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Interagency Council on the Homeless

April 11, 1996

MEMORANDUM TO: POLICY GROUP MEMBERS AND STAFF CONTACTS

FROM: FRED KARNAS, JR. *FK*
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF THE APRIL 2, 1996, POLICY GROUP MEETING

This memorandum summarizes key matters discussed at the April 2 Policy Group meeting and identifies required follow-up activities.

Fred Karnas opened the meeting by thanking those who made the March 13 meeting of the full Council so successful. He has received very positive feedback from a number of participants.

A. UPDATE ON RECENT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ACTIONS

Paul Hancock of the Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice (DOJ), reported on recent activities undertaken by his office and described the legal assistance available to homeless service providers. DOJ recently considered participating as a friend of the court in a case in Miami, FL involving the establishment of "zones" for homeless people, but ultimately decided not to do so on the basis of a decision by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. DOJ did participate in a Federal court case in San Francisco in which the enforcement of state and city laws prohibiting camping, lodging and sleeping in public was seen as criminalizing the status of homelessness, a violation of the Eighth Amendment. DOJ continues to look for appropriate cases in which to participate that involve a clear Federal interest and where the legal process can help meet the goals of the Council. Hancock discussed the protections of the Federal Fair Housing Act against certain types of discrimination, and noted that DOJ is working with the League of Cities and Conference of Mayors to clarify the obligations of municipalities under the Fair Housing Act on zoning, land use, and other issues. Hancock encouraged agency representatives to call him (202/514-4713) if they have questions. He invited them to identify additional opportunities for outreach by DOJ staff on civil rights matters.

telephone interviews have been completed and that 12,000 of the 15,000 entities on the original list have been contacted. The mail surveys have been and are continuing to be sent out. Representatives of the sponsoring agencies are continuing to meet to discuss a plan for data analysis. At the recommendation of Secretary Shalala, the Policy Group will assume the lead in making final decisions on key policy issues to be analyzed. This discussion is planned for the June 2 meeting of the Policy Group.

--Activities of the ICH Task Force on Homeless Veterans

Marsha Martin of VA invited agency representatives to participate in two conferences that are being co-sponsored by VA, the National Coalition for the Homeless, and the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund. The conferences are scheduled for May 30-June 1 in Chicago and September 14-17 in Dallas. She will contact agencies to provide additional information later.

--Recent NOFAs: Continuum of Care (HUD); Homeless Veterans Grant and Per Diem Program (VA); and Homeless Veterans Employment and Training Program (DOL)

Maggie Taylor (HUD), Marsha Martin and Paul Robertson (DOL) discussed the key focuses and points of contact for each of the subject notices of funding availability. Lawrence Rickards (HHS) noted that CMHS is planning to issue a NOFA for \$3 million soon on various aspects of prevention.

E. OTHER BUSINESS

Fred Karnas closed the meeting by noting that the Policy Group meeting previously scheduled for May 2 will have to be postponed until May 14. Accordingly, the next meeting of the Policy Group will be on Tuesday, May 14, 1996 at 2:00 p.m. A notice will be faxed to you with the agenda and information on the room number for the meeting.

FUTURE POLICY GROUP MEETINGS. Note: All meetings are on the first Tuesday of the month and will begin at 2:00 p.m. on the dates listed. A confirmation notice will be faxed to you before each meeting.

May 14, 1996	September 3, 1996
June 4, 1996	October 1, 1996
July 2, 1996	November 5, 1996
August 6, 1996	December 3, 1996

B. SUBMISSION OF AGENCY UPDATES ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITY: HOME!

Fred Karnas reminded agency representatives to submit their reports on the implementation of *Priority: Home!* to him as soon as possible. Harriet McCombs summarized HHS's progress on key action items.

Agency reports should discuss (1) key action items of *Priority: Home!* accomplished by the agency (including updates of information submitted previously and reflected in the October 1995 interim implementation report); (2) major barriers to accomplishing other action items; (3) the agency's major homelessness-related objectives for the coming year; and (4) what, if any, are the significant interagency cooperative activities engaged in, in relation to homelessness, since the issuance of *Priority: Home!*

C. NUTRITION EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

Andrea Lindsey of USDA's Food and Nutrition Information Center described her agency's efforts to develop a nutrition guide and other informational items for clients and workers at shelters, soup kitchens and food banks. Materials will be distributed electronically and as hard copy. She invited agency representatives to suggest materials to include in the guide and vehicles for distribution. Suggestions included using national public interest groups, state homeless coalitions, and clearinghouses sponsored by Federal agencies. Fred Karnas offered to furnish a list of recommended Federal clearinghouses to USDA. For additional information on this effort, contact Ms. Lindsey at (301) 504-5719.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

--Interagency Activities to Assist People with Multiple Diagnoses--Update

Harriet McCombs and Fred Karnas reported on the status of the HUD-HHS joint initiative to improve services to homeless persons with multiple diagnoses involving HIV/AIDS, mental illness and/or substance abuse. HUD and HHS will be coordinating their review of applications. Broad-based technical assistance materials that stress lessons learned and the desirability of a community-wide plan are under development.

--Status of National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients

Annetta Clark of the Census Bureau reported that the