



MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL

September 8, 2020

Minutes

9:30-12:30

Virtual Location: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/352415877>
and/or call 1(646)749-3122, Passcode 352-415-877

Members: Tracey Hair (HOME, Inc., RIII), Donna Kelley (WCAP, RII), Cullen Ryan (CHOM, RII), Cheryl Harkins (HVJ, RI), Donna Yellen (Preble Street, RI), Ginny Dill (Shalom, RI), Josh D'Alessio (PCHC, RIII), Dave McCluskey (Shaw House, RIII)

Guests: Betty LaBua (MaineHousing), Tracy Allen (KBH), Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Katie Spencer White (MMHS), Alice Preble, (DHHS/OCFS), Melanie Buber (HSA), Laurie Murray (MaineHousing), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Kate Easter (MCEDV), Kathryn Temple (DHHS/SAMHS), Sara Wade (SAMHS, DHHS), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voices), Denise Lord (Maine Housing), Rota Knott (Tedford), Amelia Lyons (Dept. of Ed), Kelsey Brown (HUD), Nicole Poulin. (Maine General), Lisa Letourneau (CDC), Jamie Blackburn (CSH), Kelly Watson (MaineHousing), Jenny Stasio, (TTD), Shawn Yardley (Community Concepts), Bill Higgins (Homeless Advocacy for All), Rich Hook Wyman (VOA) Anna Smith (CSH), Sarah Gallagher (CSH), Joe Locke (MaineHousing), Aaron Geyer (COP), Steve McDermott (MaineHousing), Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings)

- **Minutes:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing) and Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing)

- **Approval of Minutes:** August's meeting minutes were approved.

- **CSH Project Update**

Plan Development: Sarah Gallagher started the CSH presentation noting the program is in its 'Discovery Phase'. In this phase, administrative data is being compiled and information is being collected from stake holders. A slide presentation highlighted how the redesign will compliment and coordinate with the Coordinated Entry Reboot, the YHDP, the State Plan to End Homelessness and the Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program. Time-limited work groups will dive into the key components of the redesign effort using data gathered from CSH analysis, best practices and experience. The four groups are

1. System Design and Best Practice Workgroup
2. Regional Structure Leads
3. Affordable and Supportive Housing Development
4. Data and Accountability

New groups will be added as the redesign enters into additional phases.

COVID Impact: The redesign will incorporate the challenges and sparked opportunities occurring during COVID. The current partnerships formed with health care and mainstream public health agencies will be adopted into the redesign. Donna Yellen

addressed the importance of keeping shelters in the forefront of the redesign. The difficulties with lack of rural transportation, rural testing, access to rapid testing, and how best to streamline entry points were recognized as barriers to be combatted in the redesign.

- **Council Updates**

MSHA: Mainers are continuing to apply for rent relief. Additional funding will be necessary for the increased demands. MSHA continues exploring ways to grow eviction prevention programs as a proactive measure for when the current resources cease.

Region I: Cheryl Harkins reported HVJ continues to be diligent with “You Don’t Need A Home to Vote” Voting Rights Campaign. At the Region 1 meeting, the topics of how to support people who are in need of mental health and housekeeping check ins were discussed. Housing placements are low due to the lack of available housing units. Evicting tenants for other reasons than nonpayment of rent has started.

Region II: Region did not meet in August.

Region III: The entire Ramada Inn in Bangor is being used as an over flow shelter. Half the rooms will be for COVID free, the other half for COVID positive. There are major concerns over what will happen when public places close as the second wave hits in cold weather. The need for warming centers continues to be a burning issue.

- **Legislative Updates:** At the State level, the Legislature has not reconvened. The Governor has the authority to intervene and call a Special Session. Governor Mills recently stated that all State Offices should expect a 10% budget cut. Federally, Congress continues to negotiate the fourth stimulus package. The deadline to submit comments on the HUD proposed Equal Access Rule is September 22, 2020. On 9/1 a Federal Moratorium on evictions for nonpayment of rent was issued and will be in place through December 31, 2020.

- **Pandemic Related Issues**

Minors and COVID: Dave McCluskey reported at the meeting held regarding youth and the pandemic with Stephanie Primm and representatives from Shaw House, Preble Street and New Beginnings it became apparent each agency can shelter only a few positive cases. Dave stated outside assistance is imperative in order to shelter several cases at once and a plan needs to be developed in order not to disrupt programs. Over the next couple of weeks, an email dialogue will focus on creating a solid plan.

What’s Working Well/What’s Not: MSHA’s distributions of shelter grants are working well especially in regard to hazard pay and hotel payments. PCHC’s use of the Rapid Resolution upon entry with navigators at the triage point have been able to successfully divert 6 out of 10 people. Josh said they modeled an informal training on the Rapid Resolution training module from the VA. Lauren Bustard will work on putting together a statewide training. The demand for shelter is higher than it has ever been before. Housing large families of five or more in hotels isn’t working. The issue of food insecurity needs to be addressed especially the hunger in the hotels and amongst people who are unsheltered. There is inadequate mental health assistance available for the youngest and most vulnerable populations.

CDC Updates: Dr. Lisa Letourneau, Senior Advisor Delivery System Change, Maine DHHS, joined today’s meeting for a CDC update and Q&A session. Currently the CDC

is concerned with the outbreaks at the York County Jail and the possibility of an increase of positive COVID cases following the reopening of schools. Lisa mentioned the Federal Government will be leveraging costs for rapid testing, giving the states the responsibility of distributing funding. Congregant care facilities will be prioritized however, Lisa will specifically inquire if shelters are included and will advocate for them if they are not. The question of how to keep staff healthy was answered with the recommendation to have staff tested often and to follow the CMS online modules. Lisa will attend next month's meeting.

- **Topics for October's Meeting**

MSN: Formalize role and responsibilities.

Communication: How best to keep all informed with redesign efforts, reduce disconnects with external partnerships and educate the public's understanding of provided services.

**Next Meeting:
Tuesday, October 13, 2020
9:30-12:30**

Maine Statewide Homeless Council | c/o MaineHousing | 26 Edison Drive | Augusta, ME 04333

Developing policies and strategies so that everyone is pushing in the same direction to end and prevent homelessness in Maine.