

SHA Membership Meeting
June 8, 2022
Zoom – COVID-19 Pandemic

Diane welcomed everyone and encouraged people to put their names in the chat box as a way of introduction before the meeting was called to order. Attendees represented housing developers, supportive services providers, advocates, government representatives, corporate vendors and families.

There were 56 people in attendance.

1. Meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by SHA Board President, James Marhold. Jim asked for any updates or corrections to the minutes as posted. Hearing none, the minutes of the April 2022 meeting were approved.
2. Diane introduced Janel Winter Director of Housing and Community Resources, DCA to give an update. The highlights are as follows:
 - CVERAP (Program Emergency Rental Assistance program connected to COVID) Have dispersed all of the funds received for the program, original allocation as well as 2 reallocations of funds other areas did not use for a total of \$745 million that served to date 74,682 households. One of 6 states to have exhausted all funds and is the one of the first 2 to do so. Additional funds have been requested.
 - DCA is operating the Eviction Prevention Program (EPP), a \$500 million program, that can provide arrears and up to 2 years rent for people who are eligible and have allocated all of the funds. This program will serve 28,970 people and the majority would be able to pay rent for up to 2 years. Recertification would be every 6 months and if assistance was no longer needed more people would be selected from the waiting list.
 - Eviction Diversion Program- DCA has contracted with community-based organizations to place 24 resource navigators in every vicinage in the State to be able to participate in tenant landlord hearings and to provide education and connection to resources to tenants at risk of eviction. These navigators provide information about self-certification for evictions, protections, general information about courts, help with navigation to resources as well as some flexible funding for people in the program. **Janel requested help to communicate that those facing eviction must attend the court proceedings. Those that do not will be at risk of a judgment.** Currently assessing this program and hope to add additional navigators in the future.
 - Utilities programs - DCA has significant funding to help people pay off utility arrears for gas, heat, electric and water. \$260 million have been put out since March of this year for these programs for more than 250,000 households. Have more funds and June 15 is the deadline for people to start applications to avoid being terminated for arrears. Please spread the word and encourage anyone who may need these protections to at least start that application by June 15.
 - Other housing funds available: Affordable Housing Trust Fund, National Housing Trust Fund and HOME dollars. DCA is aware of costs going up. Janel encouraged participants to bring projects awarded funding with rising costs to bring it forward and talk with Larissa Luciano and Jim Lordi at DCA. People are having a difficult time finding housing so if you know anyone with units or have units for housing please reach out. DCA can provide security deposits and landlord incentives to help people obtain housing

in some voucher cases.

- Janel reviewed staffing updates including new assignments and additions.
- In response to other questions about how community stakeholder listening sessions, Janel responded: we hear a lot about making sure that we encourage mission driven developers especially in this time when the market is so tight that we have developers who are committed to their communities who are known and who come from their communities and that's the reason they are in it to represent and make opportunities for their communities especially those who have been boxed out in the past. It's important to hear and that while we want to work as quickly as possible, we need as many units as quickly as possible that we also need to make sure that they are addressing the needs of people who need them the most, the needs of our communities and that we are creating an equitable process both for people to be able to develop those units and for people to access them once they are developed.
- Final questions regarding changes to policies such as UHAC which impeded supportive housing use of Affordable Housing Trust Fund and Janel responded that the issue has been raised and they are evaluating.

3. SHA Update:

Diane announced that Harry Reyes from DMHAS could not be with us.

The one important update he wanted to convey is the announcement DMHAS issued contract renewals with an increase for salary adjustments.

Diane asked new or returning members who were in attendance to introduce themselves. She also announced our annual conference is back at the Palace at Somerset Park in person on Nov. 4th. More information will follow in the next week.

Joseph Christensen, Member and Communication Manager of SHA

j.christensen@shanj.org who introduced new members: Belmont Homes, Community Preservation Corporation, LAMB Insurance Services, Knowledge to Own, Parents with a Plan and The Alpert Group as well as the Arc of Salem, County Capital Impact Partners, Columbia Bank, Med A Quest, and MissionFirst Housing Group. Joseph thanked renewing members and emphasized the importance of keeping our contacts up to date. He also reminded members and demonstrated the member search information that helps us promote and recommend them NJ audience.

<https://www.shanj.org/member-directory-search/>

To provide this info, please fill out the member info form or contact Joseph to update.

<https://www.shanj.org/join-sha-2/>

Steve Schoch, Board of Trustees, Strategic Planning Chair

sschoch@kitchenandassociates.com to give an update on the SHA Strategic Planning process.

Steve summarized the strategic planning process that SHA undertook pre-covid.

Today is primarily introducing the framework that the board used to review SHA's work and a way we can move forward to gather more information from our members.

The board made the decision to set aside 15 minutes to discuss strategic planning part of every SHA member meeting. SHA's main goal in doing this is to involve more

members. SHA wants and needs member input. This will ideally be a guided conversational over a given topic. As with the strategic planning session, the board worked to break down the issues by the category of members that we have (developers, vendors, service providers) for example.

Some of the questions we will answer together are:

And what are the elements that are very important to developers/Service Providers/vendors?

How might we better use the SHA brand in our various member organizations?

How can we make that association with SHA more valuable to you?

How can we expand membership?

Are there constituents that are involved with supportive housing that we haven't yet identified, or we don't have as good a representation of? As a note: one group we would like to engage more fully with is municipal and government stakeholders. We have a few counties and public housing authorities. SHA could benefit from engaging this group more fully.

What are your advocacy issues?

What are the training needs? We can fill the gap if we understand the needs.

