

VT Coalition to End Homelessness Monthly Meeting
August 19, 2014 10:00am – 11:30pm
Chandler Hall, Randolph, VT

At meeting: Pat Burke (SE VT Community Action), Daniel Blankenship (VT State Housing Authority), Brian Smith (AHS-Dept. of Mental Health), Richard Rankin, (Data Remedies), Erhard Mahnke (VT Affordable Housing Coalition), Sara Kobylenski (Upper Valley Haven), Sarah Phillips (AHS-Office of Economic Opportunity), Renee Sarao (VAHC-VCEH AmeriCorps), Timothy Schroeder (DMH HMIS AmeriCorps), Lucie Fortier (Brattleboro Area Drop In Center), Josh Davis (Morningside), Shaun Gilpin (VT Dept. of Housing/Community Development), Tracy Collier (Capstone Community Action), Dawn Butterfield (Capstone), Whitney Nicols (Peer Advocate)

Call-in: Doug Sinclair (Charter House Coalition), MaryEllen Mendl (United Ways of VT-Vermont 211)

1. Introductions: Welcome to Renee Sarao (new VAHC-VCEH AmeriCorps & Timothy Schroeder (new DMH HMIS AmeriCorps).
2. July Minutes (Sara): Unavailable, tabled for a vote in September.
3. Treasurer's Report (Dawn): Verbal update provided; no written report; working on dues collection process; expect to see Chandler Hall expenses of \$60 for three months of use of the meeting hall.
4. Approach to the Year (Sara): As new co-chairs Kathy/Sara meeting with key stakeholders and steering committee to clarify roles/responsibilities; better understanding of old/new HUD-HEARTH mandates; clarification of roles for the VCEH/CoC and other organization bodies; emphasis on transparency & hammering out decision-making processes including of lead entities; BoS CoC HMIS Lead is unique with DMH (state) not a private non-profit agency as the case for most CoCs; Standing & Ad Hoc Committees do ground work with details and providing options for the VCEH group to act on; it is important for us to promote/understand that VCEH is a compilation of the local CoCs and partners; people may wear multiple hats (representing an organization/individual vs local CoC); Should VCEH meeting include packet of non-CoC informational materials (VCEH members present voted yes, as well as posting on the website).
5. HUD letter follow-up:
 - Pat-What is the status? Sara will follow-up with Jeanne to find out the process.
 - Brian said NERHMIS letter to HUD in January was read by Ann Oliva (HUD).

- Erhard said a Housing Agency letter to HUD, after Shaun Donovan's (Secretary) visit to VT, still no response after a few years.
- Daniel/Sarah have been contacted by Sen. Leahy's office (Kate Ash) seeking more information about the letter and HUD issues facing VT.

6. HMIS

- Compliance: Brian not sure why this was put on agenda but DMH (HMIS Lead) has conducted all HMIS security-related activities (staff background checks, confidentiality, etc.) recently required by HUD for the VSHA HMIS grant (subgranted to DMH/subcontracts to Data Remedies).
- Andy Lowe (SSVF grantee) no longer at UVM, BoS CoC needs new HMIS committee chair. Brian conducting outreach to get new chair and additional members. Sara requests the names of current members and the committee responsibilities. Josh recommends that outreach include members otherwise not already involved with CoC.
- During last week's meeting, the Steering Committee discussed HMIS, including an offer from Bowman to provide a demonstration on its HMIS software (ServicePoint) with scope of capability. There will be a 2 hour meeting following the September CoC meeting.
- Single HMIS: Sara/Kathy will meet with Daniel/Marcy (Chittenden CoC) to formulate questions and next step options.

7. Legislative Committee (Erhard): VCEH has a strong link with VAHC; Linda Ryan (VCEH) has led the committee for years; members include Linda, Erhard, Rita Markley, Liz Ready, Jeanne Montross (last year as Co-Chair representative); Linda has coordination annual Homeless Awareness Day; Committee meets occasionally via phone/emails.

Erhard provided an update (*see email memo from Erhard to Pathways from Poverty Council members*) on the recent Legislative proposed state budget cuts (\$31m) with low impact on housing/homeless programs but a higher impact to several service programs that effect low-income folks.

