

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)
Steering Committee Meeting, July 2, 2020, 9:00 AM
Online meeting

Attendees:

- Will Towne, **SPECTRUM**
- Todd Rawlings, **CEDO**
- Nicole Kubon, **STEPS**
- Stephen Marshall, **LIVED EXPERIENCE**
- Stephen Lunna, **SSVF @ UVM**
- Sarah Russell, **CVOEO**
- Robyn Stattel, **DCF**
- Rita Markley, **COTS**
- Phillip Snay
- Pat McKittrick, **UVMCMC**
- Olivia Graffeo Cohen, **Vermont Legal Aid**
- Meghan Morrow Raftery, **ICA**
- M223857 (as identified online)
- Liz Whitmore, **BHA**
- Lindsay Mesa, **PATHWAYS**
- Linda Amante, **CVOEO**
- Lily Sojourner, **OEO**
- Lacey Smith, **BPD**
- Kevin Pounds, **Anew Place**
- Kim Colville, **VCIL**
- Jane Helmstetter, **AHS**
- Erin Armstrong, **UVMCMC**
- Elaine Soto, **HOWARD**
- Daniel Blankenship, **VSHA**
- Chris Brzovic, **CVOEO**
- Bill Schrecker, **VHFA**
- Amy Carmola, **UWNWVT**
- Margaret Bozik, **CHT**
- Lily Sojourner, **OEO**
- Travis Poulin, **CVOEO**
- Jan Demers, **CVOEO**
- Sarah Russell, **CVOEO**
- Laura Zeliger, **BHA**

DRAFT

Please send corrections to
edacosta@vhfa.org

HMIS Software Review led by Meghan Morrow Raftery of ICA

- Meghan: The Vermont HMIS advisory committee met and voted to recommend that both Vermont CoCs proceed with a software RFP due to some of the issues that have been happening with the current vendor.
 - Some background: Wisconsin began a software review in April of 2019 because Wellsky missed some of their own self-imposed milestones implementing their new reporting system. They did an RFI first (Request for Information), invitational only. There were six vendors to send information:
 - **Wellsky (ServicePoint)**
 - **Bitfocus (Clarity Human Services)**
 - **Eccovia (Client Track)**
 - **Caseworthy**
 - Foothold (AWARDS)
 - Social Solutions (ETO)
 - Out of these 6, four sent information (emboldened above). And they participated then in the RFP.
 - The 4 Wisconsin CoCs have decided to choose a new vendor by May of next year. It's a long process.
 - Wisconsin has put in a structure/ model for Vermont to follow so perhaps it won't take as long for Vermont.
- **REASONS TO CHANGE HMIS SOFTWARE:**
 - ART will soon no longer work. It works through Java and Java support has ended. The only browser that continues to use Java is Explorer and this is not an updated browser. ART is an advanced reporting tool that's used across Coordinated Entry.
 - Since Wellsky was acquired, our ability to effect change in terms of feature enhancements and problems, is gone.
 - "There is definitely a regression in the work done by Wellsky, and ICA is consuming a large portion of organizational resources trying to get them to be better at their jobs."
- Rita Markley/ COTS: In the RFP process, would there be consideration for a vendor that's already used by 3 of us and that does all the HMIS APR reports that can bill Medicaid: **FOOTHOLD?**
 - Meghan Morrow Raftery/ ICA: As long as they put in a proposal, yes they would be in the ranking.
- Chris Brzovic/ CVOEO: Regarding members of the HMIS committee — who will be making this decision — we should try to recruit people who are end-users of the system and will be using it on a day to day basis.

- Meghan Morrow Raftery: Yes. It will be a year to two year commitment. We need a couple more members of this committee. Please email me if you want to be added to the committee.
- **We'll have a vote on this in the August meeting.**

BRIEF NOTE FROM LAURA ZELIGER, BHA

- Regarding the upcoming NOFA, BHA has indicated the challenges we have in applying for that. I'd like to re-convene with some local stakeholders to talk about this and perhaps there's a way to re-imagine that application that meets everyone's needs.
- We're still facing an outstanding audit from CPD.
- **Margaret Bozik (CHT) Lindsay Mesa (Pathways) and Chris Brzovic (CVOEO) all suggested they'd like to be part of this conversation.**

○ NO UPDATES ABOUT NOFA YET — It has not been released.

UPDATES ABOUT THE CARES ACT HOUSING FUNDS UPDATES led by Margaret Bozik, CHT

There are 2 pots of money:

- 1.2 billion that came from the Cares Act which has to be spent by the end of December. **(SHORT TERM MONEY)**
- Supplemental HUD appropriations for Community Development Block Grant and Community Solutions Grant — this has to be spent in 2 years. **(LONG TERM MONEY)**

VERMONT DISTRIBUTIONS of CAPITAL MONEY

- 23 million went to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, to be distributed by them. This is for acquisition of properties and physical improvement to properties.
 - Request for letters of intent was issued and VHCB received requests totalling 56 million. They then issued requests for full applications.
 - CHT put in applications for 3 hotels — 2 for housing and 1 for a shelter. We were invited to apply for 1 building for housing and 1 for shelter. The housing would be 62 units, primarily 1 bedrooms. We're working with BHA on what subsidy might be available.
 - The idea is that rents would generate enough income that it would be possible to have 1 full time staff member on site at the property.
 - The initial 62 lease ups would come from Coordinated Entry.
 - There was an additional 9 million added to the original 23 million.

