

CHITTENDEN COUNTY HOMELESS ALLIANCE (CCHA)

Steering Committee Minutes

February 4, 2021 9:00 – 11:00

ATTENDEES:

- Travis Poulin, **CVOEO**
- Lacey Smith, **BPD**
- Mary Ellen Mendl, **VT 2-1-1**
- Sarah Russell, **CVOEO**
- Daniel Blankenship, **VSHA**
- Margaret Bozik, **CHT**
- Tammy Santamore, **COTS**
- Sister Pat, **UVMCM**
- Amy Carmola, **United Way NWVT**
- Rita Markley, **COTS**
- Sean Thomas, **HUD**
- Jane Helmstetter, **AHS**
- Jason Brill, **VA**
- Bill Schreker, **VHFA**
- Will Towne, **Spectrum**
- Michael Redmond, **Upper Valley Haven**
- Kim Colville, **VCIL**
- Laura Gans, **VT Legal Aid**
- Paul Dragon, **CVOEO**
- Lily Sojourner, **OEO**
- Nicole Kubon, **Steps**
- Liz Whitmore, **BHA**
- David Riegel, **CHT**
- Robyn Stettel, **ESD**
- Jessica Radbord, **VT Legal Aid**
- Richard Gagne
- Marcella Gange, **CEDO**
- Erin Armstrong, **UVMCM**
- Kevin Pounds, **Anew Place**
- Marcy Esberg, **formerly CEDO**
- Sean Thomas, **HUD**
- Crystal Jones, **BHA**
- Jennifer Hunter, **CS**
- Lindsay Mesa, **Pathways**
- Tammy Santamore, **COTS**
- Will Towne, **Spectrum**
- Laura Zeligler, **BHA**
- Jennifer Hunter, **CS**
- Amy Carmola, **United Way NWVT**
- Jamaica White, **Lund**
- Elaine Soto, **Howard**
- Stephen Lunna, **SSVF@UVM**

DRAFT

Please send corrections
to: edacosta@vhfa.org

- Karina McNamara
- Louise Masterson, **ICA**
- Phillip Snay, **Veterans Inc.**
- Meghan Morrow Raftery, **ICA**
- Chris Brzovic, **CVOEO**
- Martin Hahn, **VHCB**

PRELIMINARIES

- Travis Poulin/ CVOEO: If you are working with anyone who needs assistance with taxes, let us know — we are working out of the University Mall.
- Travis/ Poulin: There will be a second round of RR Housing Funding (RRHI).

CCHA Budget

- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: Executive Committee has been discussing how to sustain admin support for CCHA. Funds runs out in 18 months. Here are the options for funding sources:
 - ✓ Cities and towns — asking for contributions
 - ✓ Current funders / funders who have given in the past / members of the funders collaborative
 - ✓ Stimulus Funding
 - ✓ HOP or HUD funding
 - ✓ Private Sector including the larger private landlords or business community
 - A survey will be sent around to the members for their input.
- Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: Balance of State just hired a director for their continuum. Does anyone know their funding source?
 - Daniel Blankenship/ VSHA: A CoC planning grant and one time funding from OEO.

Housing and Services for Vermont's Most Vulnerable

- Martin Hahn/VHCB: We're going to give an overview of a conversation we've been having for about six months with Michael Redmond of Upper Valley Haven and Bill Schrecker of VHFA. The topic is the way to help Vermonters in crisis. How can we effectively serve people over time throughout the state? If you'd like to be part of this group, the next meeting is March 4th.
- Bill Schrecker/VHFA: One of the challenges that have been identified by our group has been housing stability and retention. The client group served by affordable housing and shelter providers has often had significant trauma and this leads to a lack of housing retention. The RFP that's going to be proposed here seeks to address some of these challenges, the toughest part being finding consistent funding support for provision of services in a comprehensive statewide manner. (A family SASH model has been discussed which has significant interest at this point.)
- Michael Redmond/ Upper Valley Haven: The draft RFP is included below and we hope to have a final draft within four months (approximately June 2021). Funding will be provided by VHFA and VHCB.

Request for Proposals

Housing and Services for Vermont's Most Vulnerable Residents.

Issued by Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and Vermont Housing Finance Agency

Overview

Affordable housing owners and managers and homeless shelter providers are serving very low-income tenants who increasingly need support services to remain stably housed. These residents include households who have experienced chronic homelessness, are at risk of homelessness, and families with children. They often present with significant needs, including chronic mental illness, substance use disorder, and other complexities.

There is significant concern among housing and shelter providers that, given the increasing needs of vulnerable residents, services are not sufficient on a statewide basis. There are numerous examples of local, effective solutions for service delivery but these solutions are often siloed geographically (i.e. only available in the largest city of a county) or programmatically (i.e. services for individuals exiting a corrections facility).

In 2020, stakeholders (see below) have been meeting monthly to share their experience providing housing for vulnerable residents and discussing how they are helping to provide or manage services. These providers have a deep understanding of their community and a commitment to ensuring the residents they house are well served. These conversations reveal significant challenges facing Vermont's service delivery system but also the opportunity to enact savings through strategic statewide investment in ongoing community-based service delivery and housing retention services. This RFP is intended to identify a consultant who will translate the collective experience of housing and shelter providers into an actionable policy agenda.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders are:

- Residents of nonprofit affordable housing and emergency shelters
- Emergency shelter providers
- Nonprofit affordable housing organizations
- Public Housing Authorities
- Designated mental health agencies
- Specialized housing providers
- Intermediaries and funders: Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
- [Continuums of Care: Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, Chittenden County Homeless Alliance]

Policy areas

Stakeholders have identified three policy areas needing further development:

- 1) Ensure that residents in emergency shelter and affordable housing have meaningful and ready access to supportive housing services, including but not limited to comprehensive clinical mental health services, services for individuals with substance use disorder, and/or housing retention and eviction prevention support services.
- 2) Explore revising Vermont's Medicaid program to allow for payment of population-based health services within affordable housing properties to demonstrate the value of housing in lowering health care costs and improving health outcomes for residents.

- 3) Identify best practices for housing retention services and work with Vermont's Agency of Human Services (AHS) to develop an effective and equitable system for consistent statewide deployment.

Scope of Work

The Consultant will facilitate conversations among stakeholders and also provide programmatic leadership to determine what Vermont needs to change to more effectively provide services and how that change can be actualized. Activities include:

- Administration and Facilitation
 - Coordinate and facilitate steering committee and stakeholder meetings.
 - Coordinate routine engagement with VHCB and VHFA on project status.
 - Convene listening/engagement session(s) with residents of nonprofit affordable housing and emergency shelters.
- Problem Identification
 - Summarize need and scope of problem and solutions. This may require interviewing housing, shelter, and service providers if the consultant is not already well-versed in the current landscape across Vermont.
 - Survey non-VT jurisdictions for specific models of funding services to support housing retention and homeless prevention. These models should focus on those with the potential to work in Vermont, are replicable, and not already implemented statewide.
 - Survey VT and non-VT jurisdictions for other models of funding services, including operations, delivery systems, and appropriations.
- Craft Response
 - Develop a policy brief on how Medicaid and AHS funding could be effectively utilized to reduce and prevent homelessness and improve cost effectiveness in delivering health care in Vermont.
 - Prepare brief (2-4 page) action plan that proposes short- and mid-term policy and funding goals, using the policy areas described above as a starting point.
 - Develop a plan for engaging legislators and AHS department leadership. Provide support for meeting organization and follow-up.
- Prepare Next Steps
 - Prepare final report to evaluate progress, setbacks, next steps. Consultant may be engaged to support further implementation.
 - Develop proposals to implement 3-5 programs to demonstrate the effectiveness of funding integrated housing with services.
 - In consultation with the Steering Committee, prepare an RFP for a consultant to conduct a study to quantify the impact of providing comprehensive services for the residents of affordable housing on Medicaid, the health care system, and programming offered through AHS.

Period of Performance

Final report will be submitted in draft form to the steering committee by June 1, 2021 and the final report by July 1, 2021. Draft format is flexible and exact delivery dates are negotiable.

Response Timeline: [to be revised]

- a. Friday January 8th, 2021 – RFP Issued
- b. Monday January 11th, 2021 – Open period for questions from RFP bidders. Submit to: info@vhcb.org

- c. Friday January 21st, 2021 – Bidder questions will be posted anonymously along with funder’s responses.
- d. 12:00 Noon, Friday February 5th, 2021 - Submit proposal electronically to: info@vhcb.org

Available Funds:

Up to \$20,000 is available for the project.

Proposal format:

Proposals must include the following information.

- a. A description of the approach to be used to accomplish the activities outlined above.
- b. Brief narrative describing your understanding of the problem proposed by this RFP.
- c. A brief description of the experience, qualifications, responsibilities and per diem rate for all contributing personnel.
- d. An all-inclusive maximum proposed price to perform the desired work. Include direct and indirect costs, usual and customary expenses, and time estimates for contributing personnel.
- e. Confirm or rebut period of performance.
- f. The names of three references from past clients or associates, including a description of the relationship to reference, email address, and telephone number for each. If there is a link to a written report, please share.

Evaluation of Proposals: Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Qualifications and experience of the principals who would be conducting the activities and preparing recommendations and reports.
- Proposer’s understanding of the work to be performed and prior experience with similar projects.
- Quality and clarity of proposal in addressing scope and goals.
- Ability to meet timeframe of the proposed project.
- Hourly and all-inclusive rate.

Selection Process: VHCB and VHFA will evaluate proposals. The highest evaluated proposers may be invited to discuss their proposals and qualifications prior to awarding the contract. VHCB and VHFA expects to make a final selection by [date].

Attachment:

- Minutes from recent meetings of stakeholders (not for distribution).

- Rita Markley/ COTS: They are looking to hire a consultant to evaluate our system which is great.

Changes to GA Funding

- Lily Sojourner/ OEO: In mid-February we’ll release the proposal for community allocation funds. This proposal will be impacted by going through the legislature and by the pandemic. We will also be meeting with all the CoCs individually.
- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: There’s going to be a key opportunity for testimony next week in front of the legislature. We might want to consolidate our thoughts so that the co-chairs can represent our CoC at that opportunity.

- Rita Markley/ COTS: We might want to have a smaller workgroup to work on this one issue.
- Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: We did begin this work before COVID, so let's not lose sight of that work.
- Laura Gans/VT Legal Aid: We don't want to see the state abdicate their responsibility. We're worried especially about due process rights being eroded.
- Paul Dragon/ CVOEO: I'm concerned about the timeline. COVID makes the timeline difficult. My other concern is about the distribution of funds throughout the state. Uniformity and consistency throughout the state is crucial.
- Margaret Bozik: The state did a phenomenal job of rapidly expanding the motel program. But once the FEMA funding is gone, the motels are not going to be able to operate in the way they've been operating for the last 10 months. The pandemic really did show us how many people are living with housing insecurity. We have some expanded shelter capacity in Chittenden County but we have also seen much larger numbers of people going through homelessness. We really need more time than we're being offered to work this out.

UPDATE ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

- Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: Children's Integrative Services is governed by a collaborative group and a charter in much the same way that CCHA is and in our effort to expand our DEI work, we made some changes to our charter that I wanted to share . See below:

Accepted March 28, 2018. Revised December 23, 2020.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Our organizations believe that addressing the fundamental issues of economic and social inequalities include identifying and creating ways to build the core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion into our policies and practices to best serve young children and their families. We are committed to serving those with low socio-economic status and people with disabilities, providing equal access regardless of gender-identity, sexual orientation, language, race, ethnicity, and/or religion, across the CIS system of care.

Mission Statement:

Chittenden CIS promotes service integration for families and supports children and families* in meeting their needs, as defined by them, in a holistic way, reducing barriers to access and promoting inclusivity for all.

* CIS serves pregnant and postpartum people and teens, children ages birth to six and their families,

Strategies:

Maximize Chittenden's CIS funding so that clients receive timely, effective services resulting in positive outcomes:

Minimize Chittenden CIS administrative costs;

Facilitate Chittenden CIS staff capacity, professional development, teaming, supervision to implement best practices;

Enhance and promote training and resources to support cultural awareness and anti-racist practices among CIS staff;

Commit to hiring practices which promote diversity of personnel and a workforce that reflects the community we serve;

Advocate for Chittenden CIS resource needs and policies that promote equitable and inclusive services across the region.

- Kim Colville/VCIL: This is great. Have you consulted any POC?
 - Sarah Russell: Yes, our diversity and inclusion director at CVOEO.
- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: I hope we're going to get updated data before the next community meeting because I would support an amendment to our charter. I would also note that while our CoC system is fairly good at eliminating disparities within our system, there are enormous disparities within the housing market.
 - Sarah Russell: It would help to have data around no-cause evictions which harms POC disproportionately. I would also suggest that we update our charter sooner than the September meeting.
- Laura Gans/VT Legal Aid: Please include Legal Aid in any workgroup around this issue.
- Daniel Blankenship/VSHA: Let's make it as uniform with BoS as possible, so keep us in the loop.

BUILT FOR ZERO

- Liz Whitmore/ BHA: We signed a re-enrollment with Built for Zero. There's no fee at this point. I know everyone's in survival mode but at some point we'd like to have the BFZ people come and give us a refresher on what they offer.

SHELTER UPDATES

- Kevin Pounds/ Low Barrier Shelter: Our nightly census is around 45 right now. The Safe Harbor team has been extremely helpful. We're running a sober shelter on North Street as well and things are going well there too, with a census of about 16.
- Will Towne/ Spectrum: Shoutout to CHCB as well. Warming shelter still has availability. We've seen lower numbers this year but with higher intensity.
- Paul Dragon/ Holiday Inn: There have been a few incidents recently but overall things are going well. In case of weather emergency, Holiday Inn will serve as that shelter instead of having a pop-up shelter.
- Rita/ COTS: Our shelters are at our COVID caps. Very excited about the VHFA/VHCB proposal because if our people move into housing many are going to need the support.
- Robyn/ Harbor Place: We're working to shift Harbor Place a substance free site over the next few weeks and then starting March 1st ESD we'll ask the question up front about whether someone wants to be at a substance free location.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

- Chris Brzovic/ CVOEO: Coordinated Entry is working on prevention planning right now.
- Marcella Gange / PIT Committee: We weren't required to do the unsheltered count this year but we did what we could. Thanks to everyone who worked on the sheltered out.
- Marcella Gange/ NOFA: The NOFA was finally released.
- Jason Brill/VA: We've seen our numbers start to decline again. Less inflow from outside of Vermont.
- Mary Ellen Mendl/ Outreach & Membership: We have a robust committee: Lacey Smith, Elizabeth Kannard, and myself. We've met and begun contacting people to assess interest.

Next Meeting 3/4

cchavt.org