

First let me say – The Partnership is not responsible for homelessness, nor are we responsible for the unprecedented levels of homelessness we face today. We are however a part of the system attempting to do something about it.

There are many accomplishments to keep in mind that the Partnership achieved. One of the largest is the increase of hundreds of thousands of dollars for local programs we helped secure through our role as the collaborative applicant for the Raleigh-Wake Continuum of Care (CoC). As collaborative applicant, we provided technical assistance and guidance on the steps that could lead to a higher award from HUD. The result \$750,000 additional federal dollars coming to our community! If not for the Partnership, we would not have seen the increase in our CoC's funding rise from approximately \$3.3 million dollars to \$4.1 million dollars.

When the pandemic hit, our multifaceted role within the homeless response system helped pull together our local agencies to better serve the community through this crisis. Over the last 2 years, several accomplishments would not have occurred, if not for the Partnership:

- The County would not have a Landlord Engagement program that we piloted with 100 signed leases.
- There would not be an Access Hub taking 6000+ calls per month from people seeking services from our already over-capacity homeless service programs.
- Our community would not have a new HMIS system, that provides real-time data on the needs and resources of our community.
- As recent as April 2022, the CoC satisfaction survey, presented by then chair Marni Cahill afforded positive & overwhelming support of the Partnership as it relates to our work as the collaborative applicant.

With all the accomplishments, we acknowledge there are many ways we can improve. We have only existed in our current configuration with the Partnership as Administrator, the CoC as Governing, and member agencies as our community for a year and a half. We find ourselves compared to other communities that have existed in our model for ten years (e.g., Houston). We strive to reach their level, but that kind of success requires patient cultivation.

The Partnership is deeply disappointed our contract negotiations with Wake County and the City of Raleigh. Remember – we do not and did not have a contract with Wake County. We are trying to find a way to repair the breach between us and local government. Because your support is so valuable to us, I wanted to take this time to let you know we are addressing these concerns.

Specific issues we feel necessary to address:

- City and County Contract Performance:
  - NO issues were noted in our monthly meetings with City and County grant managers
    - City: Samantha Weintraub and John Niffenegger
    - County: David Harris
  - Monthly Reports were submitted to both City and County
    - NO issues of performance good or bad were mentioned
- CoC Performance:
  - Performance reports submitted twice monthly to CoC, 1) CoC Governing Board; 2) CoC Membership
    - NO concerns regarding performance arose during any presentation
- Monitoring:
  - City of Raleigh has monitored us 3 times – all passed with no corrective actions, concerns, or findings
  - State of North Carolina – 7 times, all passed with no corrective actions, concerns, or findings.
  - County of Wake – Zero monitoring

Specific to Mr. Holder's email yesterday

March 30, 2022 – The Wake County Manager, David Ellis, Deputy County Manager, Duane Holder, and Housing Department Director, Lorena McDowell, met with the Partnership Board and Executive Director. This meeting was followed by Wake County Housing Department Director McDowell sharing the Partnership's full Monitoring Desk Review with Partnership Board and Executive Director.

April 8, 2022 – Partnership Board Executive Committee met to discuss the Wake County Monitoring Desk Review. **This is a regularly scheduled RWP Executive Committee meeting. How would the county know what we discussed?**

April 22, 2022 – Partnership full Board met to discuss Wake Monitoring Desk Review. **This is a regularly schedule RWP Board meeting – how do they know what we discussed?**

April 22, 2022 – email request from Kim Lawyer - follow up on request for clarification on report including the request for the source documentation noted in the methodology used to create report.

April 25, 2022. Email from Duane Holder: Partnership Full Monitoring Desk Review changed to simply be feedback and observations - **"We would simply offer the Review as our feedback and observations of your performance against the contract expectations and if there are specific questions, would definitely work to reply to those."** Requested source documentation would not be provided.

May 6, 2022 – Wake County received the Partnership's Monitoring Desk Review response. **RWP submits detailed response to feedback and observation report – responding**



to all items noted. Requests again the backup documentation and requests follow up conversation with County leadership. Partnership provides documentation and offers additional documentation should they request.

- Regarding contracting: It is important to keep in mind, my job as an Executive Director is to “not chase money, for the sake of chasing money.” I am allowed to enter into contracts as I see appropriate for the organization. We choose NOT to enter into a contract with Wake County. It had everything to do with being able to meet the terms of their contract – we saw obligations we could not meet, and saw many potential opportunities for conflict of interest. We are proud of our work and therefore are happy to be listed as a lead agency, but not when we can’t meet the terms of the contract. We see this as being good stewards of the dollars, not an indication of poor performance.

