

PORTLAND CONTINUUM OF CARE

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

MEETING MINUTES

Present:

Bob Duranleau	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
Aaron Geyer	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division, Home to Stay
Jeff Tardif	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division, Family Shelter
Rob Parritt	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Meaghan Void-Dudich	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Jon Bradley	Preble Street
Cindy McPherson	SAMHS
Chet Barnes	SAMHS
Carol Kulesza	VA Homeless
Virginia Dill	Shalom House
Norman Maze	Shalom House
Pat McKenzie	The Opportunity Alliance
Bob Fowler	Milestone
Scott Tibbitts	MaineHousing
Cindy Namer	MaineHousing
Kelly Watson (Phone)	MaineHousing
Megan Spencer (Phone)	MaineHousing

I. Introductions

Bob welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made.

II. 2014 CoC Application Update

Bob discussed the submission of the HUD Application and the issues surrounding receiving the last-minute notice of no-cost extension. He went on to discuss HUD sending technical assistance via ABT Associates.

Chet addressed the advisory committee and governance, specifically the data sharing portion. Cindy suggested the data advisory committees talk and move forward with these decisions jointly.

III. HUD Technical Assistance with ABT

Bob has solidified the meeting with HUD TA for Tuesday, November 25 from 12pm – 4pm with Brooke Spellman. This meeting is to discuss the programs that lost funding (HMIS, SSO projects including Job Training, Employment Assistance, and the Collaborative, and Planning Grant all have not been funded. Bell Street did receive a no-cost extension to finish using funds through December 31, but will not be funded afterwards. In addition, 22 Park Ave received significantly less funding. The group discussed the issues surrounding the loss of HMIS funding, as the funds were supposed to be for start-up costs, not maintenance.

IV. Point in Time Survey Changes 2015

See handouts from MaineHousing. This year's PIT survey will be Wednesday, January 28, 2015. Scott discussed the PIT and the upcoming training schedule starting in mid-December. He applauded Portland's outreach, citing issues with the more rural areas of the state.

Scott reviewed the PIT standards and the reasoning behind doing the survey in the winter. The Charter and Consolidated Plan both discuss the methodology for Portland's participation. Rob suggested another statewide point person meeting like last year to ensure all areas of the state are on the same page. There was further discussion on recruiting other organizations and programs to help with canvassing.

Chet and Carol discussed programs such as the VA and PATH that will help in regards to the PIT survey. Cindy discussed having different counts on different days (youth, unstably housed, etc.) so as not to mix with PIT.

Kelly discussed the process for the shelter counts and submission of data. Those at Bell Street will become permanent housing. This means they will be considered “housed” after January 1. Carol clarified the individuals in hospitals as not being counted as homeless for the PIT. Megan and Kelly also discussed the HIC v. PIT count and how to address each issue.

Action Item: Vote to move forward with the training in the Portland area. Jeff motioned, Rob seconded, unanimously approved.

Pat asked for clarification on their transitional programs (Morrison Place and MaineStay) and whether their clients should be counted on the PIT. Yes- transitional housing programs working specifically with the homeless are to be counted on the PIT. Chet pointed out that Maine was recognized as having the second-lowest percentage of homeless in the nation (approximately 3.5%) last year.

V. CoC Planning Grant Update

Cindy gave an update on the coordinated assessment workgroup meeting. They went over the national alliance tool and SPDAT and gave an overview of pros and cons of each. Cindy and Bob are unsure of the other committee. Ginny stated that the coordinated assessment committee is attending the MCOC meeting (December 18, 1-3pm). The group decided on a separate meeting time during the second week of December to go over all of the information for both CoCs. Lynn is getting back to Cindy on any specifications for closing out CoC programs losing funding. There was a grant submitted to the Betterment Fund with the help of Ann and the City of Portland as the applicant to continue funding for the CoC planning. **Update: Bob received notice on 11/21/2014 that the Portland CoC was awarded the \$30,000 Betterment Grant substitute the lost Planning Grant Funding.**

VI. Mainstream Resources Committee Update

Aaron discussed the Mainstream resources “committee of one”. He asked for others to help and that any training ideas be sent to him. Matt Pryor will be transitioning out of the Job Training and Employment Assistance program and focusing on follow-up at Oxford Street and helping in housing. Aaron is currently working on closing out the APRs for those two closed programs.