- Kevin Pounds/ ANEW PLACE: Our low barrier shelter was denied. We were very surprised.
- Rita Markley/ COTS: We applied for 47K to do plexiglass and dividers.
- 6.2 million is available to private landlords. 30K per apartment with a 10% landlord match. There's a request out for LOI. Home ownership centers throughout the state are going to apply for that. I don't know if the CAP agencies are as well through the weatherization program. This is SHORT TERM money which will be very challenging. CHT will be submitting an LOI for this program. If we're chosen, I'll let everyone know who the point person is at CHT to work on landlord outreach.
- There is also 250K available for a landlord risk pool. This is also SHORT TERM money.

VERMONT DISTRIBUTIONS OF MONEY FOR RENT

- There's 25 million for rental assistance administered through the VSHA. This is SHORT TERM money. This is for up to 3 months of rent. Tenants and Landlords can apply but Landlords can only apply for 50 percent of unpaid rent.
- The state and city also set aside a smaller amount of money through the CDBG funds for rental assistance. This has been put on hold for the moment as kind of a backup.
- There is also an augmentation of 2.5 million to the regular rental assistance program — this is a combination of SHORT AND LONG TERM money.

VERMONT DISTRIBUTION OF MONEY FOR SERVICES

- 6 million (mostly SHORT TERM money but 1 million is LONG TERM) for housing navigation, presumably through OEO.
 - Lily Sojourner/ OEO: The only thing we have up and running at the moment is the second phase of the COVID supplemental HOP grant. The application is on the website (due July 8).
 - Lindsay Mesa/ PATHWAYS: Pathways is applying for 25K from these phase 2 funds to do an additional full time housing navigation position. We'd also like to offer to the system the potential to partner some additional people with our RRH program. We continue to find that we have additional rental assistance in that program. When we have more staff, we will be able to connect more people — through Coordinated Entry — to this program.

OTHER MONEY

- 3.78 million is available for "flex grants": money available in the amounts of \$2500 to \$8000. This is SHORT TERM money. The purpose is to get people out of hotels and into housing. Presumably administered through OEO.
 - Lily Sojourner/ OEO: We want to leverage the existing CoC infrastructure for this. We're hoping for feedback about this quickly.
- There's also utility assistance funds available as well. It's not clear how this is being channeled yet.

- There will be mortgage assistance available administered through VHFA. The income cap for eligibility will be lower in Chittenden County than in other areas of the state.
- There will also be money for Legal Aid and for Landlord/Tenant Assistance.
- Kim Colville/VCIL: Is there any money available for tax assistance?
 - Margaret Bozik: I don't remember seeing that at all.

[Click here to see the Total Economic Stabilization and Recovery spreadsheet from the Vermont Joint Fiscal Office](#)

EMERGENCY MOTEL and COORDINATED ENTRY

- Chris Brzovic/ CVOEO: One of the new requirements from ESD is that everyone be connected to services. So we're getting a lot of calls. We're back logged. We don't currently have the capacity to connect everyone to housing navigators but we anticipate we will be able to once the new motel teams are deployed.
- Robin / ESD: We are in 2 week cycles for housing, with the exception for people who have some income. We're trying to stagger the dates more.
- Rita Markley/ COTS: Phase 1 was an effort to do outreach at the 3 motels with the largest populations of people experiencing homelessness (Baymont, Quality Inn and Days Inn). When the Holiday Inn opened, 2 of the teams switched there.
 - Once ESD started implementing new requirements, there wasn't an opportunity to get to the 2 other hotels (North Star & Travel Lodge) because they had never been based there.
 - The help for this is Phase 2 which is 6 months. This will be developing individualized housing plans. We will work in teams of two. 10 outreach workers in 5 teams and one coordinator. We are still looking to hire 5 more people.
 - The Phase 1 teams will be finished with their work at the end of June but have agreed to stay on for one more week.
 - Lacey Smith has been enormously helpful — thank you!

SHELTER UPDATES

- Kevin Pounds/ ANEW PLACE: We are up to 24 guests at the campground at North Beach. We have more and more referrals coming through different sources. There are significant number of people who are new clients. People we've never seen before. I feel that COVID has brought out the previously invisible.
 - Chris Brzovic/ CVOEO: From what I've seen , the vast majority of the new people coming to us were previously couch surfing.
- Will Towne/ SPECTRUM: We renovated our drop-in center over the winter. We will be re-opening soon — a phased re-opening. Our numbers were lower through Covid. But we're full again.
- Rita Markley/ COTS: We had lower numbers due to Covid restrictions but the family shelter remained at a maximum. The Day Station is slowly re-opening.

- Margaret Bozik/ CHT/ Harbor Place: We've had from 2 to 12 people a night. Roughly 55 people have come and gone. With the exception of 1 re-hospitalization, people have moved out in a healthy state.

FINALLY: Farmer's market coupons available at CVOEO! Contact Travis Poulin.

Next Meeting: August 6, 2020

Please go to cchavt.org to find meeting dates, minutes, etc.