

**Maine Homeless Veteran Action Committee Quarterly Stakeholders Meeting Agenda**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Introductions</b></li></ul>	Please state your name, title, and organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Tri-Chair Structure</b></li><li>• <b>Roles of HVAC Committee Members</b></li></ul>	Wendy Thomas-Blais / Barrett Fisher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>HVAC Written Standards</b></li></ul>	Wendy Thomas-Blais / Barrett Fisher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Community Outreach: Standdowns</b></li></ul>	Barrett Fisher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Landlord Engagement</b></li></ul>	Kaitlin Plourde
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Housing Retention</b></li></ul>	Dan Hodgkins
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>FY Housing Surge</b></li></ul>	Wendy Thomas-Blais
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Veterans Coordinated Entry Data</b></li></ul>	Karen Martin / Emily Richards



# VA Maine healthcare System, Augusta, ME

## *HVAC Meeting Minutes*

Date: 6 August 2024

Time Started: 1000

Time Ended: 1058

ATTENDEES NAME	TITLE
Kaitlin Plourde	Preble Street Veterans Housing services Supervisor, Housing Chair
Karen Martin	VA Coordinated Entry Specialist, BNL Manager
Emily Richards	Homeless Services Hub Coordinator, Assistant BNL Manager
Lauri Legere	Program Manager for Veterans Services, VOANNE
Robby Jones	VA Grant and Per Diem Liaison
Dan Hodgkins	Senior Director of Social Work, Preble Street, HVAC Tri-Chair
Jessica Casselman	HUD-VASH Program Support Assistant, HVAC Secretary

### MINUTES:

- BNL Manager gave an update on data reconciliation progress in HMIS and on the BNL
- BNL Manager and Housing Chair discussed strategies for cleaning up the data, with input from the Assistant BNL Manager
- Housing Chair announced the landlord engagement website, nohomelessveterans.org, is live
- No new updates on retention or recidivism
- The HVAC Written Standards have been submitted and will be posted publicly
- HVAC Member discussed the Statewide Case Consultation meeting structure and ideas for how to improve the tracking mechanism, taking examples from Hub Coordination meetings
- HVAC Tri-Chair updated members on CoC grant opportunities, governance edits, and HMIS vendor options
- The committee voted to approve condensed minutes from June and July

( ) Approved ( ) Disapproved

Dan Hodgkins  
Chair

Jessica Casselman  
Recorder

Distribution: Members



# VA Maine healthcare System, Augusta, ME

## *HVAC Meeting Minutes*

Date: 3 September 2024

Time Started: 1000

Time Ended: 1103

ATTENDEES NAME	TITLE
Barrett Fisher	Claims Supervisor, Bureau of Veterans Services / HVAC Tri-Chair
Danielle Mayer	HCHV Program Coordinator
Ray Michaud	Veterans Inc. Regional Manager
Kaitlin Plourde	Preble Street Veterans Housing Services Supervisor / HVAC Housing Chair
Laura Clark	VHS Preble Street, Program Director
Karen Martin	Coordinated Entry Specialist / HVAC BNL Manager
Dan Hodgkins	Senior Director of Social Work, Preble Street / HVAC Tri-Chair
Jessica Casselman	HUD-VASH Program Support Assistant / HVAC Secretary
Robby Jones	GPD Liaison

### MINUTES:

- Preble Street has served well over their fiscal year goal a month before the year’s end and shared that additional personnel have been hired for the Bangor office.
- The VA’s Outreach team is now fully staffed and are handling the recent uptick in hotline calls, referrals, and consults.
- The team identified SOAR training as a resource to assist with connecting Veterans to SSI and SSDI, particularly when their discharge type limits the other types of resources they can be awarded.
- The COC will be updating their governance and restructuring their organizational hierarchy.
- Statewide Case Consultation is dedicating time to reviewing BNL entries to assist with data clean up and identification of gaps and issues.
- The NoHomelessVeterans website will be advertised on the radio in a few weeks, with ads running for 8 weeks, encompassing the time period around Veterans Day.
- The group collaborated to create an agenda for the HVAC Quarterly Steering committee, including a plan to try to boost attendance.

