

# Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

December 5, 2019, Champlain Housing Trust

Attendees:

- Kim Colville, **VCIL**
- Laura Zeliger, **BHA**
- Elizabeth Kanard, **CHCB/ Safe Harbor**
- Tammy Santamore, **LUND**
- Travis Poulin, **CVOEO**
- Elaine Soto, **HC**
- Jane Helmstetter, **AHS**
- Stephen Marshall, **Lived Experience**
- Lacey Smith, **BPD**
- Chris Brzovic, **CCHA/ CVOEO**
- Olivia Graffeo-Cohen, **VLA**
- Melissa Farr, **COTS**
- Meghan Laskowski, **Pathways**
- Sarah Russell, **CVOEO**
- Kevin Pounds, **Anew Place**
- Jason Brill, **VA**
- Jan Demers, **CVOEO**
- Geoffrey Pippenger, **DCF/ESD**
- Steve Lunna, **SSVF @ UVM**
- Todd Rawlings, **CEDO**
- Erhard Mahnke, **VCEH**
- Bill Schrecker, **VHFA**
- Geoffrey Pippenger, **ESD**
- Erica Da Costa, **CCHA**

## PRELIMINARIES

- Travis Poulin/ CVOEO: We are into the winter heating season. Half to three quarters of the people we have seen so far have already maxed out their crisis fuel benefits.
- Jan Demers/ CVOEO: There a great exhibition at First United Methodist – Jesus of the People exhibition, it's ecclesiastical art – “seeing ourselves in the divine.” Art by Janet McKenzie.
- Erhard Mahnke/ VCEH: Homeless Awareness Day is Jan 15th – We have the card room reserved at the State House. We start at 7:30 in the Card Room. Coffee and muffins will be sponsored. We'll have committee testimony. At noon there is a vigil and “speak out” on the State House steps. Please encourage everyone to come.
- Jason Brill/ V.A.: Burlington Elks club is serving a meal on Christmas Day.

## NEW F.U.V.S BEING APPLIED FOR BY V.H.S.A

- Travis Poulin/ CVOEO: An email from Andrea Hurley at VHSA containing the request below:
  - In collaboration with AHS, VSHA will be submitting an application to HUD asking for 50 additional FUVs. They are seeking a renewed commitment from us: “the continuum of care’s commitment to cooperate with and assist the VSHA and AHS. Members of BoS and Chittenden CoC voted in June of 2018 to support and assist the VSHA and AHS to support and fulfill each of the following responsibilities:
    - Integrate prioritization and referral process for eligible youth into the CoC’s Coordinated Entry process.
    - Identify services to be provided using the CoC program funds to family and youth who qualify for CoC program assistance.
    - Participate in regular meetings conducted by PHA (Public Housing Authority) and the PCWA (Public child welfare agency) at least quarterly and comply with the provisions of the collaboration protocol.
    - In 2018 we voted to support this and they are asking for renewal of this support.
- Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: Why are only FUV-eligible youth included in this? Why are families not included in this/ identified through Coordinated Entry?
  - Great question.
  - Let’s amend this to read that the state needs to use Coordinated Entry.
- Travis/ CVOEO: The FUV usually requires case management. We need more case management. Just a note, not an amendment.
  - DCF identifies those families but they would need to work with Coordinated Entry.
- Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: DCF identifies those families but they would need to work with Coordinated Entry.
- Chris Brzovic/ CVOEO: Just keep in mind that this is not for prevention.

- **MOTION: To renew our commitment to expand our FUV by 50 vouchers with the caveat that families AND youth would be identified through our C.E. system.**
- **SECONDED**
- **VOTE:**
  - **11 YES**
  - **0 NO**
  - **none abstained**

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### Coordinated Entry update led by Chris Brzovic:

- Newly revised forms are available for everyone to examine on the CCHA website.
- The scoring remains the same.
- Our previous forms have been in effect since 2018. Early in 2019 we began working with CHRC to revise these.
- We re-worded questions to make them clearer.