VII. Other Business

Carol stated that the VA is looking to have a stronger presence at CoC. On January 30th, VA is having a gathering to discuss their homeless program. Watch your emails for more information.

Chet stated that Sheldon Wheeler is currently the acting director at Maine DHHS. PATH has been moved to housing, and he expects more changes in the near future. Once they are solidified, he will pass the information along. Rob applauded the shift in PATH’s focus to housing.

Cindy stated that Therese Cahill Low has left Family and Child Services. With the new acting director, they are looking to have significant program changes and shifts within that division as well.

Rob discussed a meeting between OSS and Shalom House and the very preliminary notion of finding a universal methodology for verifying homelessness. Cindy pointed out that HMIS data should be able to provide this verification. Ginny stated that while OSS provides information from HMIS, but this does not happen in the data received from other shelters. Cindy remembered there was a form many years ago for this very information, specifically for places without HMIS or those not staying at a shelter. Bob suggested a small committee where everyone can give input.

Next Meeting:
December 17, 2014
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
REFUGEE SERVICES CONFERENCE AREA
190 Lancaster Street

Please Contact Robert Duranleau, City of Portland, Health and Human Services Department, Social Services Division at 482-5124, or rmd@portlandmaine.gov if you have any questions.

HUD Point-in-Time Count Standards

General PIT Count Standards (Chapters 1 and 3)

Standard No. 1:

CoCs are responsible for planning and conducting, at least biennially, a PIT count of homeless persons within the geographic area that meets HUD's requirements.

Standard No. 2:

The sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts must be conducted during the last 10 days in January and represent all homeless persons who were sheltered and unsheltered on a single night during that period.

Standard No. 3:

The final PIT count methodology must be approved by the CoC in accordance with the **CoC's governance charter**.

Standards Regarding Coordination of the PIT Count with the Con Plan Jurisdiction (Chapter 5)

Standard No. 4:

All CoCs should consult and collaborate with all Con Plan jurisdictions in the geographical boundary of the CoC, including those that do not have ESG funding, to assist the jurisdictions in submitting PIT count data that is relevant to completing their Con Plans.

Standard No. 5:

CoCs must provide PIT count data to the entity(ies) responsible for the Con Plan jurisdiction(s) associated with the CoC.

HUD Point-in-Time Count Standards

Sheltered PIT Count Standards (Chapters 2 and 4)

Standard No. 6:

CoCs must account for and report on all sheltered homeless people residing in the CoC through a census (complete coverage) or one or more sampling and extrapolation methods that are consistent with HUD standards and guidance. HUD will evaluate the nature and basis for estimation and extrapolation of CoCs' sheltered count in the annual CoC Program Competition.

Standard No. 7:

CoCs must be able to verify that the sheltered homeless people identified in the count are sheltered on the night designated for the count, as defined at 24 CFR 578.3 of the **Homeless Definition Final Rule**:

"An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals)."

Standard No. 8:

CoCs should use client data already collected and entered in HMIS as the primary data source for the sheltered PIT count for emergency shelter, Safe Haven, and transitional housing projects that participate in HMIS.

Unsheltered PIT Count Standards (Chapters 2 and 5)

Standard No. 9:

CoCs must account for and report on all unsheltered homeless people residing in the CoC's geography through a census (complete coverage) or one or more sampling and extrapolation methods that are consistent with HUD standards and guidance. HUD will evaluate the nature and basis for estimation and extrapolation of CoCs' unsheltered count in the annual CoC Program Competition.

HUD Point-in-Time Count Standards

Standard No. 10:

CoCs may exclude geographic areas where the CoC has determined that there are no unsheltered homeless people, including areas that are uninhabitable (e.g., deserts). CoCs must document the criteria and decision-making process used to identify and exclude specific geographic areas.

