**Eastern Shore’s Housing Meeting – April 25, 2023, 3:00 – 4:30 PM**

**Attendees:** Dia Drake-Sprague, Diane Dressler, Tiffanee Scott, Rachel White, Diane McComb, Andrea Vincent, Judi Olinger, Mike Arntz, Kane Levings, Beth Bullard, Chelsea Hayman, David Prater, Tim Wiens, Tierra Medley, Sharonda Huffman, Andy Krauss, Lauren Silverstone

1. **Welcome**

a. Review of minutes from February 28, 2023

2. **Mike Arntz** – Congressman Andy Harris’ Housing Legislative Aide

* Mike’s primary area of work is housing issues. He is a member of Queen Anne’s County Housing Authority. He stated that voucher waitlists are about 2 years long.
* Sharonda advised that individuals with disabilities are not always included in planning. They are on long waiting lists and there may not be opportunities for them to obtain project-based housing options.
* Diane Dressler and Sharonda drafted a letter with comments on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. Diane wants to ensure that plans, documents, and meeting formats are accessible for individuals with disabilities. There are some gaps in HUD data for people with disabilities and proposed ideas for data collection. They advised transportation is an issue and encouraged them to work with the Department of Transportation. They noted challenges in finding accessible and affordable housing.
* Mike stated that accessibility is an issue in rental housing, such as steps. He stated addressing these issues could expand housing options for individuals with disabilities.

3. **Andrea Vincent** – Remote Support Services

* Beth Bullard will be leading the team in MD.
* Remote Support Services entails delivery of support from a virtual location. Trained staff engage with individuals through a device. They can call staff 24/7 by phone, tablet, or another device.
* They help individuals live safely in their home. They can complete check-in calls for any reason. Check-in calls can be scheduled per individual’s needs.
* They recently became certified for DDA’s Community Pathways and Community Supports waivers.
* Devices can include video.
* They support individuals in the community as well, ie. employment services.
* They cover all of MD.
* They have their own PCP.
* Actual support is billed separately from the device. It depends on how many hours they receive per day. There are maintenance fees. Staff will install the device and teach individuals and staff how to use device. They are the only fee for service covered by waiver.
* Contacts: Beth Bullard: bbullard@safeinhome.com and Andrea Vincent: avincent@safeinhome.com

4. **Introduction of New Members** – Diane McComb and David Prater

* Diane McComb has been in the disability field her entire life. She has worked with the Department of Disabilities in addition to working in quality improvement for disability issues. She is very active in Mainstreet Housing. Its mission is to provide housing for individuals with psychiatric conditions without any requirement that they receive services. They serve 110 tenants across MD. Nobody should lose their home because they change or end services. She is on the board of Rebuilding Together. This is a volunteer organization that assists homeowners with repairs so they can stay in their home. Recipients are generally elderly, have a disability, or veterans. They can add accessibility features such as ramps. The individual’s name must be on the deed.
* David Prater is an attorney at Disability Rights Maryland. He manages a Fair Housing practice. Their practice ensures access to subsidized housing programs. In MD, there is no jurisdiction that an individual receiving SSI can live in without a subsidy. Another part of their practice is ensuring individuals can stay housed in their units. They have found that the pandemic really took a toll on individual’s economic and healthcare security. They want to help prevent institutionalization of individuals.
* Kane Levings is an attorney on the housing team at Disability Rights MD.

5. **David Prater** – Disability Rights Maryland – Legislative Updates and Housing Discrimination Issues

