

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2012

Bob Duranleau	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
Amy Pulaski	City of Portland, Planning & Development
Doug Gardner	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department
Dan Coyne	United Way
Rob Parritt	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Sarah Gaba	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division, Stable Lives
Paul Murphy	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Healthcare for the Homeless
Kathleen Babeu	City of South Portland, General Assistance
Leah Bruns	The Opportunity Alliance
Sarah Lundin	City of Westbrook
Carol Hutchins	Bayside Neighborhood Association
Steve Hirshon	Bayside Neighborhood Association
Shana Pike	MAPS/StepUp
Phil Allen	Preble Street Veteran Housing Services
Therese Johnson	Preble Street Veteran Housing Services – City of Portland
Patti Robinson	Preble Street
Aaron Shapiro	Cumberland County
Leslie Otto	Family Crisis Services
Kendra Danse	The Opportunity Alliance
Pat McKenzie	The Opportunity Alliance
Lori Martin	The Opportunity Alliance
Betsy Whitman	Homeless Voices for Justice
Tom Ptacek	Homeless Voices for Justice
MaryJo Skofield	Homeless Voices for Justice
Steve Huston	Homeless Voices for Justice
Jeanna Roath	Homeless Voices for Justice
Mary Ellen Welch	Police Department – Community Policing
Tom Natalie	Milestone Foundation
Joe McNally	Milestone Foundation
Amy Faulkingham	2-1-1 Maine

I. Introductions

Tom Ptacek, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made.

II. March Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for March 2012:

	<u>March 2011</u>	<u>March 2012</u>
Adolescents	12 Individuals	14 Individuals
Adults	215 Individuals	268 Individuals
Families	<u>70 Individuals (30 Families)</u>	<u>83 Individuals (36 Families)</u>
Total	304 Individuals	365 Individuals

Adolescent Shelter

The total adolescent bed nights for March 2011 were 364 while the total bed nights for March 2012 were 446. These figures indicate an increase of 23% between March 2011 and March 2012. Two (2)

individuals stated that he/she were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Bob stated that Jon mentioned at the CoC meeting that Tuesday night the Lighthouse Shelter served 29 adolescents, which is a record high.

Family Shelters

There was a total of 2584 bed nights used for all Family Shelters in March 2012 as compared to 2390 bed nights in March 2011. This represents an increase of 8% in Family Shelter bed usage between March 2011 and March 2012.

The Family Shelter placed 18 families for a total of 65 individuals into housing in March. The Family Shelter received 21 new families (intakes) for a total of 70 individuals in March. Based on self-reporting 13 families for a total of 49 individuals stated they had never been homeless before, of these 8 families for a total of 31 individuals were refugees.

Adult Shelters

Adult Shelter bed nights usage increased by 25% in March 2012 compared to March 2011. Total bed night usage during March 2011 was 6659 while it was 8311 during March 2012. Bob stated that these are record high numbers, and thus far in April the numbers have been even higher.

During the month of March, there were 183 intakes at the Oxford Street Shelter, 140 men and 43 women. An Intake or New Arrival is defined as an individual that has not stayed at the Shelter for a period of three (3) months or longer. Based on self-reporting, 47 individuals stated they had never been homeless before (37 men and 10 women).

Oxford Street Shelter Support Services team placed 31 individuals into permanent housing (24 men and 7 women), with one (1) individual returning to the shelter within 90 days of housing placement.

Pat asked if they are seeing intakes due to other shelters being full. Rob stated that this is definitely the case. Bob mentioned that this information is tracked monthly in our residency reports.

Florence House Women's Shelter served a total of 42 women during the month of March, including 9 new intakes. Based on self-reporting, 1 of these 9 intakes stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

The Shelter placed 4 individuals into housing, with 1 woman returning.

First Time Homelessness

For the month of March 99 individuals, or 36% of all new intakes, reported experiencing homelessness for the first time.

2-1-1 Maine Housing/Shelter Calls

Amy presented the housing/shelter calls update for March. There were 133 calls for housing/shelter out of a total of 1,747 calls in Cumberland County in the month of March. There were 382 calls for housing/shelter out of a total of 5,831 calls throughout the entire State of Maine in the month of March.

