

**Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County
ARPA Homelessness Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Name: ARPA Homelessness Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: April 5, 2023

Meeting Called to Order: 3:00 p.m.

Location: Dougherty Street Governmental Building Auditorium

Meeting Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/live/rTXfW27hgCk?feature=share>

Meeting powerpoint slides: <https://accgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/92113/230405-ARPA-Homelessness-Advisory-Committee-Slides->

Virtual? Yes / No

Public Input Requested or Received? Yes / No

Committee Attendees:

John Morris

Haley Sherlock

Lucy Hudgens

Charles Hardy

Shea Post

Julianne Geddis

Paige Cummings

Danielle Bonanno

Ryan Hersch

Madison Sanders

Jason Leonard

Michael Bien

Tangela Ferguson

James Scott

Dee Burkett

Tamara Bourda

Staff in Attendance:

Melinda Lord

Alejandra Calva

Coral Rogers

Cameron McGlothen

Paige Seago

Lily Soronski

The Cloudburst Group (virtual):

Scott Pruitt

Stephanie Jennings

Heather Duchscherer

Items Discussed:

1. Alejandra Calva welcomed attendees and introduced staff and Cloudburst Group.
2. Request from Shea Post for minutes from November meeting to be revised to include more detail on discussions that took place and the link to the meeting recording. Alejandra Calva stated that they will be updated and resubmitted to committee for approval at next meeting, and that future minutes will be more detailed.

3. Alejandra Calva shared that ACCGov submitted the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan to HUD by the March 2023 deadline. HUD's approval may take a few months.
4. The Cloudburst Group (present virtually) highlighted on the goals of the Strategic Plan to Reduce and Prevent Homelessness, including: (1) describing current needs & gaps in service system, (2) outline what resources are currently available and flowing in community, (3) recommend strategies to meet needs & gaps, including funding strategies, (4) share best practice program models, costs and funding sources for top 10 strategies, and (5) allocation plan for ~\$5M for ARPA.
 - a. Alejandra Calva clarified for Shea Post that, based on data and stakeholder feedback, The Cloudburst Group will guide ACCGov to define the types of projects on which the ~\$5M of ARPA Homelessness funds could be spent on (e.g., X% on RRH, X% on supportive services, etc.). The Cloudburst Group will not be part of RFP process.
 - b. For John Morris, Alejandra Calva clarified that this committee cannot "vote" to recommend the strategic plan to Mayor and Commission (M&C) due to conflict of interest. However, they will have the opportunity to review the draft of the plan and provide feedback before plan goes up for M&C vote. Alejandra Calva also confirmed that this strategic plan goes beyond just the allocation of the \$5MM of ARPA.
5. The Cloudburst Group presented on work completed (HOME-ARP technical assistance, 8 listening sessions with stakeholders and 20 client interview), and ongoing individual provider interviews, data review and review of funding levels.
6. The Cloudburst Group presented key findings on unsheltered homelessness and potential strategies for this group. They highlighted that providers will likely not be surprised by data and that most tools available to count individuals experiencing homelessness are limited.
 - a. Based on PIT Counts through 2022, unsheltered homelessness in Athens has increased (a reflection of state- and nation-wide trend). John Morris shared that PIT counts prior to 2019 are likely not accurate because there was no official Outreach engagement team then. Shea Post mentioned that for the 2023 PIT, we might see an increase due to Salvation Army being closed at the time (2023 PIT data still being processed). For Michael Bien, Cloudburst explained that the percentage of all people counted in PIT who were unsheltered peaked in 2020, but has decreased since then. Discussion about how the increased # of sheltered units since pandemic might help explain this. Cloudburst clarified for Evan Mills that people in rapid rehousing are considered "housed" and are therefore not represented in the presented graph.
 - b. Cloudburst shared that there seems to be an overrepresentation of Black/African American individuals in homelessness but under-represented in street outreach. John Morris shared that not all data related to their street outreach team is reflected on HMIS/Client Track due to nuances of program(s) and software (e.g., a lot of outreach touchpoints don't translate into an HMIS enrollment entry).

emergency/transitional housing services, and that clients don't seem to be exiting system as quickly as they may have in the past (the latter is a reflection of national trends, too).