What we want from you guys is to start thinking about these meetings and your involvement. We plan on taking a small slice of each meeting for dialogue around these questions.

4. Diane welcomed Michael Cerra and Andrew LaFevre from the NJ League of Municipalities who joined us as our guest to hear about this important new resource. Diane then introduced Kate Kelly Project Manager for the SHA Integrated Community Project (ICP) to review a new Municipal Toolkit that will be released in by the end of June. This is the fruition of the 18-month grant that SHA received from the Dept. of Human Service, Division of Disability Services. Kate began by briefly reviewing the stages of the project using the visual below:



Using the life cycle of the project poster above that Joseph created for us she reviewed the project that led us to this final release of the resource.

- Three counties were part of the grant (Bergen, Ocean and Camden)
- Focus groups were held with people with lived experience, with a variety of disabilities, and barriers in these counties.
- Leadership teams were formed with organizations that work in the communities serving people with disabilities or barriers and leaders that emerged of people with lived experience (PWLE) from our focus groups. Many of the PWLE that we met through the

leadership teams who helped us develop these themes have gone on to paid positions and internship positions for organizations that are doing advocacy work around disability rights.

- Using what we heard from the leadership teams inclusive of the leaders with disabilities, we develop some main themes for improvement in community integration that has guided have guided the focus of this project. These major themes, the main themes were around communication, transportation, employment, housing, access, civic engagement, physical environment, and cultural and recreational activities.
- Throughout this process SHA has also strengthened partnerships with other organizations and groups such as the Centers for Independent Living and their statewide council (SILC)
- The Leadership Teams developed a self-assessment for municipalities that would explore through dialogue and the questions, the steps towns are taking in the areas and their potential for growth in the three counties. The questionnaire was sent ahead so that towns could think of the questions prior to the interview. Nine municipalities were targeted (3 in each county) for this analysis.
Allendale, Teaneck, Hackensack; Lakewood, Toms River, Lacey; Collingwood, Cherry Hill and Camden City (outstanding still to be reached). Suggestions for contacts are welcome.
- The interviews were very positive with many towns recognizing the good work they are already doing but also where they might improve. Some realized that improvements could be made relatively easily and “not everything is a heavy lift”.
- The toolkit itself was organized similar to the topic groupings above. Each section of the toolkit provides resources specifically addressed each topic area.
- While the toolkit is for municipalities, it is for organizations and also advocates who can help their communities improve their integration. Organizations may want to meet with municipalities and use the toolkit as a way to highlight opportunities to work together. We hope the toolkit will be widely used and shared.
- The toolkit is in digital form and will be posted on the SHA website. It has since been posted here:
<https://www.shanj.org/sha-integrated-community-project/>
- A variety of materials are included in the toolkit such as: how to make the case for inclusion, how to follow best practices for including people with disabilities, how to improve the physical environment, how to make cultural and recreation opportunities more accessible to people with a variety of barriers, how to improve opportunities to participate in civic engagement, what municipalities can do to increase their hiring of people with disabilities, resources around improving communication, improving transportation, and last, but certainly not least, resources about around supportive housing. Some resources were created specifically for the toolkit such as a supportive housing FAQ and information about the importance of induction loops to accessible for those with hearing challenges.
- The next step is for SHA to release the toolkit widely. There will be a press release, targeted outreach to organizations and the municipalities who participated. Kate plans to create some talking points for our leadership teams.
- A question arose whether this can be adapted to include people with the experience of homelessness. Kate was happy to report that the NJ Coalition to End Homelessness was one of our partners. Several Garden State Leader graduates were part of our leadership teams. That is why we emphasize disabilities or barriers so that all populations (including those that are aging) will recognize the usefulness of these resources and feel included. Also several

questions in the self-assessment helped municipalities broaden their understanding of the breath of people who could benefit.

- Diane congratulated Kate Kelly on her outstanding work as project leader and the contribution of Joseph Christensen on the design of the toolkit and other materials.
- Andrew LaFevre from the NJ League of Municipalities expressed appreciation for the work and assured SHA that they looked forward to continued partnership as they communicate and promote the resource to municipalities

For information on the toolkit contact Kate Kelly, Kate.Kelly@shanj.org.

5. Diane introduced Kate Leahy to provide an update SHA's Housing Navigator Project. Briefly the project was made possible with a grant from Dept. of Community Affairs (DCA). HNP is an 18-month project with two main goals: to strengthen services that connect people with available housing and to bridge the gap that will provide greater access to housing for the most economically challenged in NJ. Phase I will research best practices across the US to share results and tools with NJ providers. Shelley Samuels from SRS Strategic Associates is conducting the national research. Currently 9 Interviews have been scheduled and completed, 8 additional surveys have been completed from participation in the following states: Arizona, California, Colorado, D.C., Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Washington State.

The SHA team is also conducted NJ State research. Kate Leahy has spoken with groups from a range of counties and programs throughout the state and have gained a deeper understanding of housing navigation services being offered. Focus groups with individuals who have experienced homelessness and been on the receiving end of housing navigation services were conducted in April to get the consumer perspective. All of the research including Best Practices will be included in a report. Anticipated release of the research will be in end of June or July. For information on the toolkit contact Kate Leahy Kate.Leahy@shanj.org

All Presentation can be found: <https://www.shanj.org/past-sha-membership>

The meeting concluded at 12:05 PM. Next meeting of the SHA membership is scheduled for Wed, August 3, 2022

SHA Advocacy and Policy Committee met after the membership meeting.

Submitted by Diane Riley, Executive Director