

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2012

Bob Duranleau	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division
Aaron Geyer	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division
Jeff Tardif	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Family Shelter
Josh O'Brien	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Paul Murphy	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Healthcare for the Homeless
Cindy Namer	MaineHousing
Dan Coyne	United Way of Greater Portland
Angela Sequeira	Shalom House
Amanda Kyajohnian	Shalom House
Amy Faulkingham	2-1-1 Maine
Jon Bradley	Preble Street
Patti Robinson	Preble Street
Therese Johnson	SSVF/Veteran Housing Services – City of Portland
Steve Hirshon	Bayside Neighborhood Association
Mary Ellen Welch	Community Policing
Shana Pike	MAPS/Step Up
Tom Ptacek	Homeless Voices for Justice
Kendra Danse	The Opportunity Alliance
Elizabeth Szatkowski	The Opportunity Alliance
Pat McKenzie	The Opportunity Alliance
Jenny Stasio	Family Crisis Services
Sherrin Vail	Avesta Housing
Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Lori Martin	Crossroads
Evelyn Blanchard	Milestone Foundation
Sarah Lundin	City of Westbrook
Wendy Harmon	Southern Maine Landlord Association

I. Introductions

Bob Duranleau, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made. Bob stated that we have a short agenda today so that people can attend the Preble Street Candidate Forum.

II. September Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for September 2012:

	<u>September 2011</u>	<u>September 2012</u>
Adolescents	14 Individuals	13 Individuals
Adults	256 Individuals	303 Individuals
Families	<u>114 Individuals (45 Families)</u>	<u>149 Individuals (59 Families)</u>
Total	384 Individuals	465 Individuals

Adolescent Shelter

The total adolescent bed nights for September 2011 were 428 while the total bed nights for September 2012 were 401. These figures indicate a decrease of 6% between September 2011 and September 2012. Seven (7) individuals stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Family Shelters

There was a total of 4458 bed nights used for all Family Shelters in September 2012 as compared to 3424 bed nights in September 2011. This represents an increase of 30% in Family Shelter bed usage between September 2011 and September 2012.

The Family Shelter placed 16 families for a total of 69 individuals into housing in September.

The Family Shelter received 22 new families (intakes) for a total of 98 individuals in September. Based on self-reporting 15 families for a total of 70 individuals stated they had never been homeless before, of these 10 families for a total of 45 individuals were refugees.

Bob stated that the Family Shelter had been receiving a lot of refugee/visa holder after-hours referrals. Bob stated that they had a meeting with refugee elders in the community to attempt to refer families to the shelter during its normal business hours. Since this meeting there have been no after-hours placements at the family shelter.

Adult Shelters

Adult Shelter bed nights usage increased by 18% in September 2012 compared to September 2011. Total bed night usage during September 2011 was 7683 while it was 9078 during September 2012.

During the month of September, there were 194 intakes at the Oxford Street Shelter, 150 men and 44 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, 56 individuals stated they had never been homeless before (39 men and 17 women).

Oxford Street Shelter Support Services team placed 42 individuals into permanent housing (29 men and 13 women), with one (1) individual returning to the shelter within 90 days of housing placement.

Florence House Women's Shelter served a total of 55 women during the month of September, including 10 new intakes. Based on self-reporting, 4 of these 10 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 September 137 individuals, or 43% of all new intakes, reported experiencing homelessness for the first time, based on self-reporting.

Bob reviewed the handout featuring warming center statistics and praised Oxford Street Shelter staff for their amazing job managing beds and minimizing the need to utilize the warming center. The General Assistance waiting room was only used as the warming center five (5) times in September.

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

Jon stated that the program is currently in year two (2) and program staff is still very busy; they're doing a lot of work in Cumberland and York Counties and really trying to reach the literally homeless population. Jon stated that overall the program is going very well.

IV. *State of Maine HMIS Advisory Committee*

Jeff stated that they've been meeting on a weekly basis. The majority of the work has been gone through. He stated that the group has a little more work to do on the HMIS governance. The goal is to meet a few more times and have a draft ready to present to the Continuums by the beginning of January. There will most likely be trainings on the data and governance this winter.

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

The Task Force to Develop a Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Portland draft reports