* Legislation has passed establishing a statewide voucher assistance program. $10 million is being put towards a program that prioritizes individuals with disabilities.
* Traditionally, voucher programs have been federally funded and locally administered. Funding for affordable housing has decreased over time. This legislation creates a fully state funded voucher program. This replicates the federal program so a lot of the rules and responsibilities are also incorporated into this program.
* Individuals can receive assistance for 5 years.
* There is no new waiting list. It is supplemental funding for current housing authorities.
* Diane inquired whether they are prioritizing any populations and how many people they expect to support. David advised that the number of vouchers really depends on the rental market. They are prioritizing people with disabilities, households with a minor, households with military veterans, households with members over 62, foster care individuals aged 18-23, and households experiencing homelessness.
* They want documents submitted within 30 days. Sharonda inquired about asking for Reasonable Accommodation if they need additional time. David confirmed they should submit one if needed.
* Individuals have received eviction notices due to police coming to the apartment due to behavioral crisis. Individuals have had to call EMS due to broken elevators. New legislation prevents evictions due to using emergency services. It prohibits retaliatory evictions.
* New legislation requires landlords to be licensed. Landlords cannot take a tenant to rent court unless they have a valid rental license. The purpose of licensing is to ensure that housing is safe.
* Effective in October, the landlord must give 60 days’ notice of rent increase.
* The Governor’s budget added $2 million in emergency housing funding.

6. **Updates on DDA Rent Subsidy and Technology** – Diane Dressler

* Diane advised that there are no updates as to when the program will open.
* Diane is working on a webinar with Stephanie Jones to present the DDA Rental Subsidy Program.
* Lauren discussed that some CCSs are reporting they were informed by their regional office that the program will open on 7/1/23. She expressed that communication regarding the program should be consistent.
* Diane advised HSS staff to work on obtaining identification documents for housing.

7. **Outreach Opportunities**

 Local Officials Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes Townhalls with Housing Secretary Day

• April 25 6 - 7:30 PM, Community Foundation of Eastern Shore, Salisbury

• April 27 6 - 7:30PM Chesapeake Grove Intergeneration Center, Cambridge

8. **Moore|Miller Transition Plan and Collaborations** – Tim Wiens

* MIH was named in Moore/Miller Transition Plan.
* MIH submitted a proposal to Moore administration. The proposal includes investing in affordable housing. MIH named agencies to partner with, including: DHCD, MDOD, and Department of Transportation.
* MIH would have staff in the buildings to assist with complaints and assist with social inclusion work.
* The plan is to partner with private developers in regions throughout the state.
* MIH would assist in filling units and do social inclusion work in buildings. MIH proposes that we would help fill units, half with voucher recipients and half that would be supported with other funds.
* This lends itself to remote support services.

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9. **MD Commission on Civil Rights** – Dia Drake-Sprague

* Intake: Complaints may be submitted online. Complaints must be filed within one year of the alleged unlawful incidents. They complete investigations by fact finding, interviewing witnesses, gathering and analyzing documents, and site visits. They try to identify patterns in denying individuals with disabilities housing opportunities.
* Legal: The Office of the General Counsel represents the agency in all legal matters before the Office of Administrative Hearings.
* Education and Outreach: They provide outreach to the public and private sectors. They have adult and youth education programs, public dialogues and discussions, and community partnership projects and special events.
* Training and Education: Know Your Civil Rights: Discrimination Protection in MD, Dimensions of Diversity, Understanding Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation, Employment Discrimination, Fair Housing Discrimination
* Housing Protected Classes: race, gender/sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, familial status, color, marital status, Source of Income, disability
* Some counties add additional classes. Local: occupation, appearance, political affiliation.
* Senior housing is exempt from familial status criteria.
* Source of Income: Any lawful source of money paid directly or indirectly to or behalf of a renter or buyer of housing.
	+ Source of Income: Discrimination Examples: advertising that a person must have a job, requiring documentation such as pay stubs, refusing to rent to a person who is receiving public benefits, setting income requirements to exclude public benefit recipients, requiring higher security deposit based on source of income, advertisements excluding individuals who receive public benefits.
	+ Discriminatory Practices: Providing false information about availability, blockbusting, harassing people from exercising their rights, imposing different terms of finance due to a particular class, denying or applying different terms, treating applicants differently, denying or refusing to rent or sell, advertising with illegal preferences.
	+ Illegal advertising: making, printing, and publishing of advertisements that indicate a preference, or discrimination because of protected class.
* They are hosting a virtual forum on race this week: Closing the Gap in Racial Disparities in Housing.
* Email is mccr.outreach@maryland.gov.

10. ***Next Meeting will be held on June 27, 2023. A virtual meeting link will be sent.***