

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 20th, 2014

Bob Duranleau	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division
Aaron Geyer	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Home To Stay
Josh O'Brien	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Rob Parritt	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Henry Tarlow	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, Adult Services
Ali Lovejoy	Preble Street- CLIP
Ashley Gorczyca	Preble Street/HVJ
Jon Bradley	Preble Street
Norman Maze	Shalom House
Jim Devine	Homeless Voices for Justice
Tom Ptacek	Preble Street
Vickey Rand	CHOM
Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Amy Faulkingham	2-1-1 Maine
Mary Ellen Welch	PPD Community Policing Midtown
Joe McNally	Milestone Foundation
Hanna Sturtevant	Amistad
Peter Driscoll	Amistad
Carol Kulesza	Veterans Affairs
Wendy Harmon	Southern Maine Landlord Association
Kerry Polyot-Stefani	SteppingStones
Bob Dodge	LearningWorks
Sadie Kitchen	United Way of Greater Portland
Barbara Sawyer	Goodwill of Northern New England
Kendra Danse	The Opportunity Alliance
Judy Newell	Homeless Voices for Justice

I. Introductions

Bob Duranleau, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made.

II. February 2014 Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau

See handouts. Bob reviewed the statistics in the ESAC packet for February. He addressed the lower housing placements with the Oxford Street Shelter and Family Shelter due to the focus on housing long-term stayers. Tom pointed out oddities with families and individuals; it was clarified by various ESAC attendees that Family Crisis takes in individual women in crisis, as well as pregnant women.

III. Oxford Street Shelter February Matrix – Rob Parritt

Rob referred everyone to the February Oxford Street Shelter Matrix, pointing out that while housing placements were down, so were the bednights. He is hopeful that the focus on long-term stayers is starting to pay off. When they started the shift in focus in December, they had a list of 30 individuals to focus on. The shelter has housed sixteen of these individuals.

IV. Family Shelter Calendar Year 2013 Matrix and January 2014 Matrix – Bob Duranleau

Bob referred everyone to the February Family Shelter Matrix and discussed the housing placements. He pointed out that the Family Shelter has been able to house more long-term stayers (6-10 families) thanks to the increase in subsidies available.

V. *Program Presentation by Amistad*

Hanna Sturtevant spoke to the group on Amistad and the programs offered (see attached handout). Amistad is very low-barrier and helps individuals with mental illness. There is focus on relationship-building with a view of “power with” not “power over”, allowing all members to be more engaged in all aspects of the organization and their own treatment. She reminded everyone that Amistad has a restaurant and serves a boxed lunch for \$1.75 and invited everyone to stop in.

Peter Driscoll discussed other programs offered by Amistad. They hire individuals with mental illness, as they can offer the best help for those needing services. These peers work at psychiatric centers in Maine Med, Riverview, and Spring Harbor. He pushed that mental health providers should hire more peers, as it helps clients better understand and helps keep them calm.

Jim pointed out that many Preble Street clients visit Amistad because it is a calmer place and they sometimes need this to de-stress. Peter pushed that while ESAC counts those who are in shelters each night, but there are those who do not visit shelters and do not qualify for other services. These individuals fall through the cracks and he feels they do not get the services they need.

VI. *Point in Time Survey – Rob Parritt*

The CoC committee will review a draft of the PIT on March 26. Bob stated this item is on hold for ESAC until next month’s agenda.

VII. *Home to Stay Program – Update – Aaron Geyer*

Aaron discussed the Home To Stay program. The grant was scheduled to end June 1, but MaineHousing extended it through the calendar year (ending December 31). MaineHousing increased funding for STEP subsidies in 2015. He pointed out that while placements were down, they focused on applications for when housing opens up in the spring.

VIII. *Maine Homeless Legal Project Presentation – Ali Lovejoy*

Ali Lovejoy spoke to the group on the Maine Homeless Legal Project (see attached handout). It is based on the legal clinic model, working with 60 lawyers from 14 firms. There will be a lawyer at Preble Street every Tuesday from 10:00-11:00 am beginning April 1. This program is pro-bono to clients. Ali expects there to be a mix of case management ranging from simple legal advice to taking the case back to their law firm to perform representation. Ali will send out referral forms to everyone on ESAC. Referrals will be required, as time and resources are limited. Jon pointed out that this is a national model, with Portland being the 21st community to develop this program. He reminded everyone that homeless is a fluid definition and is not just for those only in shelters.