( ) Approved ( ) Disapproved

Barrett Fisher  
Chair

Jessica Casselman  
Recorder

Distribution: Members



# VA Maine healthcare System, Augusta, ME

## *HVAC Quarterly Steering Committee Meeting Minutes*

Date: 11 September 2024

Time Started: 1400

Time Ended: 1532

ATTENDEES NAME	TITLE
Danielle Mayer	Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program Coordinator, HVAC Tri-Chair
Matthew Kennedy	Maine Bureau of Veterans Services HCV
Barrett Fisher	Claims Supervisor, Maine Bureau of Veterans Services, HVAC Tri-Chair
Kaitlin Plourde	Preble Street Veterans Housing Services Supervisor, HVAC Housing Chair
Carol Trask	Bread of Life Shelter Manager
Jessica Casselman	HUD-VASH Program Support Assistant, HVAC Secretary
Emily Richards	Homeless Services Hub Coordinator, HVAC BNL Assistant
Ray Michaud	Veterans Inc Regional Manager
Teague Morris	Outreach Director for US Senator King
Chris Olsen	American Dream Reality, LLC, Welcome to Housing Home Goods Bank, Inc
Laura Clark	Veterans Homeless Services Preble Street, Program Director
Dan Hodgkins	Senior Director of Social Work, Preble Street, HVAC Tri-Chair
Nichele Carver	Senior Regional Advisor with US Interagency Counsel on Homelessness, Senior Regional Advisor for New England
Karen Martin	Coordinated Entry Specialist, HVAC BNL Manager
Brian Bouthot	Volunteers of American Northern New England Operations Coordinator Veterans Services
James Bachelder	Maine Veterans in Need
Wendy Thomas-Blais	HUD-VASH Program Manager
Bill Higgins	

**MINUTES:**

TOPIC/ISSUE	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS
<b>Recording Disclaimer /</b>	Dan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To let everyone know, we do record these meetings, and if</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Introductions</b></p>	<p>everyone could please type your name and organization into the chat box, so we can keep a record of everyone who is here</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have several things on our agenda today, including reviewing the minutes from our previous meetings, we'll be brainstorming on how to increase attendance at this meeting, the USICH benchmarks, where we're at with FY24 housing goals</li> <li>• Laura will lead us in a conversation about current gaps and issues we see in our Veteran homeless response system, preparation for the winter, encampment outreach, housing incentives, and program updates</li> <li>• That's the agenda for today</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Approve Previous Minutes</b></p>	<p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With that in mind, if we could start would anyone like to make a motion to accept the minutes from the last two meetings?</li> <li>• I believe they were attached to the invite</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'll make a motion to approve</li> </ul> <p>Ray</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'll second</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any last minute changes?</li> <li>• Any objections to approving the minutes?</li> <li>• Once those are approved, they are sent to Maine Homeless Planning where they are posted and available for the public</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Brainstorm on Increasing Steering Meeting Attendance</b></p>	<p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next on the Agenda, brainstorming on how to increase steering meeting attendance</li> <li>• We have a pretty strong turn out today, so thank you all for being here</li> <li>• The past several quarters, attendance has been dwindling</li> <li>• We wanted to use some time today on how we can increase attendance</li> <li>• Who is not here that we'd like to see here, is there some intentional outreach we could do?</li> <li>• And some conversation around how this meeting could be valuable to our community partners who aren't necessarily working with the homeless every day but are part of the big solution that we need to be able to collaborate</li> <li>• So, let's open up the floor to see if anyone has some ideas</li> <li>• Ray – I'd like to start with a silly question</li> <li>• Who is supposed to be at this meeting, is there a list of people who are supposed to be here?</li> <li>• Dan – I don't think there's a list, but the general goal is to have all the different groups of people who are involved in the big picture to end Veteran homelessness</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historically that's been folks from our congressional delegations, people from HVAC, Veterans groups, different delegations from organizations who are actively involved in working with the homeless population</li> </ul> <p>Kaitlin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For me it would be helpful to identify some people that we should be outreaching and then choosing who has a relationship with those people to do some outreach that is more personable than an email</li> </ul> <p>James</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a part of the governor's aide de camp meetings, I've talked with the commissioner of public safety and he's got me set up to meet with the Sherriff's association to try and figure out how to get more Veterans to the stand down</li> <li>Before we were at Togus and we had the DAV vans, but now that they're moved around, we need to get a way to transport the Veterans to the stand downs</li> <li>The police can find out who they are and where they are and provide transportation</li> <li>The other side is we know the Veterans don't want to leave their encampment, so we also need security for the encampment while the Veterans are gone</li> <li>The idea is to change the goal from chasing people out of town and instead bringing them to services</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That is a wonderful idea, not just for the stand down, but all year round, do they know who to contact when they find a person who is going through a housing crisis, so I'll put law enforcement on the list</li> </ul> <p>Chris</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have a suggestion</li> <li>With the encampment up here, what they did was they looked into some of the people that had been there for a while, like a spokesperson, someone that everyone knew and got along with</li> <li>That might be work looking into</li> </ul> <p>James</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They had an individual who was the mayor of the encampment and when he went to the city to talk about stuff, when he came back everything was stolen</li> </ul> <p>Chris</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have something to bring up on that which might be helpful to our organizations</li> </ul> <p>Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have the idea of setting up an open tent on the sides, set up an office at the encampment who can keep track of where people are so that people who are providing services can help people connect</li> <li>With hot spotting and some staffing, some equipment for people to be able to use</li> </ul>	
--	---	--

