

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)

Coordinated Entry Meeting

Dec 5 2018 at 8:30

Champlain Housing Trust, 88 King Street, Burlington, VT – 2nd floor conference room

MINUTES

Attendees:

Andrea Tieso, **VHFA**
Nicole Kubon, **COTS**
Elaine Soto, **Howard Center**
Adam Wager, **COTS**
Travis Poulin, **CCA-CVOEO**
Lindsay Mesa, **Pathways Vermont**
Steve Marshall, **Homeless Community**
Brian Smith, **VT-DMH**
Chris Brzovic, **CCHA**
Erica DaCosta, **CCHA (note-taker)**

PRELIMINARIES

- Small group this time. ICA staff was not able to attend Wednesday's CE meeting. They were out of the state for a staff meeting.
 - Our main task today will be to review the partnership agreement.
 - Another C.E. meeting will happen on the 19th (regularly scheduled).
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A DISCUSSION OF THE MULTIPLE DEFINITIONS OF "CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS"

- Chris reported that CCHA is working to update our chronic homelessness list so that our master-list is **ACTUALLY** reflective of chronically homeless. But, Chris asserts, this may be a bigger issue than it seems. We currently have about 100 people on the master-list identified as chronic. We hope to update this list in HMIS and get a better idea of who is **ACTUALLY** chronic and who may have been entered in error (self-reported but weren't necessarily so, etc), but **the deeper issue going on is that HUD documentation requirements for Shelter+Care grants has become much more strict.**
- According to Stephanie Bixby of BHA, they feel that there's a much smaller group of people who would actually meet the documentation requirements: a lot of couch surfers, etc. **So we have this issue of having a larger number of homeless than can actually access PSH (permanent supportive housing). This is because the documentation requirements are so onerous.**
- It was suggested that the larger group be called **"chronically homeless but unable to be documented."**

- SAFE HARBOR feels the document-able group is very small. But **we don't have good data** on this or a method for gathering it. Currently we just have one category that fits in HMIS – “chronically homeless” – but we haven't broken the list out further.
 - The question was posed about **“initiating a field” in the assessment form** that would help track those who are “unable to be documented.” Which would be a good question for ICA.
 - The interview could potentially include an option that identifies that “the person reports all the criteria for chronic homelessness but can't demonstrate that they are.”
 - This is a tricky problem because, as one person described it: “Even if all factors point to them being chronically homeless, **the FACT that they are chronically homeless impacts their ability to prove it.** You don't walk around with a filing cabinet: “here's my documentation for the last 12 years.”
 - The argument for getting to the people who fit the definition of chronically homeless WITH documentation is that if we serve all those people, then we can apply to free up resources to serve people who don't meet the chronic definition.
 - The question remains an open one: HOW TO GET TO PEOPLE WHO “DON'T FIT INTO THE BOX.
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A DISCUSSION OF RECENT FINDINGS BY THE COMMUNITY HOUSING REVIEW COMMITTEE & C.E. ADMINISTRATION

- Chris reports that, according to the Community Housing Review Committee, there are a lot of people looking for one-bedrooms. A barrier we're facing is the **limited supply of one-bedrooms**. Stephanie doesn't want to initiate any new people into the grant until ideally everyone so far is leased up. People with vouchers for PSH currently are at risk of losing the voucher because they can't find anything fast enough.
 - In addition, **Lacey Smith has volunteered to help out with C.E. administration** – thank you Lacey -- so we're not looking right now to hire for a part time position at this point.
 - One person raised **the possibility of a conflict of interest** while citing Lacey's great value as “a woman of great integrity but I'm worried about systemic conflict of interest rather than anything having to do with her individually.” Privacy and surveillance issues for example.
 - Lacey will be using **a laptop dedicated** to the effort – a laptop provided by CCHA – and she will not be involved in doing interviews.
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REVIEWING THE CCHA COORDINATED ENTRY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Rather than create something from scratch, Chris took the Balance of State (BoS) agreement that they have for all their individual CoCs as the template and substituted names of agencies and so forth (“Assessment Partners” rather than “Lead Agencies” for example).

Chris raised questions and points for discussion on the items from the BoS agreement -- listed below (**All language highlighted in yellow** existed in the document as it was presented during the Dec 5th meeting. In some cases it was modified during the meeting):

V. Description of Coordinated Entry:

The CCHA Coordinated Entry Partnership will include the following:

Questions were posed about #8, 9, 10 & 14 under this section.

#8 currently states: “The CCHA Confidentiality Agreement for Partner staff.”

QUESTION: Is this a separate document?

#9 currently states: “Use of HMIS, according to funder requirements and in compliance with VT HMIS guidelines”

QUESTION: We want to research what these documents say.

#10 currently states: “HIPPA-compliant referral processes;”

QUESTION: Need more information.

