

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes September 19th, 2013

Bob Duranleau	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division
Rob Parritt	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Angela Havlin	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Jeff Tardif	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Family Shelter
Kelsey Tonning	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Home To Stay
Matt Pryor	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Home To Stay
Henry Tarlow	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Home To Stay
Amy Gallant	Preble Street
Brian Townsend	Preble Street
Pat McKenzie	Opportunity Alliance
Val Fitzgerald	Opportunity Alliance
Ginny Dill	Shalom House
Norman Maze	Shalom House
Tom Ptacek	Homeless Voices for Justice
Jim Devine	Homeless Voices for Justice
Ashley Gorczyca	Homeless Voices for Justice
Mary Jo Skofield	Homeless Voices for Justice
Bob Dodge	LearningWorks
Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Vickey Rand	CHOM
Amy Faulkingham	2-1-1 Maine
Shana Pike	SteppingStones
Carol Kulesza	Veterans Affairs
Mary Ellen Welch	PPD Community Policing Midtown
Joe McNally	Milestone Foundation
Cindy Namer	MaineHousing
Wendy Harmon	Southern Maine Landlord Association
Paul Murphy	Healthcare for the Homeless

I. Introductions

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

II. August 2013 Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for August 2013 (see attachment). He pointed out the increase of 100 individuals per night for the month, city-wide, versus August 2012. Most shelters have been on a steady increase, with Joe Kreisler reaching capacity for the month. The City's family shelter reached a record high in families and individuals served. Adult shelter numbers are also reaching record highs. There was a spike in August over July 2013 and August 2012. Housing placements also reached high numbers. Bob reviewed the Warming Center handout. Rob stated it is promising that the General Assistance lobby and Refugee Services warming center are being used less.

Cullen asked that we differentiate the housing placements made for chronically homeless individuals or those in the shelter 180 days (long-term homeless). Bob will work with OSS Chronic Homeless numbers with the goal of having this handout at the October ESAC meeting. Cindy showed and discussed a report from HMIS that breaks down the data pulled. Wendy addressed STEP vouchers and inquired as to where those individuals will go once the vouchers dry up. Jeff explained the problem with STEP

vouchers, as they overpay the GA guidelines. When the voucher stops, recipients typically cannot afford their rent. Cindy will look at STEP voucher cancelation and recidivism rate.

In regards to the OSS Matrix, the placements don't show if they are using a voucher, and which one. Rob stated that MIS is starting to work on this and it should be tracked moving forward.

III. *Family Shelter Overflow (high usage) – Jeff Tardif*

Jeff handed out part of the Family Shelter year-end report and went over the statistical breakdowns of shelter residents. He discussed the logistics of Maine Motel in South Portland versus Motel 6 in Portland. In moving people to Motel 6, they gain access to a grocery store across the street and a broader bus system. He stated FY13 was the largest number of individuals served, bed nights, and overall numbers.

As for placements, Jeff explained that the shelter has been referring families to Lewiston because rental units are less expensive. The shelter doesn't provide vouchers, but many families come in with them. Unfortunately, the vouchers may be set to expire soon after entering the shelter, leaving employees little time to help the family find a home. It was suggested the report change the wording from "No Housing Subsidy" to "Fair Market Rate". Jim asked that it be made known many individuals are being placed out of Portland because there are arguments made of "Portland makes it too easy." Bob stated that the City is currently working with other towns and communities. Jeff stated that, if another town calls, the shelter tries to keep the families in their current town. Unfortunately, many of the smaller communities don't have assistance for these families. Jeff stated that people are staying longer, and Cindy pointed out the 10% spike in the 60-90-day length of stay category.

Jeff discussed the refugee and visa holder/asylee pending demographic. They are not eligible for state and federal assistance so they only receive General Assistance. He pointed out the shift in country of origin and that bed nights hit a record high of 4,000 for the month of August.

IV. *CoC Update – Bob Duranleau*

Bob discussed the CoC meeting on Wednesday. The grant process and renewal application has started earlier this year. The total points available for 2012 were 134, with a funding line of 97. The city received a score of 98.5. He discussed the reasons the numbers were so low, including chronic homeless reductions and achieving overall goals.

The Continuum has been granted up to 16 hours of technical assistance to work with Cloudburst. There is a conference call on Friday to further discuss the options available in the system. There will also be another Cloudburst training on 9/26.

The HUD planning grant was also discussed, as it starts on January 1. Bob stated the Maine and Portland CoCs will work collaboratively to hire a consultant to facilitate the next phases of the project with some middle-ground unbiased individuals. Chet stated that working with Shelters Plus and chronic homeless/long-term stayers and that the collaboration and planning process can start sooner than January 1. He stated that intervention is a valid option to hinder chronic homeless. Cindy stated that collaboration can happen sooner, as the grant surrounds more the methodology and tools utilized. Chet is hoping to look at those most vulnerable and vulnerability skills with a prioritization list.

