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HOMELESS ACTION NETWORK OF DETROIT

January 31, 2018

Dear Friends and Partners of the Homeless Action Network of Detroit,

By now, you may have heard the allegations that were made against the Homeless Action Network of Detroit (HAND) in [press releases](#) and [news articles](#). We believe that everyone is entitled to their opinion and we support their right to be heard. We also want you, our partners and friends, to hear directly from us. The allegations being made against HAND are not true and contrary to our [core values](#).

Integrity is an essential part of the work we do. As the Lead Agency for the Detroit Continuum of Care (CoC), we strive to be fair and transparent. We work within the guidelines of the [Detroit CoC Governance Charter](#), which was approved by you, CoC members. Our [processes](#) are [governed by policies and procedures](#). We participate in open meetings of the [Continuum of Care board](#), [committees](#), and [general membership](#) and post [minutes](#) from each session to HAND's website upon receipt. When working with the CoC Board to develop and implement significant policy changes such as those with [transitional housing](#), [written standards for providing homeless assistance](#), and [permanent supportive housing](#), we hold comment periods to receive feedback and input from you, our partners. We work with the CoC Values and Funding Priorities Committee to set [funding priorities](#) annually. [Self-scoring tools](#), an [appeals process](#), and a [formal grievance procedure](#) are in place to ensure our CoC's practices are fair.

While we support the right of each agency to voice their concerns (even when critical of HAND), we would have preferred that a formal grievance had been filed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which is the entity that has oversight and management over the Continuum of Care program. Politicizing homelessness through the media does not benefit the people that are being served: real people with real issues that are looking for real solutions. We thank those who have reached out directly to us to offer support, words of encouragement, and to compliment the work that we do.

For over 20 years, HAND has served you as the Lead Agency for the Detroit Continuum of Care, and with your support, we will continue to serve. We are fortunate to work with some of the most dedicated and passionate people in our industry. We know that change is not easy, and yet so many of you have embraced the changes needed to end homelessness in our community. This includes the [data-driven decision](#) to shift more of the CoC's resources to permanent housing. This [process](#) was particularly hard on agencies that had invested heavily in transitional housing, but it did create 271 new units of permanent housing during the FY2015 HUD competition.

By embracing change, the Detroit CoC has seen a 29% decline in homelessness since 2012, when, at that time, annual homelessness totaled almost 20,000 people. Since the HUD FY2005 competition, 876 units of permanent housing have been created and an additional 124 units are expected to come online within the next year. Furthermore, 96% of people placed in permanent housing have remained in housing and have not returned to homelessness. This is because you are committed to serving some of the most vulnerable people in our community- low- (or no-) income people who have histories of homelessness, mental illnesses, and other barriers to housing- and you have committed to participate in the coordinated entry process that ensures that are resources are directed to those most in need. Additionally, the Detroit CoC was recently awarded over [\\$25 million](#) from HUD, one of the highest award amounts that the CoC has ever received. It's your hard work that

has driven these changes and results! We could not be prouder of the work that is being accomplished through the Detroit CoC. Even still, we acknowledge that the work is not finished and welcome opportunities to improve.

We look forward to seeing many of you tonight at our annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. The PIT count is mandated by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and it provides a snapshot of homelessness in our community. Volunteers will brave the cold in order to count and survey people who are homeless and not staying in shelter.

We stand firm in our mission to provide leadership to end homelessness. Let's continue to move forward together!

Sincerely,

HAND Staff and Board of Directors