The primary issues included:

First, similar to last year, Wake County inserted the requirement of two HMIS System Admin licenses. This was an issue last year, and you’ll recall the governing board held a closed session in Dec 2021 regarding this very issue. We were unable to grant the request of providing two HMIS System Admin Licenses then and still are unable to grant that request today.. The decision-making authority for this resides with you the NC 507 CoC Governing Board, not with The Partnership or The Partnership Board of Directors.

Second is in relationship our concerns of Conflict of Interest.

Primary is that the Governing Board is the decision making body for the NC 507 CoC: pg. 5 of the Charter states “The Governing Board is the policy-setting and decision-making body for the CoC, which is responsible to the CoC membership to fulfill its HUD-defined responsibilities as defined in this charter. The board is responsible for overseeing the planning, coordination of resources, and evaluation of results for the community.”

The Governance Charter does not transfer this role to any other entity. Additionally, the Charter also states, “The Governing Board will hold the Collaborative Applicant accountable for performance through a Memorandum of Understanding,” and the collaborative applicant will “Monitor the performance of CoC and ESG recipients and sub-recipients.”

o The Partnership has a 5-year MOU with the NC 507 CoC, approved by The Partnership BoD in 2021, detailing Collaborative Applicant, CoC Lead, and HMIS Lead responsibilities the Partnership has to the NC 507 CoC.

o Including the Charter in our contract seems to acknowledge to all parties the roles and responsibilities of the Partnership to the CoC, yet can cause confusion as to which instrument take precedent – the Charter (and MOU) or Wake County.

o Wake County is a CoC and ESG recipient / subrecipient of funding, and therefore is subject monitoring / evaluation by The Partnership. There is and can be perceived conflicts of interest.

We submitted this information to the County on July 20<sup>th</sup>. And requested the opportunity to discuss further. Nothing followed. Until Sept 9<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, Coordinated Entry;

- This is tough. With little to no movement through our system the primary reason people are not being housed is because there is little housing available, NOT due to a referral.
- The Coordinated Referral process is only as good as the information provided TO the Access Hub. It is contingent upon our service providers to keep referral criteria accurate and current.

Access Hub – again tough. We are now receiving nearly 6000 a month. 50-60 % of these calls are call back, people looking for a status update on their referrals. Our shelter system and street outreach system is overwhelmed and full. We simply have little to no movement through the system. With our occupancy rates in Wake county as ridiculously high as they are – referrals, matches, to subsequent housed is not happening. It is not only the Access Hub that is overwhelmed – its all of us, all of you. Its our system.

Key findings from the recent AHAR release bear this out – The report reveals the impact of the COVID pandemic, which drove many shelters to close or reduce their capacity and may have driven many people out to avoid shelters out of public concerns. 14% people used shelter but, **more people remained in shelter longer**, suggesting they had trouble finding housing during the pandemic (which we are still in today).

I said this last week, and I will say it again today: All this to say the decision to remove the Partnership as your collaborative advocate lies with the entire CoC not just one or two entities. We have proudly and fervently represented the CoC as your collaborative applicant and as a partner organization. We will continue to operate at the highest service level possible to you our partners and customers as well of as well as for those who most need our help. This means the NOFO / SNOFO / ESG RFA work continues, HMIS migration continues, and the Access Hub work continues.

→ finally Robin Statement

Please let me know if you'd like to follow up with any questions or discussion.

Finally, this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in as many meetings (that we are aware of) where we have been shut out, unable to speak, we find this unfair, inappropriate. I would ask that we are 1) treated innocent until proven guilty not guilty until proven innocent & 2) as the current collaborative App



9.22.22

During the last 2 years, Access Hub staff has talked with tens of thousands of people who were experiencing some type of housing crisis, we've sent thousands of referrals to our partner agencies, and have been able to successfully divert thousands of people to other resources- arguably one of the most essential components of preventing homelessness.

County leadership characterized my last 2 years of serving this county as unsatisfactory.

Everyone on this call has been tasked over the years to do more and more with few resources- and it's no different for the AH. This time 2 years ago, we had the same amount of AH staff and averaging 2000 phone calls a month. More and more people in Wake County are experiencing homelessness or are precariously housed, which is reflected in our call numbers that are reported out every month. Right now we are a staff of 4 that received over 6000 calls in August. Regretfully, this has led to callers not getting through on the first time and/or extended hold times. But that neither capture's the AH's performance nor equate to our staff of 4 not being good enough. It is deeply unfortunate that while all agencies experience the problems AH faces, county officials chose to publicly and without context report on a staff of 4's "unsatisfactory performance" We are all a part of a system that's overtaxed and to single out any one program as being unsatisfactory is not deserved.

Our Access Hub team brings great value not just to the Partnership but to the County as a whole - and asking us to operate without future funding is asking us to do more with even less.

Robin Saenz

Access Hub Manager

Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness