**Augusta:** Helen Rogers (Knox County Homeless Coalition), Donna Kelley (KBH), Jeremy Kendall, (Easter Seals of Maine), Stacy Leet (Easter Seals of Maine), RJ Pinkham (Bread of Life Ministries), Melody Fitch (FVP), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Ginny Dill (Shalom House), Leah Bruns (MaineHousing), Anne Giggey (PCHC), Joshua D’Alessio (PCHC Hope House), and Paula Paladino (MaineHousing).

**Portland:** Not available today.

**Lewiston**: Mike Mooney (New Beginnings), Janice Larey Hewey (Catholic Charities/PATH).

**On the Phone**: Mike Merrill (VOA), Mike Tilton (ESM), Hannah Ives (New Hope for Women), Tom Michaud (Sunrise Opportunities), Rowena Griffin (BAHS), Kat Perkins (Spruce Run/Womancare Alliance), Christine Roberts (HUD), Craig Phillips (Tedford Housing), Gail Garrow (OHI), Beth Meneses (CHCS), Catherine Sullivan (Hope House), Awa Conteh (City of Bangor), Steve Ellis (Frannie Peabody), Shanna Curry (Shaw House Waterworks ), Kari Bradstreet (Hope and Justice Project), and Melanie Lamore Gagnon (Safe Voices).

**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Meeting: Maine CoC**

**Date: March 17, 2016**

**Time: 1pm to 3pm**

**Location: Tandberg Teleconferencing Sites**

Disclaimer: These notes are not intended to represent direct quotes, things may not be in chronological order, and ideas may not always be accurately attributed. If you have corrections or comments, please let Paula know and she will edit accordingly.

**Review of Minutes** from February 18, 2016 – Motion to approve by Beth and Betty seconded. **Approved as submitted**.

**Big Thinking Topic:**

Leah Bruns from MaineHousing attended to present information on present information on the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and how we all fit into it. The CoC Leadership mission is to plan and coordinate an inclusive system that helps people avoid or exit quickly from homelessness. The homeless response system is part of **system change**-over time to accomplish with a multitude of priorities. The CoC’s collaborate with various state initiatives i.e. SHC, RHC, etc. locally and are involved in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) initiative which will eventually change the homeless response system. CES is mandated by HUD for continued funding of homeless resources. For example the HUD COC NOFA of $10+ million in annual funding for Maine’s two CoC’s mandates compliance with both the HEARTH Act and the CoC interim rule which mandates a CES for every CoC in the nation. CES must include ESG recipients, PSH, TH and RRH Projects as well as SPC, HMIS and outreach programs. The CAARES (Client Access Assessment and Referral System) was introduced and reviewed. The CAARES Map depicts the CES as:

* No wrong door,
* Diversion or rapid re-housing
* Referral system
* Housing stability
* Assessments

Resource in the CAARES map are based on client needs and trained Navigators follow clients into housing and link them with services. Also, recently the CoC leadership group became the CoC Board for both CoC’s.

**Steering Committee Updates:**

Vickey provided the Steering Committee updates. It was decided in the Steering Committee earlier this month that in order to make the best use of the MCoC meetings, that there would be one update from Steering that reported out on each of the committees. This will be evaluated but will be introduced in today’s meeting. Vickey reviewed the Steering Committee minutes from the meeting and these are attached for review.

**State and Federal Legislation:**

The Policy Committee met this month and reviewed state and federal policy updates. Please see the attached for what was reviewed in the meeting and also presented today. Also, with regard to State legislation, the newest and most pressing issue is MaineCare Section 17 rule changes. DHHS had proposed a rule in the fall which seemed innocuous but a few weeks ago a letter was sent to consumers informing them that there were changes including eligibility requirements that would go into effect in April. Shalom, Catholic Charities and some other larger agencies are taking a lead with informing the state how these changes will impact the people with whom they work. There were no other updates presented in today’s meeting.

**SHC Meeting Update:**

Cullen provided an update from the SHC meeting. Please see the minutes which will be posted on the [www.mainehomelessplanning.org](http://www.mainehomelessplanning.org) website under SHC.

**Regional Homeless Council Updates:**

Donna discussed the Region II Homeless Council training on March 11 which had 5 DHHS presenters and was well attended. At the meeting, they also had a discussion on the senior bonds proposal. There were 24 people in attendance. They also conducted a survey on future training needs. The resource committee through Josh and Steve talked about bringing more information into the regional homeless council meetings.

**Long Term Stayer Update:**

There are two lists. The original list is down to 10 people. The second list of 72 started in January is now down to 46, so they have already housed a great deal of people in 2.5 months. In Bangor, there are 3-5 LTS who will all be housing by the end of April. So we will be in good shape for LTS outside of Portland, and Portland is still plugging away but looking at June-July.

**Vets at Home Update:**

As for the Homeless Veteran Action Committee, they continue to meet weekly. They now have a by-name-list and we are beginning to formulate different strategies to operationalize that list. They also continue to work as a community to attack the other benchmark criteria outlined by the USICH. Cindy added that she and Phil are also working on data sharing and Cullen mentioned that Adria Horn with the Bureau of Veterans Services is coming to the Statewide Homeless Council Meetings. At the last SHC meeting, her assignment was to contact Ryan at the VA to discuss the data sharing. He agreed to sign all the data sharing releases for the VA so the VA will be able to participate in data sharing.

**CoC Board Update:**

HUD will be coming to Maine for a COC visit on May 4th and it will take place at Opportunity Alliance in South Portland. They will meet with PCoC in the morning to discuss collaborative applicant and issues with their NOFA. They will meet with the Joint Board for lunch. In the afternoon it will be a joint CoC meeting and will include the PHA’s. HUD will be updated on a number of initiatives that Maine is doing in the afternoon. So the save the date flyer will be sent out soon and the MCoC may want to attend in the afternoon. Bob Schmenko, Matt Aaronson and Lynn Morrow will be in attendance from HUD. This stemmed from the City of Portland stating they could no longer be the collaborative applicant for the PCoC.

**PIT/HIC Update:**

The Data Committee meeting will be reviewing the PIT/HIC numbers at their meeting in April and presenting their recommendations to the full MCoC for a vote at the April 21 MCoC meeting to ensure it is submitted by the deadline of April 29, 2016.

**Other Business:**

Stacy Lee and Jeremy Kendall from Military & Veterans Services of Easter Seals Maine attended the meeting today and were welcomed. They were encouraged to tell the members about their program. Jeremy stated that they provide assistance including Case management services to post 9-11 Veterans. They are working on a grant with Preble Street called the Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot (RVCP) grant for veterans who transitioned after April of 2012. They also are working on a grant for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRG), which is a federal DOL grant they are working on with Preble St. for southern Maine (in York and Cumberland Counties) which is a 1 year grant extendable up to 3 years. They collaborate with SSVF but they expand beyond homelessness so their service delivery is more flexible and they can offer CM to anyone who served post 9-11. They can do a lot more with needs and services. Jeremy is new to the position and has been on board for one month and he is hoping to re-establish commitments and relationships to benefit Veterans. If you would like more information, Jeremy’s contact information for the Easter Seals Maine is [jkendall@eastersealsme.org](mailto:jkendall@eastersealsme.org).

Conclusion: Members were asked “Do people like the simplified agenda?” and the overwhelming response was yes, so we will continue with this next month. Also, it was noted that at the next meeting the 3 tri-chairs won’t be here but there will be a guest chair for the meeting.

**Next Meeting:** April 21, 2016, 1:00-3:00 pm.

**On-Line:** Vickey Rand (Community Housing of Maine), Paula Paladino (Maine Housing), Melody Fitch (Family Violence Project), Mike Mooney (New Beginnings), Awa Conteh (City of Bangor ), Donna Kelley (Kennebec Behavioral Health), Craig Phillips (Tedford Housing)

**Meeting: MCOC Steering**

**Date/Time: 3/7/16 10:00 am – 11:32 am**

**Location: Online**

**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Welcome/Introductions/Attendance:**

Meeting convened and introductions were conducted

**FVP Supportive Housing Change:**

Family Violence Project has made a change in use for one of its programs for homeless victims of domestic violence that will affect the Housing Inventory Chart. A three-unit facility in Augusta is reclassified from Transitional to Permanent Housing. FVP will continue to provide services, as needed by residents.

**2015 Annual Shelter Stats:**

Stats are out and will be posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website. These were shared at last MCoC meeting and will be shared with Statewide Homeless Council; Discussed trends in 2015 and three-year report from 2013-2015; Discussed Veteran’s report.

**PIT Data and HIC Update:**

MaineHousing a bit understaffed right now, and Paula is working on PIT Data and the HIC. PIT data entry is going very well, but MaineHousing is finding a lot of unusable data. This is due to the PIT methodology change for 2015, which HUD required to have certain data fields completed. MaineHousing is developing a way to track the unusable data as a way to inform the process moving forward.