V. *Oxford Street Shelter Client Photo ID Cards—NEW—Rob Parritt*

Angela discussed the client photo identification cards. She stated as a component of Service Point the ID cards will be a more efficient check-in process and may serve as an actual ID for many clients. This can help with housing services and providers and it helps with outreach as well. The cards will reduce check-in times and provide more accurate information entered Service Point. Rob and Angela pressed that getting a card is 100% optional, but allows for confidentiality when checking in. Jim made sure that those who do not want cards can still gain access to the shelter. Angela stressed yes, they can. Rob pointed out that Oxford Street is the first shelter in the state to utilize this tool. Cindy stated that many

other programs can use HMIS and the scanners and for those who move between programs, and make their check-in easier. This will hopefully allow for data to be more accurately entered and reported.

Rob stated that as a lot of consumers don't already have an ID, this will be helpful. He stated there will be a lot of outreach in forms, signage, etc. Tom expressed concern regarding individuals becoming "just a barcode" and that their individual needs will not be met. Rob ensured that this will actually allow staff more time away from the desk and performing more outreach. Angela said it will allow for more face-time, rather than focusing on a computer screen to enter the correct information. Tom discussed those that are "flies on the wall" may take longer to open up and talk because they don't get the daily interaction.

VI. *Client Support & Services Plan – Update – Brian Townsend*

Brian discussed the high Oxford Street placement numbers, and credited case the management staff of OSS and Preble Street.

Jim discussed the policy given to individuals and it is nice to attend house meetings to talk to consumers. From his perspective, many individuals feel safer at the shelter and in general.

VII. *Home To Stay Program – Kelsey Tinning/Henry Tarlow*

Henry discussed the first STEP vouchers being issued, including 3 families and 7 Oxford Street clients. They had their first HCV being issued to Houlton and Saco and are now at about 15 households receiving vouchers in their first month. He reminded everyone that recipients of these vouchers must be absolutely homeless, not couch-surfing or the like. Rob asked that people not send people to the shelters in order to receive a voucher. Cindy pushed that individuals must be at a shelter or hotel only via shelter. Many small communities/towns need to call area shelters to seek options before only housing them in shelters or hotels.

VIII. *Federal and State Legislation – Cullen Ryan*

Cullen addressed the Oxford Street Shelter tour by the Governor and Cheryl Briggs. He also discussed the piece of legislature that may be put in to help alleviate the lack of funding for homeless shelters.

Cullen discussed the statewide effort to attain affordable care act resources, which would force hospitals to use resources to help with detox. He is also looking into a Medicaid waiver which would create a chapter in the MaineCare handbook for homeless individuals.

Unfortunately, permanent sequester cuts are being looked at and would cut out vouchers and affordable housing options. Overall funding will continue to decrease, so Cullen and others are trying to get HUD, CoC, and other funding. He pressed everyone to be in good contact representatives and decision makers.

Cullen brought up the new bill that could affect the Shelter Plus Care program by banning 501(c)3s from receiving funding for the HEARTH Act (HR2790). The Continuum of Care programs agreed to send letters, and he asked that all other organizations and programs send letters of support.

Amy Gallant discussed the SNAP cut, which totals \$40M and cut those who are childless adults. She urged everyone to call **1-866-456-8820** to call the Hunger Action Center Hotline. This vote is happening today and they only need to sway 20 republicans to block this cut. Tom urged everyone to make that call because of those childless adults need SNAP benefits to alleviate the burden on soup kitchens.

Paul discussed the MaineCare cuts and how it can affect 30% of those individuals he covers because they are childless adults.

Vickey discussed still needing stories for Senator King's office. She said the stories are being used to feed information to local and national stories on all the cuts happening across the board.

IX. *Homeless Voices for Justice's You Don't Need a Home to Vote Campaign – Amy Gallant*

Mary Jo discussed the campaign. This campaign has registered a large number of voters at various locations throughout the state and updated them on their voting rights. It is *only* a voter registration and does not influence attempt to influence their vote on any issue. Their goal is to register 300 voters this season and believe it is attainable.

Jim announced some of the upcoming campaign events:

10/11/2013: Candidate Forum

10/23/2013: City hall tour and discussion with Mark Rees for an educational update on voting.

Afterwards, participants will have the option for early voting, as it opens that day

Ashley offered cards and a sign-up sheet for organizations to sign up for an in-house overview of the program. Jim reminded everyone that felons are allowed to vote in Maine (one of two states to allow this).

***NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, October 17, 2013
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; or Tom Ptacek, HVJ at 775-0026; if you should have any agenda items for the next meeting.