**Maine Homeless Policy Committee**

Meeting minutes 6/5/15

In attendance: Vickey Rand, Steve Ellis, and Jon Bradley.

**I. Items of current focus.**

**Federal and State**. The group reviewed federal and then state policy issues.

Federal: The group discussed the House and Senate T-HUD budgets, both of which fail to meet the funding levels prescribed in the President’s budget. The House is expected to vote the week of 6/8 on the House T-HUD bill.

The group continued the discussion from last month regarding H.R. 576 & S. 256: To amend the definition of “homeless person” under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth, and for other purposes. This bill would expand the definition of homelessness to include couch surfing for homeless youth. Though this may make sense there are no new funds that accompany this bill.

The group discussed the upcoming National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) Annual Conference, taking place July 15th-17th. The group discussed having a more in-depth discussion at the next meeting, so those attending the conference can all be on the same page.

State:

* There is a public hearing today for LD 1205, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support the Independence of Maine's Seniors, to provide bonds for 1,000 units of senior housing throughout Maine.  The bill will be heard by the Appropriations & Financial Affairs Committee in Room 228 at the State House. At the same public hearing testimony will be heard for LD 873, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Housing for Homeless Veterans.  LD 873 would authorize a $4M general fund bond issue for housing for homeless veterans at Togus.

II. Proactive Strategies. This group has agreed to circulate Op-Eds for topics regularly. Previously, the group discussed strategizing which to cover when, and how to create a series of message that blend with and build on other recent ones. Incorporate an Investment Focused theme into each of the following topics:

1. Substance Abuse – What happens when you don’t treat it. **This topic is on hold, as some of the other topics are relevant and time-sensitive pertaining to the Governor’s budget.**

2. Prioritize one vulnerable group at the expense of another – that is not the only choice. **Who has interest in this topic? It is still timely and relevant to the Governor’s budget.**

3. Safety Net – What are the basic needs of a person/family? This budget cuts (all, some, most) of these. **Steve Ellis wrote an Op-Ed on this topic that was published on May 11th in the Bangor Daily News.**

4. It is a good investment to invest in people so they can do well. (“They” have decided we need to spend more on fraud, judges, incarceration; this gives the idea that people are criminals waiting to be caught.) **Shalom House expressed interest in an Op-Ed on this topic at the 5/8 meeting. More information on this is upcoming.**

5. Mental illness – what it means to be psychotic, and how we have chosen to serve people who experience it. **Cullen wrote an Op-ed on this topic that was published on April 10th in the Portland Press Herald.**

**III. What we are for, and why. (Why certain policies can work).**

**IV. Meeting Dates**. The group meets the Friday prior to the Statewide Homeless Council, which is typically the first Friday of the month, but sometimes is the second Friday, at 3pm. **The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 10th, at 3pm.**