were distributed. Jon gave a brief overview of the Task Force process, the members, and the report. There were three major themes that the Task Force focused on: retooling the emergency shelter system; rapid re-housing in conjunction with the housing first model; and increased case management. Jon stated that there have been two (2) public meetings taking comments from the public. The comments and concerns from the public hearings will be taken under advisement for the final draft of the report. There was a City Council work session on Monday and sent the draft on to the full City Council. The report will be presented to the full City Council for public feedback and hopefully approval on November 5th at 7:00 PM. Please refer to the Task Force Report, which is an attachment to the minutes, for more detailed information. Jon stated that there are clear recommendations in the report which ask the Mayor to have discussions with other communities for a regional approach. Other points of interest in the report include the zoning issues in Portland. The City zoning laws only allow shelters in a very small section of the City; the recommendation in the report is for zoning laws to be changed so the shelters aren't located solely in the Bayside area. Additionally, residency was looked at by the group, and researched by Tom McLaughlin. Tom discovered that residency restrictions in other parts of the country haven't really made an impact as many have thought it would. Pat added that health care and mental health services are also included in the report and many of the current issues/barriers are addressed. Jon added that the group did not focus on the issue of substance abuse. Substance abuse is a big behavioral challenge to the community that the Task Force didn't address as they focused on the current shelter crisis situation. Additionally, the issues related to substance abuse and Congress Street (among other areas in the city) is not necessarily primarily homeless individuals. So, though it is an issue that requires attention the Task Force didn't address it for a myriad of reasons. Josh stated that the concept of a centralized intake and coordinated assessments will also act as a means of prevention as people aren't just pushed into the shelter system; people are assessed immediately prior to entry into the shelters. Josh stated that a lot of the back-up material that was used throughout the Task Force process is available on the Health & Human Services (HHS) Department section of the City's website:

<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/homelesstaskforce.htm>. Patty asked about case management services once people are housed. Jon stated that when case management was discussed that was the core issue, on-going, follow-up case management to help people remain stably housed. Cullen stated that this is a good plan but it is lacking in some areas. Cullen also expressed concern with the fact that there haven't been opportunities for groups such as ESAC to weigh in. He added that the plan does not tie in with the State's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness; we are better served when we work collaboratively throughout the state. Cullen stated that it would be great if the implementation strategy was more inclusive. Jon stated that the Task Force constantly sought out input from providers throughout the process, including numerous presentations by the larger shelter providers in Portland. The City Council appointed the chairs and the chairs decided who would be part of the Task Force and who would act as staff. Jon added that he feels very good about where the plan ended up. Cullen added that the people who were at the table led to a certain prescribed approach. Jon stated that the report has been revised since the last public hearing to incorporate various rapid re-housing approaches. Cindy mentioned that there was a great discussion regarding this at yesterday's CoC meeting. Jon added that until the report is approved by the City Council it is still a draft which can be revised. Copies of the report that were distributed were out of date and did not include recent revisions made after the last public hearing; the most recently revised version of the report is available on the HHS section of the website (web link above).

VI. *Federal & State Legislation –*

Cullen stated that this is still a great time to have people from the State visit your programs so they can get a first-hand account of what goes on because they will be making decisions that will affect these programs. Cullen added that Sequestration is approaching, and that it would be advantageous to send a letter out in November regarding Sequestration to the Maine delegation once they're back in session. If sequestration commences on January 1st there will be potential cuts across the board including: an 8.2% cut to HUD programs, with McKinney-Vento seeing a \$156 million which will cause 145,000 people to be homeless rather than housed; Section 8 Housing Choice will see a \$15.3 billion cut, which will cause 186,000 stably housed people to lose rental assistance; Project based rental assistance (programs such as Logan Place, Florence house, etc.) will see a \$772 million cut, causing 90,000 people to lose housing;

and the HOME program will see a \$82 billion cut. Cullen stated that it is important to get a really clear message to our delegation in terms of what this will mean for Maine. If these cuts go through Maine would lose 900 tenant based vouchers and another 500 project-based vouchers.

VII. Other Business

Jon added that they've worked a lot on something that would help house individuals quickly while simultaneously saving the General Assistance program money, as the GA Working Group has been tasked with. Within the PATH program they're going to create a smaller team, a case manager, a peer, and a housing counselor (initially with the next installment of ESG money) and focus on 40 individuals who are most in need, who are also probably utilizing General Assistance to pay for shelter beds. They also have a commitment from Portland Housing Authority (PHA) to set aside 40 vouchers for these individuals over a three-month period; this still has to be approved by the PHA board but Jon stated he is very hopeful as they are very motivated and dedicated to this. Jon stated that they're still in the process of determining logistics for the program.

Jon briefly mentioned the Client Support Services Policy, which has been finalized and agreed upon, and its processes. There are weekly meetings Thursdays at 1:00 PM at 196 Lancaster street which are open to anyone who is interested in attending. The policy emphasizes client accountability at point of entry, establishes a joint Preble Street/City review committee, and includes clinical social workers to establish a continuum of social work/services for clients. Jon stated that there are groups looking at best methods for policy implementation and structure. Bob stated that they're in the process of developing a uniform intake process and data sharing between Preble Street and the City. Bob added that the Client Support Services Policy will be added to the November ESAC Agenda.

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, November 15, 2012
8:30 – 10:00 AM

Refugee Services Area, 190 Lancaster Street

Please contact Robert Duranleau, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division at 482-5124; John Shoos, United Way at 874-1000, or Tom Ptacek, HVJ at 775-0026; if you should have any agenda items for the next meeting.