**System, Housing, MCoC, Committee and Opioid Response Updates SHC March 14, 2023**

**System Updates**

**Coordinated Entry: Submitted by Erin Kelly**

* Hubs 3, 6 and 8 are gearing up for an April 3rd launch of CE. Hub 2 will be launching assessments on the same day.
* Virtual community meetings were held the week of 03/06 to give people a heads-up that this launch would be coming. There was also an overview of CE and a little background on why it is happening. Over 50 people were in attendance at each meeting.
* Assessment training will be available via MSHA the week of 03/13

**Hubs: Submitted by Tara Hembree**

* Great news!  York County Community Action Corporation hired Abigail Smallwood as their new Hub Coordinator. Abigail started on 2/27/2023 and is off and running. She is familiar with the hub providers and homeless services and understand the Built for Zero work.  She has been part of the Hub 1 improvement team since the start and is eagerly picking up where the previous hub coordinator left off. We are very excited to have Abigail join the team!
* All Hubs are doubling down on their scorecard items on the path to quality data. More support will be available to ALL hub coordinators from Community Solutions in the areas of quality data, system improvement teams and work, and case conferencing.  Support for all hubs will continue with combination of Community Solutions and MaineHousing.
* Four more hubs will be piloting Coordinated Entry, Hub 8 – Downeast (Washington and Hancock counties), Hub 6 – Central (Somerset and Kennebec counties), and Hub 3 – Midcoast (Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo counties and the towns of Brunswick and Harpswell) will begin a full pilot of CE on 4/3/2023.  Hub 2 – Cumberland is gearing up with support from Emily Meade, the Hub 5 coordinator.
* Hub coordinators are taking advantage of a facilitation training that was offered through a partnership with Community Solutions and Strive Together and we are all looking forward to putting the skills learned into action.
* The State Strategy Action Teams are all meeting and making gains on the projects for this action cycle, System improvement, Veteran’s Housing Surge, and Racial Equity and Lived Experience.  The next bimonthly meeting is scheduled for Mar 21st.

**Housing Updates**

**MSHA: Submitted by Lauren Bustard**

* **Response to NOFA for Long-Term Solutions to Address Homelessness** MaineHousing received an overwhelming response to this NOFA. We received a total of 37 applications, which included at least one from every hub and totaled over $34M in funding requests. We are in the process of reaching out to some of the applicants for clarification on their requests and should be announcing awards within the next couple of weeks. The criteria for these awards are that they be for projects which add capacity to the response system and can be operational by October 31, 2023.
* **Housing Problem Solving**

This is our new approach to Diversion and Rapid Exit from our Shelter System. Housing Problem Solving is defined as a person-centered, housing-focused approach to explore creative, safe, and cost-effective solutions to quickly resolve a housing crisis that supports implementation of homelessness prevention, diversion and rapid exit strategies. The most essential component of this approach is the use of a strengths-based facilitated conversation that allows an individual to identify solutions to address their housing crisis which are alternatives to the use of shelter beds. This year 18 ESHAP providers will participate in the initiative, which will provide staff training in the overall philosophy as well as skill building in facilitating problem solving conversations. In addition to training there is a small amount of admin funding for each provider and a pot of flexible financial assistance funds for each Hub to assist folks in addressing their housing crises.

* **Shared Housing** A group of providers that participate in MaineHousing funded Rapid Rehousing programs attended a six-session workshop on the topic of Shared Housing, a permanent housing approach where two or more unrelated individuals share a unit, each with their own lease. The group will be bringing back some information and tools to other providers who are interested in the approach.

**Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation & the Future: Submitted by Greg Payne**

* GOPIF is working closely with the members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. At this point, besides the housing elements of the budget, the committee has not started hearing bills and continues to receive input from practitioners and experts in the field about pressing housing issues. We believe that when bills are heard, they will likely be taken up in groupings by subject matter.
* The committee did hold its work session on the budget earlier this week and is unanimously recommending to the appropriations committee that affordable housing production be increased from $30m to $80m over the biennium.
* The Governor has pledged her support for an expansion of site-based Housing First properties in Maine. The bill itself will likely get printed and referred to the Housing Committee within the next 1-2 weeks and has strong support from Speaker Talbot Ross as well. The vehicle by which this legislation would go through the process is under currently discussion between Rep. Gattine, the Speaker’s Office and the chairs of the Housing Committee.
* We are working closely with MaineHousing to deploy additional funds from LD 3 to provide both emergency and long-term housing options for people experiencing homelessness; we defer to Lauren and MaineHousing but expect that decisions will be made within 1-2 weeks.