Cindy Namer, MaineHousing, was unable to attend the ESAC meeting due to the Maine CoC's meeting and asked Bob to distribute the 2012 PIT information for Portland and the entire State of Maine (see attachments to minutes for more information). He distributed the 2011 PIT information for Portland and the State of Maine for comparison. Doug asked where the data for out of country intakes is on the PIT. Bob stated that they're included in the out of state data. Portland is the only city that tracks out of country intakes and first time homelessness on a daily basis.

Bob also distributed the quarterly STEP and STEP with Recovery Report and the Veterans in Emergency

Shelters Report (see attachments to minutes for more information). Bob mentioned that veteran homelessness has decreased by 20%. He added that the majority of homeless veterans are in the City of Portland.

III. *Community Overflow Subcommittee – Update –*

Rob stated that they met last week to devise immediate solutions to the overflow problem. The subcommittee came up with a lot of ideas. There was a lot of positive feedback from the group. Rob thanked everyone involved. The committee is recommending that three (3) subcommittees be formed that meet regularly to look for overflow space: 1) Faith Based (churches); 2) School Department; and 3) Housing Resources. Rob stated that he's looking for input from ESAC regarding this. Pat mentioned the percentage of veterans in the shelters and suggested reaching out to the veteran programs (Army National Guard, etc.) in addition to faith-based programs. Rob stated that this could be included with one of the outreach groups. Betsy asked if the Mayor could declare a State of Emergency. Doug stated that the City Manager could, but it's generally regarding acts of nature but it can be looked in to. Doug mentioned looking at creating shelters in other towns. Rob stated that this is a good idea, because the problem is not just in Portland. Steve mentioned that relief shelters in surrounding communities don't have to be such a big operation; a few beds in a few different communities would take some of the pressure off of Portland. Getting a sense of balance and having other communities share in these impacts would be a significant benefit for everyone. Rob added that this would greatly help those people that only came to Portland because they had no other option and would rather have stayed in their town of origin. Leah mentioned that we should be pushing back on their town of origin's GA programs and holding them accountable. Tom stated that as we're forming subcommittees, but in the mean time people are sitting in chairs all night unable to sleep, which is unacceptable. Tom asked everyone on subcommittees to remember the urgency of the matter. Rob stated that the group realizes that this is an urgent issue and is not a long-term planning group. Tom stated that solutions for the men are good, but also looking at solutions for the women and adolescents. Pat mentioned that somehow there has to be an attempt to have an improved relationship with property owners and move closer to getting mental health services on site. Steve Huston mentioned that many of us have a hard time sitting in chairs for a two (2) hour meeting. He challenged anyone to sit in a chair all night, get up go apply for housing and come back and do it again. Kendra stated that over the last week she's seen many people sleeping out and it was a safety concern. Rob mentioned that if they see people sleeping out call PPD or call the shelter, staff from the shelter will provide outreach. Phil mentioned that with the VA concentrating on ending veteran homelessness reaching out and educating the VA providers would be beneficial. Though this may not be a quick outcome for the emergency situation we're in it would be helpful.

The group agreed to create these subcommittees. Vickey will send out an email to the group asking who would like to be on which subcommittee.

IV. *Preble Street Veteran Housing Services Program Update –*

Phil stated that they've received verification from S+C in the State and BRAP that they're going to be maintaining homelessness status for veterans; both programs will be accepting their homelessness status. When a veteran enters into their program they need documentation that they were homeless the night before they entered the program; however, if an individual does enter the program they will lose chronic preference for S+C. They're hoping to transition veterans more quickly and get veterans on waitlists for S+C and BRAP.

V. *Task Force to Develop a Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness – Update*

Tom stated that they've met four times thus far. The most recent meeting was the first time the group broke out into sub-groups to discuss specific topics. Tom stated that he is in the housing sub-group. They identified four (4) areas to work on and devise solutions: enlarge supply, improve connectivity, enhancing supports, and advocacy for the aforementioned. Hopefully after the next

meeting they will get reports back from the other sub-groups and what they've accomplished thus far. This Task Force is anticipated to go on for another four (4) to six (6) months. Doug stated that Pat and he are on the access to health and behavioral health services sub-group. He stated that they've created a grid of services and are reaching out to providers to quantify and qualify the services they provide so that they can map it out, engage with these agencies and determine if these resources and funds are being utilized in the most efficient way. Pat asked if anyone here is interested in reviewing their integrated grid/continuum to contact her, as she would be very interested in getting feedback. Bob said he would send her CoC information related to housing resources.