	<p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's a lot of energy around how this group can help respond to encampments</li> </ul> <p>Teague</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It occurs to me that there are some other key groups who are growing in attendance</li> <li>• The Maine Veteran Coordinating Committee has a lot of shared goals, the Maine military and community network regional meetings, I'm wondering if there is some meeting fatigue because there is some overlap</li> <li>• And meetings get moved around, and keeping track of what's happening when can be difficult</li> <li>• It might help to attend a couple of their meetings and reciprocate to see what you're all doing</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That is a great suggestion</li> </ul> <p>Teague</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I believe it's the one time we get representatives from all the Veteran services organizations, the VA, MBVS, congressional offices, and the Veterans home in one place and one time, and they're open to the public</li> <li>• They're not widely advertised, although they've existed for years</li> <li>• They've got connections, that could be a great intersection</li> </ul> <p>Chris</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are people near the Hope House near that encampment, and the university of Bangor has SW students, so those may provide a pool of people to staff the encampments and set up hot spots</li> </ul> <p>James</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We could get you an invite to the MVCC, I know Dave Patch is involved in it, if that's ok with you</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'd be happy to come and talk about what we do and what our goals are</li> <li>• This is an ongoing conversation and I agree about meeting fatigue</li> <li>• So, we want to work on making this meeting valuable, so we're working on cleaning up our data</li> <li>• So we can get back to a place where we're really confident about how many Veterans are experiencing homelessness, our inflow outflow, our progress on BFZ and functional zero benchmarks</li> <li>• I do think some coordination and collaboration, that happens outside of the meeting</li> <li>• If we had a fuller picture of all these different groups and what they have to offer, it would benefit the Veterans to know all of the services that are available</li> <li>• Having those relationships is really important</li> </ul> <p>James</p>	
--	--	--



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MBCC meeting moves around during the day</li> <li>• And getting into the Maine Veterans in Need meeting next week, because there's a whole group of non-profits that this group is trying to figure out the legislation so this work can get done</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do believe there is some overlap there</li> </ul> <p>Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I said in the chat that I send out a whole bunch of times and then people can select when they're available and then time it for when the most people can come</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The American legion and VFW would be good to get back to this meeting</li> </ul> <p>James</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jen Lane is now the homeless veteran committee chairman for the VFW</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a great conversation, I think we've already spent more time and had more discussion than our last quarterly meeting</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p><b>USICH Benchmark Presentation</b></p>	<p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nichele, are you able to give a brief presentation on the USICH benchmarks</li> </ul> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the caveat, I didn't know it was supposed to be brief</li> <li>• I will do my best to make it brief</li> <li>• This slide is about USICH</li> <li>• I believe most people have heard of us</li> <li>• United States Interagency Council on Homelessness is the only federal agency solely dedicated to homelessness</li> <li>• Council members represent 19 federal agencies</li> <li>• Purpose of the criteria and benchmarks:</li> <li>• In 2015, the commonwealth of Virginia was the first state to functionally end homelessness</li> <li>• The criteria and benchmarks work together to make sure a community has what they need to respond to homelessness</li> <li>• The criteria provide an ongoing assessment of a community's response to homelessness and the benchmarks serve as a way to measure how effectively your system is working in an ongoing basis</li> <li>• We know at any given moment, a Veteran may be experiencing homelessness, so it's more about knowing whether you have the resources to meet that Veteran's needs</li> <li>• So we say functionally ending homelessness, because actually ending homelessness is beyond our ability with society as it stands right now</li> <li>• So a better way to move forward is to see if we have the resources to house a veteran immediately</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The criteria has been an area of confusion, or disagreement between some communities</li> <li>• The community has identified all veterans experiencing homelessness, using coordinated outreach, other data sources, those experiencing chronic homelessness, and those in shelters and transitional housing is one criteria</li> <li>• The community provides shelter immediately to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it is the next criteria</li> <li>• Because sometimes you have to take the time to build a relationship and trust</li> <li>• The community provides service-intensive transitional housing only in limited instances.</li> <li>• That's important because when transitional housing is provided to a Veteran, priority should be place on it being short-term, because you want to get them into something permanent</li> <li>• And the emphasis needs to remain on it being the Veteran's choice</li> <li>• We need to make sure that the choices are permanent housing, offered SSVF or HUD-VASH or other assistance programs, or they were given the option of a transitional program as an alternative</li> <li>• The community has capacity to assist Veterans to swiftly move into permanent housing</li> <li>• And it's not enough to say you have a voucher but can't find a unit</li> <li>• And while they have voucher in hand, they're still considered homeless</li> <li>• The community has resources, plans, partnerships, and system capacity in place should any Veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future</li> <li>• The thing about functionally ending Veteran homelessness, is that as soon as you hear about someone, you can go to them, verify their housing situation, and get them connected immediately with the resources they need to get them housed or prevent them losing their current housing</li> <li>• The benchmarks are a little easier for people to understand</li> <li>• You want to make sure that there are chronic and long-term homelessness in your community has ended</li> <li>• So we're really talking about having no people experiencing chronic or long-term homelessness in your Veteran population</li> <li>• If there are people who are not ready to come inside, a unit is available to them, and the system is in place to connect them, but they're just not ready to come inside, that would be the exception</li> <li>• Veterans have quick access to permanent, not transitional housing</li> </ul>	
--	---	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your community has to have sufficient permanent housing capacity</li> <li>• Overall, the long-term trend should be more Veterans moving out of homelessness than into homelessness</li> <li>• And nationally we have around 9,000 more people coming into than going out of homelessness</li> <li>• And the community has to be committed to housing first and provides service-intensive transitional housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness only in limited instances</li> <li>• And this is about giving people the dignity and understanding that they deserve</li> <li>• That may have taken longer than it should have</li> <li>• Are there questions?</li> </ul> <p>James</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you shorten that presentation, is there more to the PowerPoint that we should know?</li> </ul> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, I didn't shorten it, I just ran through it faster than I usually would have, used fewer examples</li> <li>• I can share the PowerPoint and the Notes</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You said Virginia stopped funding transitional housing in 2011, we have GPDs, were those GPDs or something else?</li> </ul> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We did not stop GPDs</li> <li>• We were one of 13 states that had a dedicated homeless state funding source, so we used to fund the traditional two year program, where people had to pay 30% of their income and jump through all the hoops</li> <li>• And 2011 is when we decided to really become housing first</li> <li>• It started to come into focus that maybe people don't need to do all of these things in order to stay housed</li> <li>• The decision was made in 2009, and 2011 was the year that we pulled money away from it, so it wasn't an overnight change</li> <li>• The Veteran programs were not affected because they were using federal funding as opposed to state monies</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The benchmarks / criteria, the expectation is that you get someone into permanent housing or have a permanent housing offer within 90 days, for folks in GPDs, they often stay longer than 90 days, so would they count as like a ding on our system</li> </ul> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's not so much a ding as they are still being counted as homeless, but if you have that permanent housing option, if you have units for those individuals, you would be in the pink</li> </ul> <p>Kaitlin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do communities track the number of units that they</li> </ul>	
--	--	--

	<p>have?</p> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a whole spreadsheet that you'd be keeping track of for more than 90 days to be able to demonstrate that</li> <li>• There is a team that meets with you and provides you with the things you have to keep track of on this very extensive spreadsheet, and then go over things with you after 90 days</li> <li>• There may also be a back log, because this team is reviewing community after community, so even if you hit it for one 90 day catchment, but then lose it the next</li> <li>• And I would be a part of that with you</li> </ul> <p>Kaitlin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have suggestions on what other communities are doing to track open housing units that they can offer to Veterans?</li> </ul> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What I can do is get you connected to some places that recently ended homelessness to talk through some of the strategies they've used</li> </ul> <p>Wendy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What I'm understanding is that the formula of the spreadsheet shows that we're continuously housing people, and that shows that we have more people going out of the system than coming in, and that's the magic number that would show that we have enough housing units</li> <li>• It's not that we need to have a list of available apartments, but that the formula of the spreadsheet is continuously showing that the inflow and the outflow have the right ratio</li> <li>• It would be really great to have some language around that to empower our landlords, so they know that they are the ones who are really controlling that outflow</li> <li>• And of course, then there's the plug for project based housing, but given the numbers of homeless people that we have compared to how many project based units we have</li> </ul> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What you just said is exactly right</li> <li>• It's not that you have a list of units, it has to be that a trend over 90 days is that you have more getting housing than coming into the system</li> <li>• Because we did it for the whole state, we would not have been able to move someone from one community to another because of the disparity of cultures</li> </ul> <p>Wendy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And we see that in different parts of Maine, but it's also empowering when we have the ability to talk about having availability vs when we have people with a voucher in hand and nowhere to go</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a question about data requirements</li> <li>• One of the pieces was to identify all of the homeless Veterans</li> </ul>	
--	--	--

