

## MEMORANDUM

To: The Bay Area Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness

From: HomeBase

Date: April 16, 2010

Re: Meeting Clients Where They Are: Working Collaboratively Across County Lines

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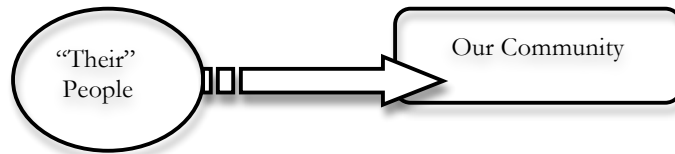
### History

Sponsored by ABAG and Public Advocates, the RSC began meeting in 1988 to focus on regional policy issues. Participants have included homeless service providers, intermediaries whose work touched relevant issues, advocacy and service provider coalitions, self-help advocacy and services organizations, academics, philanthropy, corporate leaders, and homeless people. Collectively, we identify common needs and problems areas, provide peer support, and design strategies. Our work has covered a large number of topic areas, from childcare to land use planning, and we have produced numerous products, from reports to seminars to legislative text. The RSC has been a voice of multi-county collaboration for several decades. The most relevant work group to these issues was the Homeless Families Cross-Bay Roundtable that meet in 2000, where representatives from Bay Area communities discussed service coordination, housing and political issues resulting from the movement of consumers between Bay Area communities.

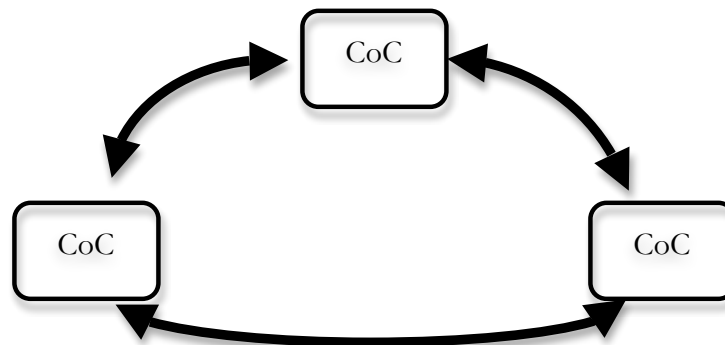
### Living in the Bay Area

Clearly, no community has extra resources to provide housing or services to people in need, however, the reality is that, like all of us, people who are unhoused often do not stay within one county's borders. In our world, our lives, our friends, our jobs, and the cost of housing, require us to move and live between counties, especially in the Bay Area.

Many people still state that “if you build it, they will come” when discussing homeless services. Perhaps envisioning something like this:



Perhaps instead, something like this is more realistic:



### **Common Goals, Common Work**

Each county is providing housing and services, search for landlords, inputting data into HMIS, doing homeless counts, and applying for funding. We are doing the same work and in some cases, we are serving the same people.

The McKinney-Vento funding stream allows for multi-county collaboration, however in the Bay Area, the size and scale of the problem in our counties, the mainstream system county-based structure, and our history has led to jurisdictional silos.

### **Client-Centered Philosophy**

At the same time, we have made efforts in recent years to create systems of care that follow the clients, instead of forcing clients to follow the system. Housing First is one example, which responds to the need for people to have a place to live in order to stabilize, with services coming afterwards. Another example is the prevention systems some counties have set up through the ARRA-funded Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program, in which clients can call 211 or another centralized number and be connected to the resources that fit them, rather than sorting through all of the resources on a long list trying to find where they fit.

The question raised today is: How are we working to make those same accommodations for clients who cross county lines? How do or could we support them to self-sufficiency?

## A Continuum of Collaboration

Certainly, we have taken a number of years to develop the collaboration and partnerships that exist within our CoCs, and it is not realistic to think that we could, or need to, reach that level of collaboration across the Bay Area. There are many theories of collaboration, but this scale shows a breakdown of how community relationships becomes more integrated.

### *Levels of Collaboration Scale*

#### 1. Networking

- Aware of organization
- Little communication
- Loosely defined roles
- All decisions are made independently

#### 2. Cooperation

- Provide information to each other
- Formal communication
- Somewhat defined roles
- All decisions are made independently

#### 3. Coordination

- Share information and resources
- Frequent communication
- Defined roles
- Some shared decision making

#### 4. Coalition

- Share ideas
- Frequent and prioritized communication
- Share resources
- All members have a vote

#### 5. Collaboration

- Members belong to one system
- Frequent communication with mutual trust
- Consensus is reached on all decisions<sup>1</sup>

### Discussion Questions:

- What cross-county coordination efforts would make your work easier or more effective? What could or should RSC be doing to respond?
- Are there subpopulations more affected by multi-county living than others (e.g. youth, domestic violence survivors, veterans, families, large families)?
- Two counties near the Bay Area, Lake County (near Napa County) and San Benito County (near Santa Clara and Monterey Counties), do not have Continuums of Care and do not receive HUD CoC funding. What is the impact of that lack of service on neighboring counties? What would be better?
- As clients move throughout Bay Area counties, how are we coordinating housing and services? How could we be more cost-efficient and/or effective? How do we

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<sup>1</sup> From Frey, B.B., Lohmeier, J.H., Lee, S.W., & Tollefson, N. (2006). Measuring collaboration among grant partners. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27, 3, 383-392.)

move beyond our jurisdictional silos? Does your neighboring CoC have a resource you do not, or vice versa (e.g. VA services)? How do you help your clients access the resources they need?

- Program Example: Where are your HPRP rapid rehousing clients coming from? Where are you housing them? What resources are you relying on to support them? In what ways could multi-county partnerships or coordination assist with this work? Or would it make your work harder?