VI. *Substantial Amendment to the 2011 Annual Action Plan to HUD*

Amy stated that she's here today because HUD has decided to re-focus their ESG grant based on stimulus funds that came out of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (specifically HPRP). It was such a great success that they want to continue it via an existing grant. The City of Portland is in the process of making a Substantial Amendment to the FY 2011 Action Plan to HUD for the second allocation of ESG funds. The State of Maine and the City of Portland has received Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds; with the new HEARTH Act we must make changes to the plan. With the changes to ESG it is now very similar to HPRP. You can use some of your money for shelter services, however approximately 40% of the money must be used for rapid re-housing and prevention. Bob stated that all ESG grantees must also be using HMIS. Bob stated that the documentation and data that HUD is requiring for the new ESG is as in-depth as the HPRP data collection was. Amy reviewed where the ESG money has gone in the past and the proposed budgets for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Bob stated that they're proposing putting the new money towards a staff person to really work with the homeless people at Oxford Street (Shelter and Day Room), Preble Street (Resource Center and Day Room), and at overflow doing a combination of prevention and rapid re-housing. If anyone has any thoughts after the meeting regarding this please contact Amy via email at AVP@portlandmaine.gov or Bob. The CoC suggested that some of this money be used for security deposits. The CoC is meeting again on Tuesday, April 24th at 11:00 AM to review the feasibility of this option and the impact it would have. Pat asked if they would be using someone already on staff or hiring a new staff person for the rapid re-housing and prevention work at Oxford Street and Preble Street. Bob stated that they would be hiring a new staff person for this. Pat suggested that we not reinvent the wheel, rather bridging resources that are already in place and utilizing staff that is already doing HPRP work; it's a waste of money and time with start up. Leah stated that they'd like to partner very strongly with this. Bob stated that they came up with this proposal because they already have these resources in place, they are already working out of Oxford Street, Preble Street and staffing the overflow at Preble Street Resource Center. Bob encouraged people to come to the CoC meeting on Tuesday for the discussion on security deposits. Pat stated that she wants to encourage connecting with wrap-around funds for those with serious mental health conditions.

Amy stated that this was presented to the CoC, today at ESAC, and again at the CoC meeting on Tuesday; it will be presented to the Public Service and Health & Human Service Council Meeting, and then finally to the City Council. The final plan is due May 15th.

VII. *Federal and State Legislation*

Cullen could not attend the meeting today. Bob stated that the Appropriations Committee came up with a compromise for the Governor's proposed budget cuts to General Assistance (GA): 10% reductions in overall GA maximums, reducing the upper-level reimbursement from 90% to 85%, and soft-capping housing assistance for nine (9) months. In Portland, our program would be reduced by approximately \$1 million, and would cost the City approximately an additional \$225,000. The Governor's original proposal would cap housing assistance at 90 days and would cost the City about \$875,000. The Governor did a line-item veto, and the legislature is not coming back to vote and

everything will be renegotiated in May. Dan stated that the line-item veto is for the specific budgeted amounts, which is approximately \$4.7 million. He stated that the policy changes will still take effect. Dan stated that in May the legislature is scheduled to come back, so this will be on the plate in the larger budgeting discussions. You can contact your legislatures and let them know how important GA is. Bob and Kathleen stated that it has become extremely difficult trying to budget GA due to all of the different proposals that were on the table. Landlords are also apprehensive to rent to GA clients due to the proposed cuts.

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, May 17, 2012
8:30 – 10:00 AM
Refugee Services Area
190 Lancaster Street

Please contact Robert Duranleau, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division at 775-6315, extension 224; John Shoos, United Way at 874-1000, or Tom Ptacek, Preble Street at 775-0026; if you should have any agenda items for the next meeting.