IX. *Tenant Based Rental Assistance Presentation – Aaron Geyer*

Aaron discussed the Tenant Based Rental Assistant Program, where it is to help in short-term assistance, like security deposits and first month’s rent. He has met with the shelters and hopes to have results for the April meeting. There are more HUD requirements than originally anticipated, so the program will be audited in July 2014. Aaron pointed out that all units must pass an HQS inspection, which will be more in-depth than a typical safety inspection, which he and his team will be conducting. Wendy asked for a checklist to hand out at her meetings with landlords. Aaron agreed and Henry pointed out that the checklist is also on MSHA’s website. Wendy asked about the security deposit returns, and whether those will go to the tenant or back to program. Aaron and Bob stated that these will stay with the client.

X. *Federal and State Legislation – Cullen Ryan*

Cullen stated that since the Governor refused to submit a budget, it was left to appropriations. Due to the lack of manpower, an omission of \$5.6M was made, equating to \$4.6M in case management, and \$1M BRAP subsidies (approximately 244 subsidies). He is hoping that ESAC will weigh in with a letter to encourage the State to correct this oversight. Bob motioned that ESAC send the letter, it unanimously voted in favor by everyone present.

On the federal level, ESAC sent a letter to Senator Collins thanking her for her support in Section 8 funds.

Jim stated that Senate President Alfond is looking to institute a program to end hunger for students, which will be rolled out this week.

Ashley discussed MaineCare, as the Senate voted just short of the two-thirds majority to override a governor's veto.

Ashley discussed the Property Tax Credit, which is increasing the cap on what people can get back for paying taxes. She stated the Governor is likely to approve it.

It was also pointed out that General Assistance cuts will most likely die in a vote. Ashley is working on getting more information regarding the Governor's proposals to cut more on TANF benefits.

Norman discussed the potential loss of BRAP subsidies and the impact on programs in the area.

XI. Other Business

Jim discussed the Portland Disability Advisory Committee and an open forum on March 24 to see how Portland can be more disability-friendly. There is also a meeting on April 3 for New Mainers and landlords to meet and learn more on what is available.

Mayor Michael Brennan will be having a press conference at 4pm to discuss a Portland minimum wage.

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, April 17, 2014
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 if you should have any agenda items for the next meeting.

Maine Homeless Legal Project (MHLP)

About Maine Homeless Legal Project:

The Maine Homeless Legal Project is a collaboration organized through the American Bar Association, the Maine Volunteer Lawyers Project, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, and Preble Street. More than 60 attorneys from 14 different local law firms have expressed a desire to participate.

The clinic will be held at Preble Street Resource Center (5 Portland Street) every Tuesday from 10-11am beginning April 1st. **A referral from a shelter housing worker or caseworker is required before a client will be scheduled for a clinic appointment.**

A wide range of issues may be addressed including back child support, trouble accessing resources, navigating outstanding fines and warrants, immigration issues, SSI/SSDI-related issues, etc.

How to refer to the clinic:

Workers making referrals will need to provide:

- A completed referral form
- A copy of the clients' shelter/casework intake
- A signed release

Specific referral info coming soon!

Other info:

Attorneys may meet with the client during the clinic only, or may decide to take on the case and bring it back to their firm for extended representation.

Please call Ali Lovejoy at 775-0026 x1152 or Amy Russell at 775-0026 x1267 if you have any questions about the clinic.

The Peer Support and Recovery Center...
66 State St Portland, Me 04101 773-1956
www.amistadinc.com

Was started in 1982 as the Amity Center. Formed by family members that wanted a safe place for their loved ones with a mental illness to be welcomed and treated with dignity and respect.

Moved to its' current location in 1994. In the late 1990's we became the Amistad Social Club and later the Amistad Peer Support and Recovery Center.

Serves members that have a severe and persistent mental illness or other life challenge (like intellectual disabilities, substance abuse, homelessness, poverty).

Provides services that meet daily needs like; showers, lockers, laundry, computers, phone lines, and mail.

Is open Monday-Saturday 9a-5p.

Currently hosts about 100 to 150 members a day.

Our restaurant serves about 80 lunches a day.

Serves about 65 free breakfasts every weekday morning.

Members serve on the Board of Directors, run committees, and vote on key issues at the weekly Community Meeting.

Members spend over 1,400 hours a month volunteering. The members run the reception desk, do intakes for new members, cook and serve in the restaurant, do maintenance, and work on a variety of committees.