	<p>in the state, using different data measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right now, we have this huge data pool of people using the BNL generated out of HMIS</li> <li>• Are there specific things we need to pull out of HMIS?</li> </ul> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's more about having that BNL, knowing who in your state is experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• I can't remember if I've heard anyone really balking about using HMIS in Maine, but in some places, getting them to use the system could be a challenge</li> <li>• The measures we use really change based on which communities we're dealing with</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any other questions for Nichele</li> <li>• And a huge thank you for doing this presentation, this has been really helpful for us to understand</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One more question before we move on</li> <li>• If we have programs that require sobriety or MH treatment, it sounds to me like that's a barrier, so we need to have those conversations if that exists</li> </ul> <p>Nichele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We had some shelters that created barriers like that, which meant we couldn't count them for Veterans</li> <li>• We could only count shelter beds that were genuinely low-barrier</li> <li>• And over time, they ended up losing their funding, because we also had our city governments on board and we all attacked the issue together</li> <li>• Maine's numbers seem like this is an achievable goal</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, this is looking more and more solvable, and we're definitely moving in the right direction</li> <li>• We are working on our application for USICH</li> <li>• We had one going before COVID, but then the pandemic threw everything off track, though I think we still have a copy somewhere, which might be informative</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p><b>VA FY24 Goals and Housing Surge Data</b></p>	<p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danielle is going to review some of our housing surge data for FY24 housing surge goals</li> </ul> <p>Danielle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I put together a short PowerPoint</li> <li>• I'm the homeless program coordinator for VA Maine</li> <li>• The goals are three fold, including a permanent housing goal, a prevention of return to homelessness, and engagement with unsheltered Veterans</li> <li>• For the first goal, nationwide is 41,000 Veterans housed over the course of FY24</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The second is that no more than 5% of them return to homelessness</li> <li>• And the third is that, nationwide, we engage with at least 40,000 unsheltered Veterans</li> <li>• The data we have right now is as of July</li> <li>• Nationally, we're at 38,873 of 41,000</li> <li>• Returns to homelessness, nationally we're at 3.3%</li> <li>• And the engagement goal, we're at 34,956 of the 40,000</li> <li>• In Maine, we met the goal as of the end of July</li> <li>• Our goal was 156, and we ended the month with 157 Veterans housed</li> <li>• We're at 3.2% recidivism, which is both below the goal and below the national average</li> <li>• For engagement, our goal is 166, and we're at 148</li> <li>• We're doing well and by the time the fiscal year ends, it seems likely we'll meet or surpass these goals</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Gaps/Issues in the System/Winter Planning</b></p>	<p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next, Laura will lead us into a conversation about some of the gaps in our system or what needs are not being met</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was hoping to talk some about barriers we're seeing for Veterans, and we can break it down between sheltered, unsheltered, those in need of housing retention</li> <li>• So, let's start with literally homeless</li> <li>• What are some barriers we're seeing to getting people housed, or even to getting them connected to programs</li> </ul> <p>Kaitlin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rising rent costs and voucher payment standards not matching up has been a huge challenge</li> </ul> <p>Karen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aging of the homeless population is something our system is not yet equipped to deal with</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, we don't have enough housing for people in need of assistance</li> </ul> <p>Karen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even with a disabling diagnosis, there aren't enough permanent housing options</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And from a data perspective, it doesn't show as permanent housing, even if they are likely to stay there for the rest of their life</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking about unsheltered people, I feel like a lot of times they get connected to Veteran's services, but I don't know for sure</li> <li>• So that could be a potential gap</li> <li>• If they get connected to another program, do they civilian</li> </ul>	

	<p>programs have the information to connect that Veteran to a Veteran program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making sure that the various lines people call in on, 211, the hotline, and the Preble Street Outreach, etc. has our updated information</li> </ul> <p>Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another pitch for that mobile office at the encampment, you could have cell phones available to be used and have someone taking messages to facilitate communication</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know our staff have cell phones for clients to use, but maybe there's a better system for that</li> </ul> <p>Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And you could staff it with people with lived experience, who would be happy to earn a little money, just set them up under an open pavilion</li> </ul> <p>Chris</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the things we keep running into is an attitude that we need places for people to go, but they don't want that place to be where they live</li> <li>• A benefit to doing an awareness raiser is that there are people out there, who if they had a better understanding of what we do, they might be willing to help us to do it</li> <li>• It's important to reach out to people and let them know what we're doing</li> <li>• If anyone is interested, email me, we plan to do a brainstorming session in the next few weeks</li> <li>• Radio and television are required to serve the public interest, so there's a lot we could do for free</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To summarize, the gap or the barrier is stigma</li> <li>• So, something we could do would be to organize positive media about people experiencing homelessness about what they're struggling with</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wanted to mention another potential gap is diversion, that not every homeless Veteran is getting a comprehensive housing solution offered to them</li> <li>• And that may require training our outreach team and the people answering the phones about what resources they might have locally or through other avenues to reserve some of the other resources for people without options</li> </ul> <p>Wendy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think sometimes with the hotline calls or referrals, the consults, there is an understanding that there are housing resources out there, but there are also limitations, but they might have their own resources that maybe they hadn't considered, especially when it comes to homeless prevention</li> <li>• Do we have a comprehensive, easily accessible list that they can go to</li> </ul>	
--	---	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because there's an idea that they can't get help unless they're homeless</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That also connects to the USICH benchmarks, because if we can sort of divert some people from the system, that would decrease our inflow</li> <li>• Any other barriers or gaps</li> </ul> <p>Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One thing we could do is to help people get as much as they can get, as much as they qualify for</li> <li>• We want to reduce poverty as much as possible</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think for the most part our programs are doing that, but that's also a good reminder</li> <li>• Not just for Veteran services but for any other services</li> </ul> <p>Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's no stigma for getting food stamps or the other support services that you paid taxes for others to get</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Encampment Outreach / Response Planning</b></p>	<p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danielle talking about encampment outreach</li> </ul> <p>Danielle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know we've touched on encampments already, and some of the barriers as far as coordinated efforts go</li> <li>• VA outreach has been focusing on encampment outreach and has run into some geographic barriers</li> <li>• The landscape has shifted from having localized groups, with a few outliers, like the encampment in Bangor</li> <li>• As there's been a shift, individuals are more mobile and aren't congregating as groups as much anymore, which is making identifying Veterans and outreaching people much more difficult</li> <li>• Our outreach has been working on collaborating with organizations that have pathways and making sure that they know how to direct Veterans into our systems, and local law enforcement to help identify access points and to possibly get a heads up when they come into contact with a homeless Veteran</li> <li>• But we're also very open to feedback about what we could also be doing and how to be thoughtful about providing that outreach</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you seen more people moving into the mid-coast reason</li> </ul> <p>Danielle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, but also people aren't in larger groups</li> <li>• Law enforcement in Augusta pointed us toward some areas where there were tents, but when they went out, the people had moved more into the woods</li> <li>• Is Preble Street seeing something similar with outreach?</li> </ul>	



	<p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, people are moving further into the woods, they're not staying close together, they're being moved along a lot</li> <li>• I've also heard that people are moving north of Portland, to Lewiston/Auburn, Augusta, Topsham</li> <li>• We're doing more mid-coast outreach</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This doesn't help immediately, but the COC was looking into an outreach app for workers to be able to map where people are, which would connect to HMIS</li> <li>• Because you're right when people are moving so frequently, people are also losing stuff more frequently, so the need for supplies is higher</li> <li>• We can also be more intentional about outreach workers partnering up with other people</li> <li>• Or understanding where encampments are in each hub, maybe bringing in the hub coordinators</li> <li>• Or we could try to pull some private money to purchase hand warmers or can openers with our contact information on it</li> </ul> <p>Danielle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a group that meets right now that specifically looks at outreach or encampments with the Veteran population?</li> </ul> <p>Wendy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was also going to ask if there is any collaboration between outreach groups?</li> </ul> <p>Laura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have an internal outreach meeting</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preble Street hosts an outreach meeting with community providers in Portland, but most outreach programs are regionalized</li> </ul> <p>Karen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Bangor, the city has just appointed some of the outreach efforts for Bangor, Janette Jones</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emily says that Hub coordinators do generally keep track of encampments, because they're in charge of the PIT counts</li> <li>• So, we could reach out to them, which would give us the best place to start</li> </ul> <p>Emily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know some Hubs host meetings where they coordinate outreach, but they also do that during case conferencing</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Housing Incentives / Program Updates</b></p>	<p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I hate to break up the conversation, but we're running short on time</li> <li>• Any urgent program updates we want to be sure to get in here before we wrap up?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	