Standard No. 11:

CoCs must be able to verify that the unsheltered homeless people identified in the count are unsheltered on the night designated for the count, as defined at 24 CFR 578.3 the **Homeless Definition Final Rule**:

“An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.”

Data Quality Standards (Chapter 6)

Standard No. 12:

CoCs must ensure that during the PIT count homeless persons are only counted once. It is critical that the counting methods be coordinated to ensure that there is no double-counting. Therefore, CoCs must also collect sufficient information to be able to reliably deduplicate the PIT count (i.e., ensure that the same homeless person was not counted more than once).

Standard No. 13:

Surveys of people for the sheltered or unsheltered count must be administered in a manner that protects participant privacy and safety, as well as the safety of the person completing the survey.

Standard No. 14:

CoCs are required to ensure that people conducting the PIT count, including project staff and community volunteers, are appropriately trained about count standards, data collection procedures, and protocols for privacy, security, and personal safety.

Point-in-Time 2015

Date of the Count: Wednesday, January 28, 2015 - the 'night of the count' begins at sunset on the date of the count and ends at sunrise on the following day.

Sheltered Count: We will be primarily using the HMIS for the sheltered count as we have done in the past several years. Sheltered count survey forms will be created for those shelters not participating in the HMIS to collect data on their clients. DV providers will be asked to submit PIT count information through secure forms as they have in the past.

Sheltered Count Methodology: The methodology that has been used historically and is recommended for 2015 is a 'Census Count'. This is an enumeration of all sheltered homeless people in the CoC. For projects that have entered data into HMIS, the data collection is already completed and the necessary information should be extracted from the HMIS. For projects that do not participate in HMIS, a provider level survey should be conducted.

Unsheltered Count: The unsheltered count will be done using survey forms, as we have done in previous years. Forms following the HUD sample format will be used for the unsheltered count.

Unsheltered Count Methodology: The methodology that has been used historically and is recommended for 2015 is a 'Night of the Count' and 'Complete Coverage' methodology. This is a count of people who are staying in unsheltered locations on the night of the count - January 28, 2015. The whole CoC geography is canvassed in order to count unsheltered persons. CoCs send teams of enumerators throughout the geography, searching for and counting unsheltered persons.

Deduplication/Data Quality Process:

- Survey questions and identifying information from unsheltered surveys are used for deduplication and verification of homeless status on the night of the count
- HMIS uses an algorithm using identifying information to deduplicate the sheltered count
- HMIS projects must send in confirmation that the data in the system accurately reflects who was in their project on the night of the count
- The surveys will be adapted from the sample survey instruments provided by HUD. Minor changes will be made to the forms to meet our data collection needs without compromising the required HUD data elements for the count.

Privacy: Information about how PIT count data is used, the voluntary nature of the full survey, and proper handling of confidential information will be covered in trainings for outreach groups. Current HMIS users are already trained in privacy/confidentiality standards and have signed agreements indicating such.

Training: Data Collection Training – Sheltered and Unsheltered

The HMIS Team will provide training to HMIS participating agencies on their requirements related to the PIT and HIC. This will be done using a combination of webinar, web postings, and user support through the HMIS Help Desk. Training from the HMIS Team on the data collection portion of the unsheltered count will be provided to regional groups as needed either in person or via webinar. This will include information on using the survey tool and enumeration processes. Training materials such as a PowerPoint and handouts will also be developed to identify who should and should not be counted and to provide common definitions.

PIT 2015 – Definitions

Literally Homeless - Sheltered:

An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals).

Literally Homeless - Unsheltered:

An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

Persons *prohibited* from being included in the sheltered or unsheltered PIT count:

- Persons counted in any location not listed on CoCs' Housing Inventory Count (HIC) (e.g., staying in projects with beds/units not dedicated for persons who are homeless)
- Persons residing in permanent housing (PH) programs, including persons housed using HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers
- Persons temporarily staying with family or friend (i.e., “doubled-up” or “couch surfing”)
- Persons residing in housing they rent or own (i.e., permanent housing), including persons residing in rental housing with assistance from a RRH project on the night of the count
- Persons residing in institutions (e.g., jails, juvenile correction facilities, foster care, hospital beds, detox centers)