The HIC data has been challenging this year, as Paula has discovered missing or incomplete information. One example: for all federal grants, full grant identifier/numbers must be included.

**HUD All Grantee Meetings:**

Craig is attending the meeting in Concord, NH on 3/10 and John Bradley will also be there as he is a presenter. Some CoC members are attending the Boston All Grantee meeting on 4/5, because the NH meeting conflicts with Joint CoC Board meeting.

**FY14 APR issues in e-snaps:**

Paula will post a link to the notice from Lynn Morrow (March 2, 2016) on the Maine Homeless Planning website and will send it out to all projects.

**Governance Ad Hoc Committee Update:**

A small group has met twice to review and update the MCoC Governance. There will be some substantive changes the group will recommend; however most revisions are minor grammatical corrections and language changes. The third meeting is scheduled for the first week in April. CoC committee summaries need to be updated. This group will ask committee chairs to bring these summaries their committees for updates. After all updates, the revised Governance will be brought before the Steering Committee and then the full CoC.

**Draft of CoC Agenda/Additions/Adjustments:**

The group discussed format of the full MCoC agenda and decided to make a few changes: Place action items (i.e., approval of minutes) at the top of agenda, big topic discussions next, and updates at the end. Consolidate committee updates into Steering Committee report. Ask full CoC for feedback about how this format works for them after the meeting. Big Thinking topic for March: Coordinated Entry System and How We All Will Fit into It.

Drafted meeting agenda

**Parking List for Next Steering Committee Meeting:**

Discussion about time spent in activities of CoC, specific to projects, that can be used toward match and leverage requirements.

**Review/Approval of Minutes:**

We did not review or approve February minutes.

**Committee updates:**

**Policy:** Vickey reported policy is met last Friday and information will go out following. Information to follow regarding National Housing Trust Fund and considerations for how Maine may target those funds.

**Project:** Donna reported that the committee met, though encountered some technical difficulties. Working on revising monitoring forms, based upon recommendations from the Selection Committee. Donna is drafting form for HMIS and another for all other projects. Committee plans to begin conducting reviews soon.

**Resource:** The committee has been working on a training for Region II Homeless Council, scheduled for this Friday, March 11th at MaineHousing. The topic is DHHS Resources, specifically those for Children, Youth, and Families. Several speakers from DHHS are scheduled to present. Mike is planning to develop a webinar for all ESG Projects, and is awaiting a few names for the CoC Committee lists.

**Data:** No report.

**Scoring Template:** No report.

**Selection:** No report.

**Next Meeting:**

**Monday March 7th at 10:00 am.** (Paula will host conference call number)

**Policy/Advocacy Update – March 2016**

**Federal Legislation Update:**

* **The President released his FY 17 budget proposal on February 9th.** In addition, HUD announced a legislative proposal where it will seek $11 billion in mandatory spending over the next 10 years to serve a total of 550,000 families with additional vouchers, permanent supportive housing, and rapid rehousing assistance.

Proposed HUD budget items of note:

* + **$18.447 billion for Section 8 Tenant Based Rental Assistance renewals**, an increase from the $17.681 billion enacted FY 16 funding.
  + **$7 million for VASH, a decrease compared to the FY 16 enacted level of $60 million.**
  + **$88 million for new/restored TBRA (Veterans, FUP, DV, etc.) – *New***
  + **$15 million for the Voucher Mobility Demonstration Program – *New –*** Designed to help families with housing vouchers move and stay in areas of opportunity.
  + **$10.816 billion for Project-Based Rental Assistance,** an increase compared to the FY 16 enacted level of $10.62 billion.
  + **$2.664 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants**, an increase compared to the FY 16 enacted level of $2.25 billion.
  + **$950 million for HOME funding**, level funding compared to the FY16 enacted funding level. However, the proposed budget also make the traditionally $10 million stand-along Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program a set-aside within the HOME program.
  + **$2.8 billion for CDBG**, a decrease from the FY 16 enacted level of $3 billion.
  + **$355 million for Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)**, level funding compared to the FY 16 enacted level.
* **H.R. 3700, the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) passed the House on 2/2 through a unanimous vote of all present**. It will move on to the Senate for consideration. CBPP explains that the bill would:
* Provide more flexibility to “project-base” vouchers to support affordable housing development and preservation and enable more homeless families or individuals with disabilities to live in appropriate housing.
  + It would raise the percentage of a housing agency’s voucher assistance that the agency can project-base from 20 percent to 30 percent, if the agency uses the added 10 percent: (a) for developments in areas where vouchers are difficult to use; (b) to house homeless people or veterans; or (c) to provide supportive housing to people with disabilities and the elderly. In addition, H.R. 3700 would permit agencies to provide project-based vouchers in 25 percent of a development’s units or 25 units in a development, whichever is greater, thereby allowing higher concentrations in small developments.
* Help address homelessness by 1) allowing local housing agencies to make greater use of project-based vouchers to assist the homeless (as well as veterans, the elderly, and people with disabilities); 2) revising the rules for inspecting units that families with tenant-based vouchers wish to rent in order to get vulnerable families into homes more quickly, while protecting them from eviction if subsidy payments to an owner are suspended because a unit has developed housing-quality violations; and 3) strengthening voucher assistance for former foster children, a group that faces a high risk of homelessness.
* Streamlining housing quality inspections in the voucher program to encourage more private owners to participate and enable families to occupy their homes more quickly and avoid a precipitous loss of housing if their homes fall into disrepair.
  + H.R. 3700 retains the inspection requirement for all units where vouchers are used but streamlines and improves the inspection process. It would allow agencies to make initial subsidy payments to owners even if the unit doesn’t pass the initial inspection, as long as the failure resulted from non-life-threatening conditions; defects would have to be corrected within 30 days of initial occupancy for payments to continue. It would also allow families to occupy units that have passed inspection under certain other federal programs (such as the HOME program, which funds housing development and rehabilitation), so long as the housing agency later inspects the unit under voucher program rules.
* Simplifying rules for setting tenant rent payments, while continuing to maintain key affordability protections.

Importantly, H.R. 3700 would make these improvements while leaving in place the core characteristics that have made federal rental assistance programs effective. It also would do so without raising costs; in fact, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that H.R. 3700 would reduce program costs by $311 million over five years, with $195 million of that reduction stemming from the bill’s rental assistance provisions. (These figures do not reflect amendments that the House approved, but those will likely have only a modest net impact on costs)

* **S.993/H.R.1854, The Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act,** Introduced by Senators Franken (D-MN) - Cornyn (R-TX) and Representatives Collins (R-GA)-Scott (D-VA). The Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act (CJMHA) recently passed the Senate and the House Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support. It has beneficial provisions from the prospective of ending homelessness.  In Maine we have always seen a pattern where people with mental illness are swept into jails, as well as homeless shelters.  The people would be much better served and at far less cost in permanent supportive housing. The bill includes provisions around screening people who interact with the criminal justice system for mental health conditions and connecting them with services, at all points in the justice system from intake to transition.

**State Legislation Update:**

* Bills of note:
* **LD 873, Authorizes a General Fund $4M bond issue for housing for homeless veterans at Togus** – Assigned to the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee.
* **LD 1188, An Act To Implement a Rental Assistance Program for Low-income Households and Individuals.** The Affordable Housing Workgroup presented its recommendations, followed by a public hearing on Tuesday, 1/26/16.
* **LD 1607**, **An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Maine Affordable Housing Working Group,** was reported out by the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development for the purpose of turning the working group's recommendations into a printed bill.  **The bill will have both a public hearing and a work session on 3/3**.  The bill would direct MaineHousing and local housing authorities to develop a single universal application to apply for tenant-based Section 8 and establish a state-wide, centralized waiting list for tenant-based rental assistance as well as a method for applicants to submit and update applications for rental assistance by electronic means.  The bill would provide that MaineHousing and DHHS ensure that this application may be used to apply for BRAP and Shelter Plus Care.  The bill would also direct MaineHousing to explore options to increase access to affordable housing for Extremely Low Income (30% AMI) households.  Finally, MaineHousing would work with local PHAs to identify “unused vouchers” under HUD’s HCV Program and use these vouchers to establish a pilot rental assistance program.  MaineHousing would implement the program based on “best practices and evidence-based research to provide a comprehensive approach to prevent homelessness and promote housing stability, family well-being and self-sufficiency for families at risk of homelessness.”
* **LD 1473, Resolve to Increase Access to Opiate Addiction Treatment in Maine.** Work session held on 2/10.
* **LD 1496, An Act to Support Maine People in Recovery.** Work session held on 2/10.
* Senator Tom Saviello says he is sponsoring a bill to expand MaineCare to what he calls 70,000 low-income, hard-working Mainers.