

**VT BoS CoC/VT Coalition to End Homelessness**  
**CoC Board Meeting – Tuesday, March 15, 2016**

Attendance: MaryEllen Mendl (VT211), Daniel Blankenship (VSHA), Geoffrey Pippenger (AHS/ESD-GA), Sandy Partiz (VT Legal Aid), Pete Kellerman (JGS), Liz Genge (Downstreet), Whitney Nichols (peer advocate), Sarah Phillips (AHS/OEO), Renee Sarao (VCEH A\*VISTA), Shaun Gilpin (DHCD), Bethany Pombar (VCRHYP), Kathy Metras (NEKCA), Kelly Greaves (DCF/ESD), Connie Sandahl (NEKYS), Jim Bastien (VA-WRJ), Brian Smith (AHS/DMH), Brooke Jenkins (GSH), Elizabeth Eddy (BROC), Kristina Valentine (UVH SSVF), Meghan Morrow (ICA), Jennifer Allen (ICA), Arwen Farrell (TPHT), Faye Grearson (TPHT), Joyce Cloutier (Vets Inc.), Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez (PVT), Amos Meacham (PVT), Pat Burke (SEVCA), Knowles Wentworth (HCRS), Dawn Butterfield (Capstone), Erhard Mahnke (VAHC).

Minutes: approved with one correction to add Daniel Blankenship (VSHA) to the list of attendees at the February meeting.

PIT Updates: Daniel explained how the new HUD definition of chronic homelessness could have contributed to fewer numbers but increased outreach may have balanced it out; significant decrease in GA motel use (not a CWE night) on the count date across the state which inevitably brought all numbers down (+GA Alternative projects and other initiatives also contributed); as every year, after a significant amount of time with manual review, there were many submitted PIT surveys that were non-usable/not included due to too much missing info/no provider response, non-eligible (couch-surfing/precariously housed, DOC TH) and duplicates – this will reduce next year with the potential live us of the Google PIT tool and data derived directly from VT HMIS-ServicePoint. Anticipated draft on 3/21, press release on 4/4 (*actual release determined to be 4/12*), Daniel update at VT Council on Homelessness meeting on 4/6, Chittenden public meeting to report on PIT on 4/18(?); Sara Kobylenski & Margaret Bozik will be CoC representatives speaking to the media.

VT HMIS Report: Daniel & Meghan explained the collaborations between the VT HMIS Administrator (Institute for Community Alliances) and the CoCs, including the Google PIT form which VT 211 entered data from all hard copy forms with data not already derived directly from VT HMIS, which ICA spent considerable time assisting multiple homeless providers to ensure accurate data; HUD announced Tier 1 funding from the recent NOFA application – VT BoS CoC awarded new \$60,000 HMIS grant (reallocated from VSHA/UVH Windsor Shelter+Care grant) to supplement the existing \$30,000 HMIS grant, and Chittenden also awarded a new \$60,000 grant, which will bring out state to full HMIS funding and the ability of ICA to hire another staff person based in Vermont.

Meghan explained how she and ICA staff are working with several partner coalitions (VA, VCRHYP, AHS, etc.) to ensure full HMIS utilization and uniform community data. Meghan reported on progress of the VT HMIS Advisory Board and HMIS Governance Charter.

NOFA Updates: HUD announced Tier 1 awards (including new HMIS grant), waiting to hear “in the spring” about remaining applications in Tier 2 (Shelter+Care Statewide, Rapid Rehousing #3 and RRH #4 Bonus).

VT BoS CoC needs to start preparing for federal expectations of CoC-wide performance (not just individual projects), including 1) decrease of Literal Homeless persons, 2) emergency housing stays are brief – 20 days or less, 3) increasing household incomes/benefits, 4) remaining or exiting to permanent housing, 5) low recurrence of homelessness. Jennifer Allen from ICA mentioned that there are great resources on the HUD Exchange at:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/toolkit/responsibilities-and-duties/>. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (all federal departments) expects these indicators to be determined with all homeless providers actively participating in the CoCs HMIS and in a formalized coordinated/centralized entry system.

Daniel asked for feedback on the recent CoC NOFA selection process to prioritize and determine funding of CoC projects. As part of that process, local CoCs & the CoC project selection committee determined that three Transitional Housing projects would “retool” to serve specific populations (youth, domestic violence, and/or substance abuse) and consider moving CoC service budget funds into CoC housing budgets. In addition, the HOPE-Transitional Housing and the Clara Martin Center-Safe Haven projects are slated for reallocated into different CoC projects to be determine before/during the next CoC NOFA submission (fall/winter 2016). Daniel brought up the possibility of applying during the upcoming CoC NOFA process with reallocated CoC funds to support a Coordinated Entry staff person and/or other assistance to local hubs.

General Assistance Updates: Geoffrey Pippenger (ESD/GA director) explained the process for denying household’s motel voucher with a 30 day wait period before they can access it again, as well as the process for appeal. Providers expressed concern about the high number of people deemed ineligible, the appeals process, contingency plans in the event of extreme cold weather for ineligible households (recent President’s Day), and the lack of understanding for households that they need to show up at the shelter (if determined by ESD) or face automatic 30 day hold. There are other that may be denied for refusing to go to/stay in a shelter, leave a shelter, and/or inappropriate behavior while in a shelter. Geoffrey explained that a consideration of denials may be done by ESD on a case-by-case basis, especially when face with extreme cold weather.

CoC Planning: As part of the recent CoC Tier 1 project announcements the VT BoS CoC [VSHA as the Collaborative Applicant] was awarded an \$80,000 planning grant, an increase from last year’s award of \$30,000. The current CoC planning grant pays for 50% of the AmeriCorps\*VISTA position shared with VT Affordable Housing Coalition (Erhard), consumer stipends, PIT coordination, and planning/review of CoC project monitoring and performance.

How does the CoC want to use the grant funds to implement planning/coordination activities?

Sarah Phillips recommends that the CoC operationalize the planning grant and CoC functions. One idea would be to combine CoC planning funds with AHS funds to create a new CoC coordinator position to support CoC Board Development, assist local CoCs, and general CoC planning & coordination. The position would be accountable to the CoC (VCEH).

Next Meeting Agenda Items – April 19, 2016:

- Deeper discussion in planning ahead, review of overall CoC project portfolio, and areas either losing funding after 2016 or with vulnerable HUD priority
- Staffing model for VCEH (Sara/Sarah)
- Legislative Update (Erhard)
- PIT roll-out results (MaryEllen)
- Post meeting gathering of Emergency Shelter providers to review winter 2015-16