

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA) COORDINATED ENTRY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 3, 2021 8:30 - 10:00 AM, (Rescheduled from Jan 2021) Gotomeeting

Attendees:

- Chris Brzovic, **CVOEO**
- Margaret Bozik, **CHT**
- Will Towne, **Spectrum**
- Jason Brill, **VA**
- Stephen Lunna, **SSVF @ UVM**
- Louise Masterson, **ICA**
- Emily Taylor, **CHT**
- Sophia Senning, **COTS**
- Stephen Marshall, **Lived Experience**
- Christina Brown, **Spectrum**
- Lacey Smith, **BPD**
- Mike Ohler, **CHT**
- Stephanie Smith, **CVOEO**
- Ciara Kilburn, **Steps**
- Linda Amante, **CVOEO**
- Thomas Moore, **UVMCMC**
- Deac Decarreau, **WHA**

DRAFT

please send corrections to
edacosta@vhfa.org

PRELIMINARIES

- Louise Masterson/ ICA: We are in the demo phase right now of our HMIS software assessment. The committee will be choosing new HMIS software in the coming months.
- Stephen Lunna is retiring! Oh no! This is terrible. You will be greatly missed. Congrats Stephen.

A DISCUSSION OF C.E. Homelessness Prevention Planning

- Chris Brzovic/ CVOEO: We have prevention services in our COC but we don't have prevention tied into coordinated entry. Let's outline a plan for next steps for the data we want and how to go about data collection. We want data about returns to homelessness vs. newly entering homelessness. We want to know about who had engaged in services as well. We want data on back rent assistance, maybe some of this already exists but we have a question about this. ICA said that we may be able to see a report on those who have been in Coordinated Entry previously, exited to being housed permanently and have now returned to C.E.
- Margaret Bozik/ CVOEO: I want to capture data on first time homelessness as well.
- Chris Brzovic: In a preliminary capacity (raw data), it looks that there were returns of 12 households in the last year. In the last 2 years it look like there might be 32 households returning to homelessness. So now we want to discuss what we want to know about this group, as well as people who are first time homeless.

- Margaret Bozik: Based on our experience at CHT, I'd suggest a longer look-back period. Maybe 5 years instead of 2. What we've found is that people often do well for one or two years and then, as services become unavailable and time goes on, they lose their housing. Also, let's focus of finding information that helps us form strategies that will help us find funding for successful interventions. Sometimes it's a purely money issue — even if not typically — and this information would help us argue for money for back rent.
- Chris Brzovic: We don't have a lot of information that we can pull from HMIS more than 2 years ago just because we didn't have a lot of data sharing agreements in place and so forth. But it will flag people who have returned to homelessness. As far as the preliminary data we have for the last 2 years, I've glanced at it and it looks like the majority — about two thirds — were exited without rental subsidy. A few were RRH. A majority of returns seem to be due to lack of rental subsidy. I'll look at the BFZ report for a look-back as well.
- Margaret Bozik: It would be good to find out what happened in terms of returns to homelessness prior to the pandemic, particularly with regards the back rent program and the moratorium on evictions. My guess is that those two things were big factors in returns to homelessness and first time homelessness. Maybe we could use roughly March 20th as a reference date.
 - Also, it would be good to know, Thomas, the extent to which people's health conditions have contributed to their loss of housing. Does UVMHC have specific things they'd like to know about that?
 - Thomas Moore / UVMHC: I'll follow up on that.
- Linda Amante/ CVOEO: If we alter the C.E. assessment now to add questions about this, would it have to go through a C.E. approval process? Because that can take quite a long time.
 - Chris Brzovic: Yes they would still have to be approved by CCHA. We could either add a small number of questions to our existing assessment here and there over time or we could try to produce and roll out a larger new form to add to the existing assessment.
 - Stephanie Smith/ CVOEO: I would prefer if we start with a data gathering approach and make small adjustments to the C.E. assessment unfolding over time rather than one large newly added form.
- Margaret Bozik: We want to distinguish between questions about diversion (people working out a place to stay on their own) versus questions that get to the root question of why they're living without a home. But given that we have over 500 households in hotels right now, something that gets at diversion would not be a bad idea because we're not going to be able to house that many people as they come out of the hotels. Also, there's a consumer survey that we developed in the Strategic Planning committee that might be useful for surveying people in the motels. It's designed for clients to describe what caused their homelessness. At the same time, getting service providers' perspectives would also be valuable because the two perspectives are not always going to match.
- Stephen Marshall: Can we incorporate questions about what towns they would be in if they were not being directed toward housing in the Burlington area. I'm interested in rural vs. non-rural homelessness.
- Chris Brzovic: My next question is about the data that doesn't live in HMIS.

- Sophia Senning/COTS: We have some of what you're looking for in our system (FOOTHOLD) and could produce some of this in quarterly reports.
- Margaret Bozik: Could we do an aggregate non-identifying report out of the "Redbook" (that lives with the HRT groups (Housing Resource Team)))?
 - Sophia Senning/COTS: I don't think it would be the most comprehensive or the most accurate.
- Linda Amante/ CVOEO: My recommendation is to add a field for "reasons for losing housing" in HMIS.
- Sophia Senning/COTS: There are two pieces here: 1. A question about what causes homelessness so that we can develop new services and resources and 2. Questions to target and prioritize the resources that already exist.
- **Margaret Bozik: I don't want to lose sight of the fact that BHA has a planning grant from the hospital around retention and it will be followed up by an implementation grant. So the implementation strategies will be based on the information we're gathering now.**
- Chris Brzovic: We'll revisit this next month. Maybe we can take a look at diversion tools that already exist perhaps with other communities.

CATEGORY 4 HOMELESSNESS and COORDINATED ENTRY

- Chris Brzovic: We're looking at households that are fleeing DV and not necessarily literally homeless.
- Ciara Kilburn/ Steps: In our RRH program, we've seen a lot of inappropriate referrals. Also, we have folks who cannot enter into the motel system because of safety issues but their best bet is to stay where they are until a better option appears, but they are on the edge of homelessness.
- Chris Brzovic: The question is, are they eligible for C.E.? Should we add them (Category 4 households) to the master list? And then what are they eligible for/ prioritized for? We wouldn't necessarily prioritize them over a Category 1 literally homeless household. We just need input here. I couldn't find solid guidance from HUD. Are there restrictions, for example, with our MOU with CHT regarding homeless preference? Would a category 4 household be eligible for a homeless preference?
- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: The state has specific definitions/ requirements. Let's look at them and revisit this.
- Linda Amante/ CVOEO: What does the Balance of State do?
 - Louise Masterson/ ICA: I'm not aware of BoS having a position on Category 4, but I'll check in on this.
- Chris Brzovic: What I've found is that other communities have put this category on a prevention track. We could go ahead and put them in the C.E. system and then if they become literally homeless, then they would be ready to go, but otherwise they would be exited eventually to inactive.
- We'll come back to this discussion.

FINALLY

- Louise Masterson/ ICA: We also have new C.E. data elements that HUD has asked for. We'll be rolling out training for these new HMIS data elements soon.

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Next C.E. Meeting: Feb 24, 2021