Chittenden County Homeless Alliance

Strategic Planning Committee

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CCHA Quarterly Meeting Feedback

Connected to Mutually Reinforcing Activities

In an effort to engage and include the voices on individuals who are, or have been, homeless in developing community solutions to make homelessness rare and brief, on June 6, 2017, the Alliance Quarterly meeting was held at the Salvation Army after their dinner meal. The focus of the evening was to develop a deeper understanding of:

* How people who need housing get connected to services
* What roadblocks people encounter accessing services and securing housing
* What people need to stay housed (focus on conditions other than vouchers and money)]
* What would you do to change the system

It should be noted that many of the responses to the systems change question spoke to what seems like fairly intractable cultural, economic, social and political issues and conditions that contribute to maintaining the status quo (at best), if not making the situation worse.

The meeting was organized around small group discussions in each of the three areas. Service providers acted as facilitators and scribes. The following connects the information gathered in these conversations with the Mutually Reinforcing Activities work the strategic planning committee has been drafting as a foundation for a 3 – 5 year strategic plan for the Alliance.

**Summary Table:**

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| Key Questions - | Connection to Mutually Reinforcing Activities |
| How does someone who needs housing get connect to services?   * Word of mouth * Organizations (public, private and non-profit housing and service providers) * 211 * Signs and posters * Community and faith-based organizations * Print material | These comments seem to align with items identified as needing to be universally available.  If accurate, timely information were to become a universal need, the Alliance should consider what, if any, role it could have in moving the effort forward. (Could align with year two goals for marketing, communications and outreach outlined in funding proposals for backbone support.) |
| What Roadblocks do people encounter in accessing services and securing housing?  There is great similarity between the issues that were identified with this question and the issues that were identified as what people need to stay housed. Information in this section is limited to comments about processes and people.  Comments focused in five general areas:   * Accessing services in a timely, convenient and appropriate manner * Language, transportation and accessibility * Complicated system and rules * Lack of access to technology * Stigma | In general these comments seem to align with items identified in various places across the map. In addition they included some specific recommendations about ‘how or what’ might help. Given that, it is reasonable for the Alliance to consider a role that would:   * Identify and promote the use of best practice to address identified barriers and needs * (Continue to) Find ways to support the inclusion of consumer voice in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services across the continuum of needs * Seek opportunities to standardize assessments, applications and approaches wherever possible. |
| What do people need to stay housed?  Comments focused in four broad areas:   * Financial, legal, medical and economic conditions * Lack of skills and knowledge * Habits and lifestyles * Social Connectedness * Furnishings and moving support * Transportation | * Proactively expand (and formalize) connections with networks   across the community to inform and support the goals or work of others that are critical to the goals of the Alliance (for example: transportation, job skills training, etc.)   * Seek opportunities to test solutions that requires cross-network |
| What would you do to change the system?  Comments focused in the following broad areas:   * Equity and inclusion * Racism and discrimination * Immediacy * Collaboration and standardization * Simplify access and regulations * Flexible and nimble * Professional, skilled and caring staff * Communication * Culture and Attitudes * Political and economic systems and structures * Fully utilize and leverage all available resources * Housing inventory – quantity, quality, type and affordability * Consumer choice * Budgets prioritize people * Decision-making around resources | These comments were by far the hardest to align with areas of the mutually reinforcing activities map.   * (At the risk of overly simplifying) The two places the lists seem to connect the best are in the Universally Available and Guiding Principles boxes. * A number of other areas speak less to what we do but more about how we do it, how we monitor what we do with an eye to continuous improvement and appropriateness and who we involve in developing a community response to the housing needs of its residents. * Finally, there were a number of areas that spoke to regional, state and national conditions outside of the Alliance’s ability to control, but not necessarily outside our ability to influence. These areas beg the questions of what is the role of the Alliance in education and advocacy, and to the extent there is a role how we decide when, how and how much we can do. |