

Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC)
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2022, 2:00-4:00PM
Microsoft Team Video Conference

Members Present: Terezie Bohrer – Chair, Meghan "RK" Johnson, Jane Ginsburg, Jose Landaverde, Katherine Morales, Patrina Harrison, Lessy Benedith, Cris Plunkett, Henry Brown, Stephen Irwin

Members Absent: Kate Shuton, Jennifer Friedenbach

Shelter Client Advocates Present: Tyler Rougeau

HSH Staff Present: Cordell Thompson, Lisa Rachowicz, Angelica Varela, Janay Washington

Others Present: Jaime Perez-Bautista, Javier Lopez Cortez, Teddy Honey

Introductions and Welcome: Members and guests introduced themselves.

Meeting Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/8/22: Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

SGAC Business

Election of new SGAC Chair

Chair Bohrer announced that Meghan Johnson was the sole person who showed interest in being the new SGAC Chair.

Meghan mentioned that it would be an honor to hold the position. She stated that her history with homelessness gave her insight on the issues facing the unhoused.

The Chair put Meghan's nomination for the SGAC Chair up for discussion and a vote. She received unanimous approval by the committee members.

Review of Shelter Grievance Statistics

15 Month Denial of Services, Internal Hearings and Arbitrations Report 2/21 – 4/22

Lisa Rachowicz stated that the Data and Performance Team is still working on getting all the information from our shelter provider partners. She added that the Department Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) reporting process has significantly improved since the last report.

The Chair believed the information in HSH's report was inaccurate, so it should be discounted. She hoped the September report would be greatly improved.

Client Advocate Reports Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Comparison Report for January – March 2022

Tyler Rougeau reviewed the Client Advocate Report. Based on requests, he added shelter sites that did not hold any hearings to the report. Plus, employment and income information of shelter clients were added to the data.

Meghan had a question regarding the reporting of all denial of service (DOS) to the client advocates.

Lisa explained that shelter staff are required to report all DOS to the client advocates. However, she stated that the Shelter Grievance Policy only requires that shelter providers need to contact the client advocates when there is a hearing.

Old Business

Update on the implementation of the Shelter Grievance Legislation

Lisa provided a presentation regarding the Shelter Grievance Legislation that went into effect on May 28, 2022. The legislation expands the scope of what is considered a shelter. Now, emergency shelters, navigation center, safe sleep programs, shelter-in-place hotels, transitional housing, vehicle programs, interim housing, drop-in centers, and stabilization centers are covered under the legislation. Currently, 48 programs fall under the shelter grievance ordinance.

Lisa presented the following questions for the SGAC:

1. How does the SGAC want HSH to communicate complaints received?
2. What steps will the SGAC take upon receiving a complaint?
3. Would the SGAC also take complaints regarding the Shelter Client Advocates?
4. Updating the Shelter Grievance Policy?

Chair Bohrer asked if the SGAC should put together a subcommittee to discuss Lisa's questions or should the members give feedback at the time of meeting?

Meghan believed that members should take time to study the issues suggested by Lisa.

Lessy Benedith acknowledged the work HSH puts into training shelter staff, so they can comply with the Shelter Grievance Policy. Also, Lessy agreed with the formation of a subcommittee.

SGAC should follow up with HSA, DPH, HSH under their purview what sites, are now covered under the newly passed Shelter Grievance Legislation (needing to see a full & complete list)

Lisa mentioned that she had a full list of HSH sites, but she was still seeking clarification on which non-HSH sites are included in the legislation.

Also, Tyler requested clarity on this issue. He encountered two sites that are not under HSH. He wanted to know what other sites need of services, so the client advocates can provide support.

The Chair offered to reach out to the Department of Public Health to see if they had any sites covered under the legislation.

New Business

SGAC needing public comment from HSH on an update about the Yearly Report that is long overdue

Chair Bohrer asked Lisa to comment on the overdue yearly report.

Lisa responded that she was not familiar with the topic. She did mention that HSH regularly provides a report that covers 15 months. Plus, Lisa would see if the requested report was a requirement of the Shelter Grievance Policy.

Private Arbitration Subcommittee

Jane Ginsburg inquired about the status of the private arbitration subcommittee.

Patrina Harrison responded that she was still waiting for volunteers to join the subcommittee. As of now, Jane was the only participant. Patrina requested a subcommittee, because she believed African American shelter clients were receiving harsher outcomes during the arbitration process. Patrina suggested that the subcommittee could study the shelter DOS data, so the SGAC could get a better understanding how African American clients are being treated. Also, she had concerns that there were no African American arbitrators.

Meghan believed that Patrina was misinformed on how the Shelter Grievance Policy worked and how shelter clients received denial of services.

Tyler explained that the Shelter Grievance Policy and new legislation provided the qualifications for all arbitrators.

The Chair requested that a letter be sent out to request volunteer African American arbitrators.

Lessy agreed that there should be equity and diversity in all aspects of the shelter system. Plus, she requested that the SGAC membership reflect the expanded seats created by the new legislation.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

September 13, 2022

2:00-4:00PM

Video Conference

Meeting Adjourned