

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes November 19, 2015

David MacLean	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division
Jeff Tardif	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Family Shelter
Angela Giordano	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Brian Marchant	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Ali Lovejoy	Preble Street
Donna Yellen	Preble Street
Fiona Mason	Preble Street
Jim Devine	Homeless Voices for Justice
Chris Bicknell	The Opportunity Alliance
Dawn Pickles	The Opportunity Alliance
Ginny Dill	Shalom House
Norm Maze	Shalom House
Steve Ellis	Frannie Peabody Center
Nicole Evans	United Way of Greater Portland
Alysia Melnick	United Way of Greater Portland
Wendy Harmon	Southern Maine Landlords Association
Carol Kulsza	Veterans' Affairs
Dan Martins	Veterans' Affairs
Vickey Rand	Community Housing of Maine
Cullen Ryan	Community Housing of Maine
Peter Driscoll	Amistad
Rebecca Hobbs	Family Crisis Services
Jenny Stasio	Family Crisis Services
Wes Phinney	Serenity House

I. Introductions

Dave welcomed the group and brief introductions were made and announced that the CoC application has been submitted.

II. October 2015 Bed Usage Statistics – Jeff Tardif

Jeff reviewed the October 2015 statistics ([see statistics](#)), pointing out that there has been a decrease in the number of individuals served over all. There has been a slight drop in adolescents served and the number of youth turned away are older youth referred to Oxford Street Shelter or Florence House. The family numbers were down significantly compared to the previous year and Jeff noted the change in practices at the Family Shelter can attribute to that. TBRA had a very successful month and served 54 individuals. Jeff recommended to the group that organizations reach out the TBRA with clients who have received 7 day eviction notices as a way to prevent individuals from returning to the shelter system.

TBRA: All referrals may be sent to:

Aaron Geyer, (207) 482-5131, aeg@portlandmaine.gov

Amber Bowman, (207) 482-5208, ajb@portlandmaine.gov

III. Preble St. – Donna Yellen

Discussion regarding a request for data about the number of people not being served and reasoning as to why. There are many individuals who do not stay at the shelters because they are not allowed (sex offenders, criminal record), are under restrictions/banned, or are unwilling to give up their clean needle kits. There is a lot of concern regarding the PIT count being a very soft number and it was suggested that the PIT count become a quarterly task instead of an annual task. Jeff expressed that the Family Shelter keeps tracks of all incoming phone calls and includes these figures in their Shelter Matrix report. Oxford Street offered to start to

tracking in a similar fashion, but expressed concern that this would not show an accurate number due to many people not presenting because they know the policies and will not be allowed into the shelter. Preble Street recently did a mini PIT count over a 3 day span and found 90 people. This information has been shared with Oxford Street and a number of these individuals had been in the shelter within the last 30 days. Angela suggested that this information should be shared with the group so other organizations can compare the list to their databases to determine if these individuals are not seeking shelter for a particular reason. It was pointed out that some of these individuals may have been under a ban or restriction, which has since been lifted, but they are unaware of this fact.

It was agreed upon that a small group of individuals from each organization would convene to determine the best plan to start a call log to collect this data for the next ESAC meeting.

IV. Shelter Matrix – Update – Jeff Tardif and Angela Havlin

Jeff reviewed the Family Shelter matrix. They were able to mitigate 33 families to keep them from entering homelessness. In addition, they did not utilize the warming center for the month of October. They have been able to move a lot of families without housing subsidy with the help of the Home to Stay by utilizing TBRA.

Angela reviewed the Oxford Street matrix. She said that in the month of October has the lowest average number individuals served this year with the most decrease compared to October 2014. She explained that they were able to house 24 individuals, which is an increase compared to the last few months. This is due to 90% of the housing efforts focusing on housing LTS, which allows for the most efficient housing and one position that focuses on triage, rapid re-housing, etc. They have has a very successful month in housing with subsidy and reunification.

V. OSS Long Term Stayers Report Update – Brian Merchant

Brian discussed the Long Term Stayers initiative explaining that it involves many agencies throughout the community and their goal of housing a specific list of Long Term Stayers (LTS). He also explained how many of the clients housed are not just from their list, but through triage as well. Clients go to a housing orientation and are sent to PHA to sign up for a BRAP application and to Avesta to sign up for the waitlist. They have a list of 28 LTS, with 7 on deck for housing and 2 near the end of the process for housing.