<b>HVAC Staff Update</b>	<p>Wendy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danielle, have you had a chance to talk about that thing we were discussing</li> <li>• Dan and Barrett and the VA Homeless coordinator are the tri-chairs, and I was filling in until we had a new homeless coordinator</li> <li>• So, since she has accepted the permanent coordinator position, she is now the third tri-chair for HVAC</li> <li>• So, the charter should be updated to remove my name and put hers in</li> </ul> <p>Dan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you for the update, and thank you for all the work you've put in with the committee</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
--------------------------	---	--

( ) Approved ( ) Disapproved

Dan Hodgkins  
Chair

Jessica Casselman  
Recorder

Distribution: Members



# VA Maine healthcare System, Augusta, ME

## *HVAC Monthly Meeting Minutes*

Date: 1 October 2024

Time Started: 1000

Time Ended: 1135

ATTENDEES NAME	TITLE
Kaitlin Plourde	Preble Street Veterans Housing Services Supervisor, HVAC Housing Chair
Barrett Fisher	Claims Supervisor, Bureau of Veterans Services, HVAC Tri-Chair
Ray Michaud	Veterans Inc Regional Manager
Wendy Thomas-Blais	HUD-VASH Program Manager
Karen Martin	Coordinated Entry Specialist, HVAC BNL Manager
Brian Bouthot	VOANNE Operations Coordinator Veteran Services
Laura Clark	Preble Street Veterans Housing Services Program Director
Amy Holland	Maine Housing
Emily Richards	Homeless Services Hub Coordinator, HVAC BNL Assistant
Carol Trask	Bread of Life Shelter Manager
Danielle Mayer	HCHV Program Coordinator, HVAC Tri-Chair
Alexander (Sandy) Colts	Systems Improvement Advisor, Community Solutions
Robby Jones	Clinical Social Worker, GPD Liaison

### MINUTES:

- There were no new changes to HVAC officer positions or committee members.
- HVAC members voted to approve the minutes from September's Meeting.
- Sandy went over the Built-for-Zero (BFZ) criteria, answering members' questions and providing illustrative examples of what is required for BFZ to recognize that Maine has reached functional zero.
- These criteria include demonstrably reliable data capturing from the entire state and a minimum of 90 days where the system outflow exceeds inflow.
- Motion was made to have the tri-chairs come together to create a plan of action for how to meet both BFZ and USICH criteria successfully.
- Preble Street has entered a partnership with a landlord organization and is hosting a Lunch & Learn on 12 November.
- USICH released the Federal Homelessness Prevention Framework (<https://usich.gov/prevention>)
- Veterans Inc has filled their Housing Retention Case Management position and is ready to dive back into CCM.

- Statewide Case Consultations have been dedicating a period of time to BNL clean-up, which has led to measurable BNL improvement.
- Preble Street’s radio advertisements have started for their landlord engagement website [www.nohomelessveterans.org](http://www.nohomelessveterans.org).
- As of the end of August, we are on track to achieve or surpass the VA’s housing, retention, and engagement goals for FY 24.