8. Point in Time Committee (Sara): Jeanne is coordinating this year's committee with the first meeting to convene in September; Sara will distribute chairs/members for all of the committees to everyone and post on website.
9. NOFA Committee (Sara/Daniel): During last year's FY13 HUD CoC application Sara (also Brooke/Amy/Brian) worked with Daniel (CoC Collaborative Applicant) to develop an initial process (especially for Project Ranking). Sara is looking for a replacement to her role as Chair and members for the committee from both CoC applicant agencies and non-applicants.

Daniel informed the group that this year should be much less complicated as HUD is skipping the CoC application this year to catch up with only a decision to be made on whether or not submit the same Project Ranking as last year (with no sequestration cuts) or develop a new Project Ranking; more information will be available when HUD releases the Notice of Funding Availability.

Pat spoke on behalf of her local CoC (Springfield area) when asking why there isn't any opportunity for new projects? Daniel will try to attend one of their meeting to explain, as well as continue educating the NOFA cte/CoC.

Explanation (not provided during meeting): *HUD strongly encourages CoCs to assess local needs and consider reallocation/prioritization of CoC funds through a fair/transparent process. VCEH/BoS CoC currently, and always, has had the opportunity to reallocate funds from any current projects into a new one, but has chosen not to pursue this option until last year. For the last several years, HUD only offered new/reallocated CoC projects as Permanent Supportive Housing (Shelter Plus Care-Chronic Homeless Only). Last year, HUD added an option to also reallocate funds into a Rapid Rehousing for Families Project (similar to VT Rental Subsidy Program); this occurred at the same time as required 5% sequester cuts, which were expected to be gone forever. The 5% sequester amount was used to create a new S+C-Chronic only project [Rutland] through a RFP process that was reviewed by the CoC but not funded by HUD during the previous year's application process; shockingly the CoC was awarded the new project (5%). Currently every county in the VT BoS CoC has shared or sole access to a CoC-Shelter Plus Care project. ALL counties (except Lamoille, Grand Isle and Essex) also have a HUD CoC-Supportive Housing Program project. If the VCEH wants to offer the opportunity of a new/reallocated project then it will need to be funded from existing CoC funds (current projects) based upon priorities established by the CoC, develop/release a RFP, and review/rank projects as conducted by a non-biased panel.*

10. Coordinated Assessment System (Sarah): The current Ad Hoc committee is developing a plan which would also hopefully result in a standing committee; the group is a collaboration of VT BoS CoC providers, Chittenden CoC providers, state partners and others; currently developing/assessing a common screening tool/assess mapping models; a few communities may pilot the screening tool this fall; group also working on a formal referral process/MOUs/Release of Info; Sept./Oct. will be a draft screening tool; DCF internal housing team is concurrently also evaluating their assessment system with ESD highly interested in moving forward with the CoCs.
11. Standing Rules Ad Hoc Committee (Sara): An update was provided to the Steering Committee on a draft; formal vote postponed until September meeting with plenty of advanced notice.

12. Pathways from Poverty Council update (Sara): group is an opportunity for the voices of outside partners to help influence state policy/funding priorities; Family Services Division under intense scrutiny of child welfare/family system due to several recent baby deaths; Council members requesting that the Governor slow down with implementation changes in order to create a collective process through public/written comments.
13. Next Meetings: September 9 (Steering Committee); Sept. 16 (annual joint meeting with VAHC and CoC meeting afterwards with focus on local CoCs); Oct. 14 (Steering Committee); Oct. 21 (VCEH meeting with longer discussion on Con Plan or Coordinated Assessment—with Bowman-ServicePoint 2 hour presentation on HMIS capabilities).
14. OEO Warming Shelter Proposals (Sarah): See links on VCEH website of workplan and OEO position paper to help clarify funding process. Feedback is strongly encouraged; avenue for community partners to submit specific plans; next steps include OEO providing written responses by September on comments received; considerable joint document coordination occurring between OEO & ESD.
15. GA Motel Rule (Erhard/Sarah): discussion ensued; posting available shortly from DCF; for more information contact Shawn Brown (DCF Deputy Commissioner) and/or Sarah or Erhard.