- b. Discussion about how HMIS data does not fully capture number of client enrollments into existing programs, exit rates to permanent housing, etc. For example, John Morris shared Advantage has 2 transitional housing units not funded by HUD so they are not in HMIS; Tangela Ferguson shared that most Project Safe data is not in HMIS. Agencies were encouraged to share their data with HCD. Cloudburst reminded attendees that ACC is not unique in having limitations with data collection.
- c. Cloudburst shared that interviewed clients have shared the need for more housing navigation assistance – whether they were part of RRH, receiving vouchers or other subsidies, or none. John Morris shared that there is a lot of confusion among clients about the different types of subsidies available (e.g., vouchers vs. RRH). Discussion about the fact that the lack of affordable housing and landlords unwilling to work with agencies is the underlying issue here.
- d. Cloudburst shared starter thoughts about how to improve current emergency and transitional housing in ACC, including: exploring regional models to leverage resources outside of county lines, bolstering case management to support quicker exits, incorporating shelter into coordinated entry to ease navigation challenges, and other flexible resources that could be leveraged to resolved housing issues.
 - i. More discussion about the lack of affordable housing as the underlying issue in ACC; wrap-around services are great, but without an adequate/affordable housing unit, agencies can only go so far.
 - ii. Discussion led by Shea Post about how shelters are already doing informal coordinated care, and that formalizing this process might be too much to take on, and it's unclear on who would manage this. Additionally, John Morris shared that adding coordinated entry workflow makes intake process very long and duplicative; also redundant if the only agency client will work with is the agency entering coordinated entry info. However, there is potential interest for a system that would make it easier to refer clients but that doesn't create additional burden on agencies.
 - iii. Discussion about need for flexible resources, such as a flexible housing fund that enhances agencies' reach. Madison Sanders shared that Family Promise has a small fund to support clients with move-in costs, for example, that may not be covered by other programs.
- e. Regarding permanent housing, Cloudburst shared data that shows RRH increasing but PSH units decreasing. John Morris shared that there are some PSH units not in ClientTrack. Feedback from clients and providers to date shows that there is not enough affordable housing units nor post-housing support.
 - i. Brief discussion on agencies' difficulty using all their RHH funding if there are no affordable and adequate units that help set clients up for success; even if they are able to find units, agencies know clients will have

difficulty staying in unit once RHH funds run out because of increasing market rates.

- ii. Discussion about how ACC's affordable housing investment strategy (currently in development, but outside of Cloudburst's scope) would be better suited to address incentives for developers to create affordable units including PSH; how scattered site PSH poses challenges if the units are situated in neighborhoods that don't set up clients for success. There is a general consensus that increasing number of PSH units—for families and individuals—would be beneficial to community.
8. Cloudburst and Alejandra Calva shared next steps through fall, including:
 - a. Through April – continuing to hold provider interviews, business and student surveys now open [Jason Leonard asked ACCGov to increase field size for open-ended responses on business survey], reviewing administrative data, and identifying best practice models.
 - b. May 3 – next committee meeting focused more on potential strategies
 - c. Summer – final draft plan will be completed by Cloudburst in July, and HCD will manage public comment period
 - d. Fall – M&C to vote on plan in September/October .
 9. Discussion about need to be strategic on uses of ARPA funding (that needs to be allocated by end of 2024 and spent by 2026), so that whatever is created with ARPA is sustained.
 10. Michael Bien stated that the strategies recommended by Cloudburst seem to be evidence-based, but that Athens is already doing some of them. Requested a more methodical conversation about how those tools may already be used/tested in Athens so that final plan is not just a list of tools already in use.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:36 p.m.