**MCoC Updates**

**MCoC Board: Submitted By Cullen Ryan** The MCoC Board of Directors met March 2.  Items covered are summarized below:

* Scholarships for attending conferences were discussed.  The strategy decided on, based on an ad hoc committee’s recommendation, was to have attendance correlate with sub-populations; the Homeless Veterans Advisory Committee, the Coalition for Domestic Violence, the Youth Advisory Board, and mainstream CoC referrals would each put forth their preferred conference attendee representative.  7 people would attend altogether based on one conference per year for each sub-population, 1-2 participants at each.  The attendees would be expected to share their learnings with the broader group.
* System updates:  Portland is facing a growing crisis with Oxford Street Shelter filling quickly with asylum seeker single adult populations displacing the traditional homeless populations which amount to 1700-2200 unduplicated people each year.  By having this facility largely filled or filled entirely with asylum seekers who cannot work for 8-12 months, we will see as much as a quarter of our traditional homeless population in Maine displaced.  We are seeing quickly growing numbers of people unsheltered and sleeping outside because of being unable to access shelter in Portland with 75 tents, some in clusters of up to 17 tents each on city property/public parks alone; more are elsewhere. This is an emerging and growing crisis that will affect the entire homeless system.
* Review of system performance:  Shelters are mostly full or overflowing with some exceptions.  More shelters had upticks in housing placements over last year with exceptions.  There were 81 housing placements this year vs. 82 last year.  Exits to permanent housing 58 with 10 returns (17% return rate).  The high return rate suggests insufficient support for success in housing.  The average length of time homeless decreased in 2022 vs 2021.  But returns to homelessness are high.
* The nomination process was discussed at length, including though a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.  The Board landed on making a recommendation to the MCoC for open nominations with 6 current Board members with renewing terms to be recommended for renewal, and filling the additional open seat, and adding additional seats to welcome other people interested.  The Board will continue to strive to be inclusive and has expanded and created specific seats to ensure diversity, equitable, and geographic representation throughout its duration. The Board’s function will be described at the MCoC meeting including that Board members serve at the pleasure of the MCoC and that all decisions are ultimately made by the MCoC itself.

**Full MCoC: Submitted by Vickey Merrill**

The Maine Continuum of Care (MCoC) met on 2/16 and had Big Thinking Topic discussions regarding refining the nominating process for open seats &/or expiring terms for the CoC Board of Directors as well as MCoC committee recruitment.  Other updates provided include SHC, Federal and State Legislation, the Hubs, the CoC Board, Coordinated Entry, and the Youth Advisory Board. The next meeting is on 3/16 and will include discussion on MCoC scholarship funds for people with lived experience, in addition to standing agenda items.

**Committee Updates**

**MSN Update: Submitted by Noelle Coyne**

* Continued discussion around the changes to Section 13 of Targeted Case Management that are having large fiscal impacts on some of us. Section 13 case management can now only continue for 90 days after someone becomes housed. This is a delicate time in a person’s life and having intensive ongoing support is crucial to success. Housing providers have a history of being able to do this successfully especially when they are able to build upon relationships developed in the shelters. Many of these needs expand beyond the scope of housing navigators and we fear that much of the work will fall on them without proper case management services.  Steph Primm and Katie Spencer White have been advocating for this service to be able to be continued beyond 90 days.
* Housing First needs supportive services beyond housing navigations services for many people to be successful. There is no funding for this though.
* COVID  - unfortunately it has not gone away but many of the supports and resources have leaving shelters in a bind. It was shared that multiple shelter have outbreaks right now causing them to close or halt new intakes.

**Homeless Committee Updates:** Sent to Council in separate documents.

**Opioid Response**

**Update Submitted by Gordon Smith**

The January, 2023 overdose report is now available on the mainedrugdata.org website.  There were 50 fatal overdoses and 6 of the decedents were experiencing some degree of housing insecurity.  Although the Feb. report will not be posted until the end of March, I can report to Council members that of the 44 fatal overdoses in February I am aware of, 4 decedents were experiencing some degree of housing insecurity.  So our experience so far in 2023 is pretty consistent with 2022 when 11% of decedents were experiencing homelessness.