VI. United Way – Nicole Evans

Nichole explained that the United Way of Greater Portland is working with the community to gather input that will be used to establish 10-year community-wide goals in education, financial stability, and health in Greater Portland. She handed out a survey for all attendees to complete. She started a discussion using the questions in the survey: What kind of community we want? What is keeping us from getting it? What needs to happen to get us there?

If you are interested in more information, please click the links below.

[United Way's Community Conversations](#)

[United Way's Online Survey](#)

VII. Homeless Voices for Justice Update

Jim discussed the bus transportation bill, stating that the pilot program is currently underway. This program will allow case workers to spend more time assisting their clients and less time issuing bus passes.

On December 10th is the Annual Holiday Wish Event. In 2014, HVJ wished for the bus pass program, which is currently underway. This year, they are wishing for access to healthcare for everyone. They are collaborating with representatives from South Maine Worker's Center.

The You Don't Need a Home to Vote campaign was a success. They registered over 100 individuals, bringing the total registered to 2,450. They assisted individuals in getting to the poles. A Candidates' forum for the Portland mayoral race and city council seats was a success at Preble Street.

On December 16th, HVJ will make their bi-annual trip to Vassalboro to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to speak with the officers in training about the proper way to interact with the homeless on a responsible level. Their goal is to bring the officers into the group of collaborated partners.

HJV would like to extend an open invitation to anyone who would like to join them on the first Monday of each month to meet at Preble Street at 9:30 AM.

VIII. Federal and State Legislation – Cullen Ryan

Federal:

- On Monday 11/2 President Obama signed a two-year budget deal. The agreement lifts spending caps and suspends the debt limit until 2017. The measure also sets federal spending through the 2016 and 2017 fiscal years, and eases strict caps on spending by providing an additional \$80 billion, split evenly between military and domestic programs. A summary can be found [here](#). According to CBPP the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015:
 - o Extends the debt ceiling through March 2017.
 - o Effectively eliminates about 90 percent of the sequestration budget cuts for non-defense discretionary programs in fiscal year 2016, and about 60 percent of them in 2017, while also easing sequestration for defense by equal dollar amounts in both years — and thereby providing more substantial relief from sequestration than the Murray-Ryan deal provided for 2014 and 2015;
 - o Greatly reduces the potential for government shutdowns this year and next (essentially eliminating the risk of a shutdown over funding levels, though retaining the possibility of one over riders and other policy differences);
 - o Extends the solvency of Social Security Disability Insurance through 2022, thereby avoiding across-the-board cuts of nearly 20 percent in disability benefits starting in late 2016, which will otherwise occur; and
 - o Avoids, for Medicare, an estimated 52 percent increase in deductibles for physician and other outpatient services in 2016, and a 52 percent increase in Part B premiums that roughly 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries otherwise would face.
- The THUD appropriations bill that the Senate is considering uses none of the flexibility created by the recent budget agreement to boost rental assistance for poor families, despite rising rents, the growing number of poor families struggling to pay rent, and rising homelessness. The bill also vastly expands the “Moving to Work” (MTW) demonstration without reforms to address the significant problems that the Administration and others have identified with MTW. The revised Senate bill raises HUD program funding by less than \$1 billion (about 2.5 percent) over the earlier Senate bill written within the sequestration-level caps. It directs none of this additional funding to restore housing vouchers, otherwise expand assistance to reduce homelessness, or amend the original Senate bill’s \$132 million cut in funding to maintain and repair public housing. The only bright spot in the HUD portion of the bill is its restoration of funding for the HOME program to the FY 15 level. The earlier Senate bill would have nearly eliminated the program.

State:

- o Question 2 on the State Ballot, the \$15 million Senior Affordable housing bond, which passed the legislature during the last session, passed with 69% of voters in favor.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, December 17, 2015

8:30 – 10:00am

REFUGEE SERVICES CONFERENCE AREA

190 Lancaster Street

If you should have any questions, please contact:

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