

Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative Task Force
Public Comment
October 18 – November 4, 2016

October 19, 2016 Sarah Owens, representing the CanDo Neighborhood Board

The Board respectfully recommends to the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative Task Force that they collectively and individually advocate before the public and before appropriate government and non-governmental agencies, including housing and homeless assistance providers in Marion and Polk Counties, through written and oral communications both formal and informal, the overarching goals of the U. S. Housing and Urban Development Department's Continuum of Care Program, specifically:

1. **Favoring a systemic response to homelessness.** So that homeless assistance is as well coordinated, well managed, inclusive, and transparent as practicable, the Task Force should:
 - a. *Encourage all housing providers to collect and share data.* Servicepoint is the software application that most Continuum of Care Program grantees in ROCC Region 7 use as their Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Barriers to use by non-grantees include license fees, training, staff time, and motivation. The Task Force is uniquely situated to raise awareness of the need for good data and full participation in Servicepoint, and encourage providers who don't use it to begin doing so (except for projects that are defined as "victim service providers" under the VAWA Act).
 - b. *Encourage all housing providers to measure system performance.* The Task Force should advocate for the use of HUD's system performance measures to assess and improve the overall impact of homeless assistance efforts (e.g., measures that track the average length of homeless episodes, rates of return to homelessness).
 - c. Encourage providers to create and use an effective *Coordinated Entry process*. A coordinated entry process is used to assess and prioritize needs. The Task Force should advocate for a well-designed process that achieves these goals:
 - i. make it easier for persons experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis to access the appropriate housing and service interventions;
 - ii. prioritize persons with the longest histories of homelessness and the most extensive needs;
 - iii. lower barriers to entering programs or receiving assistance; and,
 - iv. ensure that persons receive assistance and are housed as quickly as possible.
2. **Favoring the strategic allocation of resources.** The Task Force should encourage everyone in the community, including government and non-governmental entities, to allocate resources to homeless assistance programs using cost, performance, and outcome data, and monitor the performance of all programs, including how much each spends to serve and house an individual or family as compared to other programs serving similar populations. To that end, the Task Force should encourage the community to assist housing providers not using Servicepoint to begin doing so, and give preference to programs that use it.