- The questions added (single adult) are under “wellness.” In the section on wellness, we incorporated more language of the VI-SPDAT.
- We found that many people were underreporting substance abuse issues because they were worried about their ability to get into housing, so we unlinked it from housing.
- Some “observation only” questions were added to correct for underreporting.
- We’re NOT trying to screen people out. The major challenge has been scoring low because of underreporting. These are the recommendations of the C.E. committee WITH the feedback from the front line workers.
- Please go to the previous Coordinated Entry minutes to find more detail about exactly what was revised: <http://www.cchavt.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Coordinated-Entry-11.20-draft.pdf>

- **MOTION to approve the revised Coordinated Entry Forms**
- **Second**
  - **10 YES**
  - **0 NO**
  - **None abstained**

- Geoffrey Pippenger/ ESD: Staff is getting trained in HMIS now and the transition will happen at the end of January.
- Chris Brzovic: We need to add Economic Services to our data sharing agreement.

- **Motion to update the data sharing agreement with ESD**
- **SECOND**
  - **11 YES**
  - **0 NO**
  - **None abstained**

- Chris Brzovic:
  - [Please see handout of October report](#) – it needs some correction for Veterans, which is not accurate.
  - Length of time to housing has gone up significantly. Some people are just stuck in our system.
- Jane Helmstetter/ AHS: Will we be re-assessing some individuals now? With the new V.A. assessment?
  - Chris Brzovic: YES, everyone.
- Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: Did these people become chronic because it took so long to get housed? Or did they start off chronic?
  - Chris Brzovic: Both
- Jane Helmstetter/ AHS: Let’s present the trend-line if possible.
- Chris Brzovic: The time represented during each phase is something I’m going to look more closely at. I don’t know for sure how these lengths of time are being calculated.
  - Phase 1 is everyone who has begun the process, met with a housing navigator.
  - Phase 2 are working to identify and address barriers.
  - Phase 3 is what matters most; clients are referral ready at that point.
  - We might want to re-think the use of “phase 4.” Not sure it’s useful anymore.

- We're going to doing a big data cleanup at the next CHRC meeting, especially around the "Blank" category. BLANK = in-actives, not engaged & not connecting and/or the phase has not been updated.
- Stephen Marshall: Explain "NOT HOMELESS"
  - It means at serious risk of homelessness. So they might be treated by CHCB and funded through PATH.
- Todd Rawlings/ CEDO: So it appears that there's a need for more PSH. Is there a history of the CoC making a specific recommendation to local government to prioritize this?
  - Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: The subsidy for housing itself exists, but often it's the services that don't exist.
- Todd Rawlings: It sounds like the bottleneck is the services – and there isn't a funding source for that – has the CoC made an ask for specific amounts for services?
- Jason Brill/ V.A.: But we also don't have enough units.
- Laura Zeliger/ BHA: We have recently gotten more vouchers. Send them our way.
- Chris Brzovic: Even for those who don't need PSH, it doesn't mean that they don't need some level of supports.
- Jane Helmstetter/ AHS: We also need more flexible funding and flexible case management – not office bound.
- Laura Zeliger/ BHA: Does this group look at congregant housing? Rather than scatter sites?
  - Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: Providers are more or less supportive of this.
- Elizabeth Kannard/ CHCB: We need to add two case managers at Safe Harbor – ours are maxed out.
- Laura Zeliger/ BHA: Do we have the census count of the number of individuals needing PSH?
  - Our best guess now is 28 but there's likely more. 28 is just those confirmed in the C.E. system.
    - Laura Zeliger/ BHA: And do we have a sense of how many are currently getting PSH?
- Kim Colville/ VCIL: The health dept has a lot of data. We can use them as a resource.
- Chris Brzovic: We need a methodology for determining who needs PSH.

## A recommendation to amend the language of the Governor's Executive Order

- In April, 2016 the Governor signed an Executive Order which "calls for owners of housing that receive state funds to make available at least 15 percent of their portfolio of housing units to Vermonters experiencing homelessness."
- The CCHA recommendation is to stipulate that the 15 percent set aside specify that it be *filled through the Coordinated Entry System*.
  - **Motion: To make a recommendation that language be added to the executive order for publicly funded housing for the homeless to ORIGINATE THROUGH THE Coordinated Entry system.**
  - **Further Discussion: Jason Brill: Let's ask the BoS to do this too.**
    - **10 YES**
    - **0 NO**

- I abstention.

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## PIT PLANNING UPDATE

- Lacey Smith/ BPD has a template donation letter with language.
- Sarah Russell: If you have some language, I can post to FPF about small items as well as tents. I've done successful tent drives before.
- A state rep has the ability to post to multiple FPF.
- Stephen Marshall: We need to do outreach to media regarding a PIT count.
  - Jane Helmstetter: Let's do this statewide – with the Vermont Council to end homelessness. I'll reach out to them.
- Press release FIRST.

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## Veterans Committee Update led by Steve Lunna of SSVF@UVM

- We have 12 currently listed as homeless in Chittenden -- 3 of those are GPD (transitional housing).
- Jason Brill/ VA: That 12 can be reduced by 3 or 4 because of some recent data scrubbing.
- Steve Lunna: Regarding Built for Zero, we've seen a steady decline for 4 or 5 months in a row.
- Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: Are the VASH vouchers at VHA fully utilized?
  - No. Of the between 9 and 12 veterans not all are going to be VA eligible – but they will be able to access different vouchers. They might be eligible for SSVF.
- Jane Helmstetter: Update on Canal street veteran's program?
  - Melissa Farr/ COTS: We have a couple residents in the program, but it's winding down. We won't be continuing the program.
  - Jason: 2 veterans now at Canal. 14 vacancies. Steps can be taken to amend a contract. Nothing has been finalized because it has to go through VA.
  - Steve Lunna: We want to change some of those beds from service intensive to "bridge housing" because a third of our veterans are currently unsheltered.
- Steve Lunna: *60 minutes* did a story on homelessness. They mentioned that nationally we've reduced Vet homelessness by 50 percent.

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## Shelter updates:

- **Winter Warming Shelter Btvshelter.org (Kevin Pounds)**
  - 40 beds are packed out each night. 7 are ESD and communication is going well.
  - We're very happy about 2-1-1.
  - We're happy to get so much volunteer support for meals especially.
- **Way Station & Family shelter (Melissa Farr)**
  - Family: We have 25 people on the wait list. We have 4 or 5 families on the move because of access to vouchers. And we have 4 newborns.

- We are open earlier now so we can go directly from the day station to the way station.
  - We had an event the day before Thanksgiving with medical staff to help people get some medical support.
  - We need waterproof gloves and mittens – not knitted.
  - One time volunteers are fine.
  - **Extreme weather shelter (Jan Demers)**
    - This is a pop up shelter for 20 degrees below zero and worse when there are no motels available. There will be a DEC 10 training. Americorps Vista and Medical Corp both come. It's 25 beds. For some reason, it often opens on MLK day or Presidents day.
    - Location: Red door church – fellowship hall – the will accept animals.
    - Geoffrey Pippenger: We have one in Burlington & one in Rutland.
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## FINAL THOUGHTS

- Travis Poulin/ CVOEO: 3 Square Changes: The latest recommendation is to change the structure of the standard deduction for utilities – this would have a large impact on the state of Vermont – 1 in 5 people would be knocked off of 3 squares. The changes will be very detrimental.
  - Kim Colville/ CVIL: I'm part of the human trafficking taskforce. Housing is a real problem. We've had 56 people this year. Please keep this in mind and let's start a dialogue about this.
    - Stephen Marshall: Does the housing have to be secret?
      - YES.
    - How are you connecting with C.E.?
      - When people reach out and try to leave, it needs to happens quickly.
    - Let's put this on the agenda and have someone come make a presentation.
    - Let's make sure someone from STEPS attends.
  - Proposed changes for disability rules: Everyone will have to re-prove their disability every 2 years.
  - Janet Green, director of rental assistance at BHA, is leaving.
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### Next Meeting: Jan. 2nd

To find archives, event dates and so forth, please go to [cchavt.org](http://cchavt.org)