

EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

REFUGEE SERVICES CONFERENCE AREA
190 Lancaster Street

Thursday, May 19, 2016
8:30am – 10:00am

Minutes

Attendees

Name	Organization
Brian Marchant	CoP OSS
Jeff Tardif	Family Shelter
Dave MacLean	City of Portland
Adam Harr	City of Portland
Ali Lovejoy	Preble Street
Rob Parritt	City of South Portland
Chet Barnes	SAMHS
Meredith Pesce	CoP OSS
Harrison Deah	City of Westbrook

Name	Organization
Vicky Rand	CHOM
Jim Devine	HVJ
Steve Elis	FPC
Ginny Dill	Shalom House
Jan Bindas-Tinney	Preble Street
Claudette Ndayininahaze	TOA
Dawn Pickles	TOA
Wendy Harmon	S. ME Landlord Assoc.
Cullen Ryan	CHOM

April Shelter Bed Usage Statistics

Jeff Tardif explained the April 2016 statistics ([see statistics](#)); the overall bed nights went down in April. Jeff stated the residency of family shelter clients, where people are coming into shelter from. Dave then explained that the city is trying to hold accountable municipalities of responsibility who send people to Portland. He described difficulties of demonstrating that an individual or family is a resident of a particular municipality and is that municipality's responsibility under GA statute; in order to prove that a person or family seeking assistance is a resident of different municipality, a client would need to have a lease in that town, or a child enrolled in school there. Jeff said that his staff asks clients about where they stayed in the previous 90 days, but that most people couch surf and don't go to seek General Assistance in the towns they are coming from. Harrison added that in Westbrook, when most people who did have housing are evicted, they exhaust their money staying in hotels before they seek help.

Shelter Matrix

Brian Marchant explained that OSS is down from last month and that the warming center was not used in April. They housed 8 long term stayers and one veteran in the 30 individuals housed. Brian said that they are increasing placements in Rumford, Mexico, and Lewiston.

Jeff explained the Family Shelter Matrix. While they did not use the warming center, the overflow units were used 12 days in April. Jeff stated that the shelter received 30 calls, some from out of state and a majority calling in from other Maine towns. Housing placements increased to 16 over 14 from last month.

OSS Long Term Stayers Report Update

From the first list, 6 remain with one 1 on deck to be housed; the second has 38 remaining with 3 on deck. The second list includes unsheltered people that Ali Lovejoy explained were identified from a survey of unsheltered individuals. Ali said that 10 people on the LTS list are or were unsheltered. Between the Preble Street survey of unsheltered and the 85Point in Time survey, Ali said she identified 85 unsheltered individuals. Of them, 17 are no longer homeless, 9 are housed, 3 are incarcerated, 2 have left town, 2 have not been seen, 1 passed away. Of the remaining 68, 51 have a lead worker, 30 have a housing plan, 19 have stayed at OSS or Florence House

within the last month. Ali said they have identified 21 additional campers; 16 now have a lead worker, 8 have a housing plan, 3 have stayed at OSS or Florence House, one has left town, and one is incarcerated.

One-Year Follow-Up on the OSS LTS Initiative

Cullen Ryan gave a background of the situation last April that instigated the LTS initiative. About 5% of OSS clients were not exiting shelter, feeding the need for overflow. Cullen said that the now that so much of the list has been housed, the initiative will move to a second phase that focus on people who stay in shelter for three to six months. The First group of 70 people were projected to be housed at 9 per month, starting in May 2015. The average number of people staying in March 2015 was 258 which dropped to 198 in December 2015. 79 long term stayers were housed in 2015. The next phase is expected to be housed a faster pace, as people in the new range tend not to have the severe difficulties of the original list. Cullen stated that there were only 3 returns to homelessness.

Chet Barnes stated that the definition of chronically homeless may need to change, or have an understanding from the CoCs that if there are no individuals who meet that definition on the Shelter Plus Care waitlist when vouchers are available, an organization could use an available voucher to house a long term stayer. He said there is a barrier for individuals who probably meet the chronically homeless definition but lack the documentation required to use vouchers designated for the chronically homeless. Cullen responded that the definition was changed to say that the person who has stayed the longest in shelter is a long term stayer (outside of Portland, as people here still meet the over 180-day bed night definition).

Homeless Voices for Justice Update

Jim Divine thanked the group for the letter of support sent to the housing committee. On May 21st, there will be a housing committee meeting at the USM campus. On July 6th the Portland Coalition of Housing Justice will have a rally at city hall and will meet today at 3:30 at the Joe Kreisler Teen Shelter. Jim explained that a lot of the people who are affected by the India Street closure are also people served by ESAC organizations. Jim announced that June 21st HVJ will have their annual Solstice vigil at the post office park, which coincides with Preble Street's annual dinner.

Federal and State Legislation

A funding bill will head to the senate floor that increases funding to section 8 vouchers, family unification program, HUD VASH, HCV Mobility program, money to renew project based vouchers, Shelter Plus Care, HOME, CDBG, and HOPWA. The senate budget is much better than the one from the house. Senators King and Collins support the funding bill. Senator Collins supported an amendment to extend the time HOME funds can be used. HOTMA and improvements to HOPWA are being worked on.

At the state, the community is working on rewriting the rule on section 17 that limited qualifying conditions which puts a barrier on BRAP.

Governance and Procedure

Dave explained that our letterhead made it appear that organizations and city entities that abstained or were not present to vote on the letter supported it. This led to controversy as city employees cannot officially support or dissent on city policy. Dave stated that it would be best if only organizations that vote their support for letters of support be listed on the letterhead on the letter sent. Cullen suggested that exceptions could exist for federal level issues. Dave responded that organizations should have the option to opt out.

Other Business

Dave explained that Rule 16 limits GA eligibility for asylums seekers to only those who have submitted their asylum application. The city appropriated \$250,000 for FY17 to support individuals who no longer qualify. Harrison explained that Westbrook will try and work out using emergency funds but it is up in the air.