

**Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 7, 2021, 2:00-4:00PM**  
**Microsoft Team Video Conference**

**Members Present:** Terezie Bohrer – Chair, Jennifer Friedenbach, Meghan "RK" Johnson, Kate Shuton, Henry Brown, Katherine Morales, Patrina Harrison, Stephen Irwin

**Members Absent:** Jane Ginsburg, Jose Landaverde, Lessy Benedith, Cris Plunkett

**Shelter Client Advocates Present:** Ramsey Dunlap, Tyler Rougeau, Waldo Campos

**HSH Staff Present:** Cordell Thompson, Lisa Rachowicz, La Shenna Sirles, Patrick Buckalew, Janay Washington

**Others Present:** Jonathan Blackman, Jacqueline Portillo, Kenisha Roach

**Introductions and Welcome:** Members and guests introduced themselves.

**Meeting Agenda:** The agenda was reviewed and approved.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 9/7/21:** Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

### **SGAC Business**

#### **New Members**

Katherine Morales and Patrina Harrison were introduced as new member of the SGAC.

#### **Virtual Meeting Poll**

The SGAC members voted to keep virtual meetings.

## **Review of Shelter Grievance Statistics**

### **15 Month Denial of Services, Internal Hearings and Arbitrations Report 8/20-10/21**

#### **Summary of DOS's by Shelter for July – September 2021**

Chair Bohrer reviewed the 15 Month Denial of Service and Arbitration Report.

## **Client Advocate Reports**

### **Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Comparison Report for July – September 2021**

Tyler Rougeau, Directing Attorney for the Shelter Client Advocates Program, repeated his past concerns that shelter staff are not providing denial of service (DOS) paperwork to clients. He referred to The Department on Homelessness and Supportive Housing's (HSH) Hearing and Arbitration Report to make his case. In October, HSH reported 15 DOS and the Client Advocates only received two requests for hearings.

Plus, Tyler mentioned that internal hearings have returned to the shelters. During the pandemic, internal hearings were located at HSH's headquarters. He felt their return would be beneficial to shelter client.

Tyler believed that the shelters are misapplying rules in the congregate manual, so they can DOS clients. He used Rule J as an example, *Manufacture or preparation of controlled substances (drugs): Guests may not manufacture or prepare controlled substances onsite. Any guest who engages in these activities will be subject to the denial of service rules as described above, as well as possible criminal prosecution.* Tyler said that shelters are using Rule J against clients who simply consume drugs.

Also, Tyler expressed his concerns that the 48-Hour Rule remains non-grievable in the updated congregate manual.

Chair Bohrer wondered why there was such a large discrepancy in reported DOS between HSH's shelter report and the Client Advocate's shelter report.

Lisa Rachowicz, Interim Manager of Navigation Centers and Shelter Programs, acknowledged that the shelter data is not accurate due to shelters not reporting their numbers. She said that HSH is working to resolve the issue by updating the department's survey tools.

Patrina Harrison requested information about the demographics on the shelter report.

Tyler replied that the client advocate report shows gender, race / ethnicity, and disabilities of the shelter clients.

Patrina requested that future reports include the income of the shelter clients. Also, she requested the demographics of the arbitrators and client advocates.

Cordell Thompson said he would follow up with the demographics of the arbitrators.

Meghan "RK" Johnson stated that most of the client advocates identify as People of Color. She reassured Patrina that the client advocates are doing their due diligent to assure everyone is being respected and receiving the services they deserve.

Kate Shuton asked if the Shelter-In-Place Hotels (SIP) and shelters have the same rules regarding visiting hours? Also, she asked if SIP Hotels and shelters had to quantify the number of incidents a person violates per rule (e.g., curfew violations, continuous disruptive behavior)?

Regarding visiting hours, Tyler stated that times varies within each SIP Hotel and shelter. As to Kate's second question, he replied that SIP Hotels and shelters need to be more specific with certain rule violations.

## **Old Business**

### **Sites following rules in accordance to G. P. and Congregate Manual**

Meghan believed that HSH had overseeded its authority and has gone against the SGAC on how HSH reports changes. She'd like to know why HSH continues to refuse to get approval of new shelter rules from the committee.

Lisa believed that the Shelter Grievance Policy does not give the SGAC oversight in the making of the shelter rules.

Jennifer Friedenbach stated that it was up to individual shelters to set their rules. In the past, The Human Service Agency would go through the SGAC to get input on any changes that effected all shelters. She used the example of acts of violence outside the entrance of the shelters. The “Acts of Violence” rule was applied to all shelters. It stated that an individual committing an act of violence within 200 feet of a shelter’s entrance was subject to an immediate DOS. However, Jennifer felt that the HSH locked out the SGAC on any consideration of rule changes during the pandemic.

Meghan made a motion that arbitration decisions needed to be abided and honored by HSH.

Jennifer added the following language to the motion: “as required by the Shelter Grievance Policy”.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Patrina motioned that shelter client should have the right to choose between a private arbitrator vs. a HSH provided arbitrator.

The Chair believed that we should discuss this during the next meeting, since this was a complex topic. She felt this issue needed a lot more research.

### **More frequent Grievance Policy Training amongst sites**

Meghan made a motion that HSH needed to provide three grievance policy trainings to shelter program staff each year, before staff can issue a denial of service. Plus, HSH must monitor denial of services and report the number to the SGAC in compliance with the policy.

Chair Bohrer asked who decided the frequency of trainings per year.

Lisa replied that HSH provided monthly trainings to new shelter staff. They are required to take only one training and test to issue a denial of service.

Henry Brown suggested that the Client Advocates provide trainings to shelter clients, so they know their rights.

Tyler mentioned that they hold “Know Your Rights” trainings for shelter clients. During the pandemic, it’s been difficult to provide information to clients.

The Chair asked Meghan to withdraw her motion, so more research could be done on this issue. Plus, she asked Meghan to setup a subcommittee to study this topic.

Henry, Ramsey, and Patrina offered to participate on the subcommittee.

### **HSH's transparency and notifying SGAC/ advocates when policies and rules are being changed**

#### **Report from Subcommittee reviewing documents**

Lisa reported that the group found inconsistencies in the congregate manual and the Shelter Grievance Policy. She’s moving forward to get input from HSH and shelter providers to change the language in the congregate manual.

#### **Status of legislation**

Jennifer said a draft is being created by the City Attorney. The legislation will require the basic elements of the Shelter Grievance Policy to be followed.

#### **New Business**

There was no new business.

#### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **Next Meeting**

March 8, 2022  
2:00-4:00PM  
Video Conference

#### **Meeting Adjourned**