( ) Approved ( ) Disapproved

Barrett Fisher / Danielle Mayer  
Chair

Jessica Casselman  
Recorder

Distribution: Members



# VA Maine healthcare System, Augusta, ME

## *HVAC Meeting Minutes*

Date: 5 November 2024

Time Started: 0959

Time Ended: 1147

ATTENDEES NAME	TITLE
Nichele Carver	Senior Regional Advisor with US Interagency Counsel on Homelessness, Senior Regional Advisor for New England
Ray Michaud	Veterans Inc Regional Manager
Dan Hodgkins	Senior Director of Social Work, Preble Street, HVAC Tri-Chair
Matthew Kennedy	Deputy Supervisor of Veterans Services at MBVS, HVAC Tri-Chair
Barrett Fisher	Claims Supervisor, MBVS
Laura Clark	VHS Preble Street, Program Director
Brian Bouthot	VOANNE Operations Coordinator Veterans Services
Danielle Mayer	HCHV Program Coordinator, HVAC Tri-Chair
Dean Klein	Executive Director, Maine Continuum of Care
Kaitlin Plourde	Preble Street Veterans Housing Services Supervisor, HVAC Housing Chair
Karen Martin	Coordinated Entry Specialist, HVAC BNL Manager
Carol Trask	Bread of Life Shelter Manager
Robby Jones	Grant and Per Diem Liaison
Emily Richards	Homeless Services Hub Coordinator, HVAC BNL Assistant
Matthew Leslie	Senior Associate, Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC)
Jessica Casselman	HUD-VASH Program Support Assistant, HVAC Secretary

### MINUTES:

- Matthew Kennedy took over the MBVS Tri-Chair position from Barrett Fisher, who turned over the responsibility with our thanks.
- October's meeting minutes and condensed minutes were voted approved without amendments.
- Ray updated HVAC members on position openings at Veterans Inc.
- Matt Kennedy shared updated income requirements for VEFAP.
- No important updates from USICH or the governor; Barrett sent the annual report on homelessness MBVS prepares for the governor to the HVAC distribution group.
- Matt Kennedy reported out on Stand Downs.

- Karen updated members on changes to Statewide Case Consultation meetings and BNL data improvements.
- Kaitlin shared landlord engagement strategies focused around Preble Street’s recent website launch and the use of Flex Funding.
- Kaitlin reported out on the Southern Maine Rental Housing Alliance’s new partnership with Preble Street.
- The group discussed the Housing Retention workgroup, asking for volunteers to be involved in the workgroup and what our general goals for that group should be.
- Dan proposed a discussion around refocusing some energy on the goal to house Veterans within 90 days of their admission, in service of the BFZ and USICH benchmarks, asking for ideas and potential barriers.
- Danielle reported out on the VA’s FY24 Housing goals, which were met or exceeded.
- No word yet on FY25 Housing goals.
- Dan proposed putting together a temporary workgroup to identify action steps HVAC should support to move toward the BFZ and USICH benchmarks, including breaking those down into achievable, measurable steps. The group discussed.
- The group discussed ideas for outreach, focusing on identifying barriers and how to overcome them.

( ) Approved ( ) Disapproved

Dan Hodgkins  
Chair

Jessica Casselman  
Recorder

Distribution: Members



# VA Maine healthcare System, Augusta, ME

## *HVAC Monthly Meeting Minutes*

Date: 3 December 2024

Time Started: 1006

Time Ended: 1047

ATTENDEES NAME	TITLE
Dan Hodgkins	Senior Director of Social Work, Preble Street, HVAC Tri-Chair
Matthew Kennedy	Deputy Supervisor of Veterans Services, MBVS, HVAC Tri-Chair
Amy Holland	Homeless Response System Coordinator, Maine Housing
Kaitlin Plourde	Veterans Housing Services Supervisor, Preble Street, HVAC Housing Chair
Ray Michaud	Veterans Inc Regional Manager
Robby Jones	VA Clinical Social Worker, GPD Liaison
Karen Martin	VA Clinical Social Worker, Coordinated Entry Specialist, HVAC BNL Manager
Emily Richards	Homeless Services Hub 5 Coordinator Veterans Services
Laura Briggs	Director of Operations, Bread of Life

### MINUTES:

- November Minutes unanimously approved.
- Vets Inc. HVRP hiring underway
- MBVS Income limits 150% of DHHS poverty guidelines for Financial Programs (VEFAP & TSP)
- Matt Veterans and Legal Affairs Report VLA due January
- Unifying messages around ending homelessness, as we will not meet the June 2025 goal for functional zero. Once quality data has been established, we can develop benchmarks.
- Dan shared Dean Klein is new executive Director of COC.
- Board of directors forming.
- COC NOFO submitted.
- State of Maine passed bill for site -based Housing First programs and are accepting applications now.
- Media presence increased with advertising.
- Dan developing leads for community funding.
- Kaitlin presenting in community at landlord associations.
- Kaitlin seeking to build subcommittee to work on engaging more landlords.

- Committee discussed the agenda for the next HVAC Steering Committee Meeting.

Matthew Kennedy  
Chair

Karen Martin  
Recorder

Distribution: Members