

Capital Region Workgroup- Addressing Solutions to Homelessness

Meeting Summary

7/25/25

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Alyson Baker	City of Albany	Mike Foley	Director of Community Development Albany County
Megan DeMeo	Bethesda House	Faye Andrews	City of Albany
Perry Junjulas	Albany Damien Center	Troy Filburn	CARES
Addy Haberbush,	SCAP	Kathy Germain	CARES
Charles Doyle	City of Troy Dept. of Housing & Community Development	Francia M Chiaretta Smith	Albany Housing Authority
Ajele Randolph	Albany City Mayor	Christine Rodriguez	Equinox
Liz Hitt	HATAS	Folake Oyedokun	Neighborhood Specialist Albany City
Jack Rosenzweig	Albany County	Mike Jackson	Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority
Mitchell Grossman	Schenectady	Denise Galloway	CARES
Anna Sapak	Albany County	Naomi Clarke	City of Albany Neighborhood Services
Amy La Fountain	Joseph's House	Laila Jerome	CARES
Chiquita. DArbeau	Albany Housing Authority	Rikki Shaw	Unity House
Tracy Ellis - Sen Tedisco	Sen. Ted Tedisco's Office	Tracy Pitcher	St. Paul's Center
Starletta Renee	YWCA Greater Capital Region	Ed Kowalczyk	CDYMCA
Mike Belanger	Troy Housing Authority	Michelle Sandoz-Dennis	CARES

Meeting Intention: To provide a federal funding update and review the House Markup of the HUD appropriations bill. To discuss how other funding cuts, especially those to Medicaid and SNAPS passed as part of the Reconciliation Bill signed into law on July 4th would magnify the impact of proposed CoC and ESG funding cuts.

Updates on Federal Funding Landscape:

CARES began the meeting providing an update on the FY26 proposed federal budget. We discussed how other federal budget cuts for safety net programs like Medicaid and SNAP will compound impact on CoC and ESG clients. Additionally cuts to programs like Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funding impact the supply and creation of new affordable housing.

The House's proposed HUD budget cuts ended up being less severe than expected for CoC, ESG, and HOPWA. We're hoping the Senate's version will be even better, but there's still a lot of uncertainty.

On July 3rd, CoC's received notification that there will be a 2025 Notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) would be released. This was unexpected as Congress approved a two-year funding cycle when the 2024-2025 NOFO was published. This email included that there would be a new focus from HUD on prioritizing street outreach and transitional housing (which is capped at 24 months)

Discussion among Non-Profits, Localities, and Housing Authorities on the Impact of Federal Funding Cuts:

There was open discussion about how these funding cuts might affect nonprofits, local governments, and the vulnerable populations we work with. Everyone agreed we need to collaborate more to keep services running smoothly despite less money.

Public Housing Authority, Tenant and Program Based Rental Assistance proposed cuts

Mike Jackson from Schenectady's Municipal Housing Authority shared what they're dealing with: public housing capital funds are being cut so they been proactive to adjusting rent assistance levels to fit the current market and stopped leasing new Section 8 vouchers . Their focus is now on keeping current voucher holders supported without adding new ones, but funding is still very uncertain. Cuts to SNAP and Medicaid will also hurt people living in public housing.

Community Development Block Grant and HOME proposed cuts

Mitchell Grossman updated the group that their consortium, including Schenectady and Troy, got about the same HOME and CDBG funding as last year, but they're worried about what the 2026-2027 budget will look like.

Medicaid and SNAP Cuts

The significant cuts to Medicaid and SNAPS benefits will amplify any CoC and/or CoC funding cut. DSS commissioners couldn't join, but they shared previous concerns that cuts to SNAP and Medicaid could cause real problems for county budgets. We will request they provide additional information at the next workgroup meeting.

2025 HUD NOFO

CARES reported that Congress seems to have rejected the 24 month limit on rental assistance which is good news for Permanent Supportive Housing for now. However, with the notification from HUD regarding the 2025 NOFO suggested that there would be new priorities with a focus on street outreach and transitional housing (which has a 24 month cap on rental assistance) as well as recovery-focused housing.

Open Discussion on Contingency Planning

- Perry Junjulas from the Damien Center shared how they're trying to find alternative funding sources to keep health insurance and food assistance for their HIV-positive clients, anticipating potential cuts to Medicaid and SNAP in 2027.
- Amy LaFountain asked the group how agencies are communicating these changes internally and externally. She is working on drafting a clear but calm statement for her agency to acknowledge impacts without causing unnecessary stress. Starletta Renee talked about their programs to support staff and clients, including a help wanted campaign, community garden, and cooking classes.
- Consensus from service providers to keep staff motivated and be honest about challenges, but also to avoid causing alarm with uncertain information. Clear communication is key, especially with vulnerable clients. We need to encourage cost-saving measures and provide support to residents who might be affected by these changes.
- On advocacy, we discussed upcoming meetings with Senator Gillibrand's DC Housing director and Congresswoman Stefanik's housing staff. We want to continue to educate local elected officials and nonprofit boards to understand and act on these funding threats.
- CARES is creating an advocacy toolkit organized by district, featuring easy "light-touch" options like signing letters, sending emails, and writing op-eds to make advocacy accessible.

- Impact stories from people who've successfully used our programs will help Congress members advocate for full funding. These stories will help show lawmakers the real effects of budget cuts and strengthen our advocacy. We talked about different ways to share those stories, including short videos and storytelling toolkits, so we're ready to respond quickly when federal reps ask.

Perry emphasized the power of collaboration and sharing resources between organizations. Kathy mentioned there's a dedicated webpage with all meeting materials and updates for easy access.

Next Capital Region Workgroup meeting will be August 27th at 9 am via Zoom

CARES will continue to monitor both the appropriations as they are released and HUD's intent to issue a 2025 NOFO. Please feel free to reach out to Kathy Germain at kgermain@caresny.org or Kelsey Addy at kaddy@caresny.org if you have information or questions. The dedicated webpage with all materials and meeting information is [Here](#).