#14 currently states: “Regular Partnership meetings to evaluate the success of the Partnership in achieving goals, analyzing data, and making changes in referral protocols and processes, as needed. A commitment by Partners to engage in problem solving with mutual respect;”

QUESTION: Do we need a separate meeting of all the partners for evaluation or is that something that this body can take on? An annual evaluation of C.E. process should be initiated.

Stephen suggested we should work on the preamble under the “Description of Coordinated Entry,” specifically: “The CCHA Coordinated Entry Partnership will include the following.”

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We did a slight revision to the section titled: **VI. CORE COMPONENTS** (otherwise heavily borrowed from Balance of State).

IX. CES Administration & CE Committee Responsibilities

C. **Seek out funding to help with costs associated with the continued development and implementation of this Partnership.**

QUESTION: Is this a responsibility for any single partner (should we just remove it)?

DISCUSSION: IF HMIS gets additional money – some piece of that could be dedicated to doing this analysis because to suggest analysis of data without money, is lofty. If you're going to analyze data as a committee, it's going to cost HMIS something.

The issue of funding for data analysis was further discussed: IF BoS has funding baked in as part of their efforts (to support analysis), then shouldn't CES do it also? Should both do it? Or just one? (Is Balance of State looking for funding from AHS?)

The group decides it becomes C.E.S. responsibility to seek funding rather than the individual partners.

D. **Ensure that all requirements (programmatic and fiscal) for grant funds received to underwrite any part of expenses associated with the continued development and implementation of this Partnership.**

QUESTION: Whose job is this?

DISCUSSION: CES should have the programmatic but not the fiscal part, perhaps. We need to develop a monitoring policy – it's still an open task.

X. Assessment Partner Responsibilities and XI Assessment Hub Responsibilities

This section could use some more input.

XVI. CONFIDENTIALITY

Partner staff participating in this Partnership will sign a Confidentiality Agreement related to sharing client information.

This could use some supervision/input.

XIX. TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

Chairperson of the **AREA Coordinated Entry Partnership Committee.**

QUESTION: Who is the “chairperson” or equivalent?

DISCUSSION: Probably the chair of the C.E. Committee.

There was also an impromptu discussion of the **ROI section** (In attachment B of the agreement).

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION:

- We don't have an ROI tool but it would be helpful to have one. What does the ROI for Coordinated Entry cover exactly? Is that a general release to cover any of the organizations?
- So the ROI specific to the program within the agency? Or the whole agency?
- It's NOT a comprehensive release.
- Let's have a section saying “this is a reminder but people consult the individual agency.”
- Chris suggested he would ask Sarah for that tool to adopt for the ROI – to see how Balance of State deals with this issue.

- **Chris asks everyone to look over the agreement before the next meeting & we'll look at another draft at that time.**
- Stephen suggests uploading the agreement to Google Docs in READ ONLY mode.

PLANNING UPCOMING TASKS

We need to **form a plan for the Annual Coordinated Entry Evaluation and the Training.**

- We should plan to get a group together of the assessment hubs and key partners to discuss how things have been going since rolling out in March. And what we need to raise for the second training (particularly with assessment).
- But we need to establish first whether the goal is to evaluate the process or the outcomes or both?
- We don't have a lot of guidance from HUD on this.
- Brian suggested this for evaluating the effectiveness of the training: a 5 question survey monkey of all participants that were there – and see how many correct they get? We can gauge what percentage absorbed the training. And if people didn't score above a certain percentage, you could say “you should come back for our next training.”
- **GROUP thought this was a great idea. Simple & effective.**
- Nicole suggested we should also add something to the quiz that asks “what are you still unclear about? What are your most frequently asked questions about C.E.?”

- Another suggestion was that all providers need to tell the funder (or entity) when there is someone new. Also ask, on the survey, if they have new staff and please send them to us.
- It was also suggested that we should have more trainings & let's RECORD the training. And eventually make training modules a requirement for new staff. Followed by the **competency quiz** mentioned by Brian.

A Discussion of TIMELINE

- Twice a year training would be ideal: **Late April & Early November, tentatively.**
- We will need **to form a smaller group in the coming months** to get really involved in the assessment process.
- We need to establish **what aspects of C.E. do we need to evaluate.**
- **Anyone want to be involved in this, please let Chris know?**
- At the next meeting, we'll discuss the APR. They've redone the APR and they've developed certain data points that they want us to track and report on in terms of referrals, how many people are accessing, how many people we're assessing, and they want us track time from assessment to the time that someone is housed.
- **We could ask for T.A. from HUD (technical assistance).** They will tell you what they have in mind – assuming they wrote it. It will allow HUD to evaluate C.E.'s success.
- **HUD recommends you narrow your priority list so you can exit people from the list in 90 days.**
- We want to be focused on what is important with an eye also to crossing Ts and dotting Is.