

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance Coordinated Entry Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

8:30AM – 10:00AM

Champlain Housing Trust, 88 King Street, Burlington, VT – 2nd floor conference room

MINUTES

Attendees: Chris Brzovic (Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, committee chair), Paddy Shea (Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, meeting note taker), Jan Demers (Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity), Sandrine Kibuey (Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity), Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust), Tamella (Tami) Thygesen (Veterans Inc.), Meghan Morrow (Institute for Community Alliances), Caitlin Ettenborough (Institute for Community Alliances), Steve Lunna (Supportive Services for Veteran Families at UVM), Jane Helmstetter (VT Agency of Human Services), Sarah Phillips (VT AHS DCF Office of Economic Opportunity), Adnan Duracak (VT AHS DCF Economic Services Division), Elaine Soto (Howard Center), Jason Brill (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs), Adam Wager (Committee on Temporary Shelter), Nicole Kubon (Committee on Temporary Shelter), Sharon Rotax (Steps to End Domestic Violence), Lindsay Casale (Pathways Vermont), Stephen Marshall (Homeless Community).

1. Update on HUD Technical Assistance

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): ICF is the agency who will be providing our HUD technical assistance. We will be looping them in to work with the committee later.

2. Review assessment tool for single adults including:

- a. Sustainability assessment questions**
- b. Vulnerability assessment (VI-SPDAT with modifications)**
- c. Determine prioritization protocol (scoring) for RRH utilizing sustainability and vulnerability assessments**
- d. Next steps for other assessment tools for other subpopulations**

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): A workgroup met and decided to prioritize sustainability and vulnerability. The idea was that we need some questions beyond the VI-SPDAT to look at sustainability. We looked at the National Alliance to End Homelessness tool.

Meghan Morrow (Institute for Community Alliances): We can't modify the VI-SPDAT in the system, but we can create our own assessment based off it.

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): We still need to decide what our DV assessment and prevention assessment will be. We don't need to know that today, but I would like to decide what we will be using for single adults.

a. Sustainability assessment questions

See Appendix A: Sustainability Index

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): This would be scored and weighted.

Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust): For Question 7 – I would like it to ask by how much. Question 5 – there should be a dollar amount attached there, not just % AMI.

Lindsay Casale (Pathways Vermont): What is our goal for rapid rehousing **[RRH]**? Is it to serve those who are most sustainable?

Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust): I don't think we decided about "most" sustainable, just that it would be sustainable. I think from what Rebecka Lawrence said, that is an important criteria, because if you help them for a while, but they get evicted at the end of it, the RRH wasn't the appropriate intervention. Maybe they should get homeless preference vouchers or permanent supportive housing instead.

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): We haven't decided how we are going to weight people for RRH (high sustainability-low sustainability vs. high vulnerability-low vulnerability quadrant).

Sandrine Kibuey (CVOEO): But how many families with high vulnerability are likely to have high sustainability of their circumstances?

Helmstetter (VT AHS): Could we pull data from Vermont rental subsidy to see who was most successful with that RRH program?

Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust): That would only be valuable if you could pull out which ones got vouchers at the end and which ones didn't.

Jane Helmstetter (VT AHS): Right, people who we give RRH to can end up in a worse place at the end of it if they can't get a voucher or don't have increased financial resources by the end of it.

Sarah Phillips (VT AHS DCF OEO): There is national research on RRH that shows what it takes to be successful.

Stephen Marshall (Homeless Community): What do we do with the people who don't fit into RRH or PSH? Set up a camp to keep them safe?

Sarah Phillips (VT AHS DCF OEO): For RRH, you don't necessarily need to have the income when you start, you just need to be on track to get more income (e.g. from job, benefits), or have your expenses go down (e.g. you will be entering a nursing home, etc.).

I like some of these questions (past evictions can be a good indicator), but that may be more tied to services.

Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust): Exactly, it may be that question helps get at how many services people need.

Stephen Marshall (Homeless Community): For people in rehab, sometimes their history doesn't show what will happen in the future/if they've had a change in behavior.

Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust): True, but people with a history of eviction will have a harder time getting a landlord to rent to them.

Lindsay Casale (Pathways Vermont): It's not a bad thing to be aware of people's histories, but that mentality only works if you're housing every person. If you use barriers to say that someone is too risky to house, that's a worry. There are actually no accurate predictors of how someone will do in housing.

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): That's an important point.

Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust): If you put someone at 30% AMI in RRH without any supports, that's not a good strategy. Same thing for someone with 5 evictions in their record; we can't house them without assurance that there will be long-term follow-up to help them be successful.

Sandrine Kibuey (CVOEO): Who takes anyone in when they have no income? Before even looking at housing people, we look at their barriers and work on that before we think about housing them. There is work to be done before we house them.

Sarah Phillips (VT AHS DCF OEO): We recognize that folks doing RRH are looking at sustainability, and we are looking at what's the best way to do that in a uniform way, as a policy across the CoC. We don't want to set people up for failure by putting them into RRH only based on vulnerability without looking at sustainability.

Sandrine Kibuey (CVOEO): This tool can be very important for a housing case manager to see how much work and support it will take to get someone housed.

Jane Helmstetter (VT AHS): And for them to stay housed. Even if someone is financially stable, but vulnerable, they could need a lot of support.

Sandrine Kibuey (CVOEO): And that's why we refer them to classes such as rent rights, budgeting, and that's why we have HOP to bridge the gap if something happens.

Adnan Duracak (VT AHS DCF Economic Services Division): I agree with Sandrine. A part of sustainability will be the education part. We have seen individuals who don't know how to manage money.

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): These are all great points and interesting discussions, but let's get back to the agenda. Does anyone have any other questions or points about the Sustainability Index?

Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust): The first "additional question" needs to go. The one about if you've ever been accused of a crime, etc.—a lot of housing providers can't ask those questions.

Sarah Phillips (VT AHS DCF OEO): These are important questions to see what support people need, but we want to make sure that they aren't held against them even when they have a strong service plan and supports.

Sharon Rotax (Steps to End Domestic Violence): If someone were experiencing DV, they might have 3 evictions all because of their abuser trashing the apartment.

Nicole Kubon (COTS): I thought we had already agreed we would assess for sustainability across the CoC, and these questions seemed like the relevant ones. I thought it was so that when you were at the RRH table, it would help determine your level of need. If so, this would help assess length and level of support needs.

Sandrine Kibuey (CVOEO): I thought these questions weren't going to be scored.

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): We could just have these as additional questions for now and not worry about the scoring. I think we need to focus on moving forward. We could just use the VI-SPDAT and add these as additional questions. Everyone has legitimate points about the problems with the VI-SPDAT. We didn't just want to look at vulnerability, so now we have these questions about sustainability. We could just say low scores go to RRH and high scores go to PSH.

Adam Wager (COTS): We need income info.—and that's not in the VI-SPDAT—to be able to find the appropriate resources for people.

Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust): What if we scored questions 5-7, and the others would be informational only?

The group likes that idea.

Sarah Phillips (VT AHS DCF OEO): It needs to have a second question to clarify if it will go up or down. Child Support and alimony are two other sources of income that sometimes shift a households' income, particularly in domestic violence situations.

b. Vulnerability assessment (VI-SPDAT with modifications)

See Appendix B: VI-SPDAT Rewording Proposals

Adam Wager (COTS): With #4, the heart of the question seems to be about if people are vulnerable to crime.

Paddy Shea (CCHA): There are a lot of people who don't feel comfortable calling the police because of their race, immigration status, if they are a DV victim, etc., so, if question #4 is used to determine if they are vulnerable to crime, it's not really fair because it wouldn't count those folks.

Stephen Marshall (Homeless Community): I like most of the rewordings because it is more respectful of the dignity.

Nicole Kubon (COTS): #4 is probably the most difficult.

Sarah Phillips (VT AHS DCF OEO): Let's all read through the re-wordings and see if we agree or disagree with them, then we can just talk about ones we disagree with.

Stephen Marshall (Homeless Community): In #8, wants to change it from “convinced” to “manipulated”?

The group agrees that “manipulated” is best.

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): #9 took out “unprotected sex” and “risky.”

Paddy Shea (CCHA): I noticed that too. It reminded me of how many people thought that blood donation criteria were offensive when they asked about if people had sex for money, but didn’t ask if people had unpaid/recreational unprotected sex. When it came to the blood supply, many people thought the focus should be on the risky behavior, not the reason for the behavior.

Jason Brill (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs): We could add “or anything that you consider to be risky?” on the end.

Chris Brzovic (CVOEO): We’re almost at time.

For # 24 the group agrees that “brain issues” is not okay to say, and that we should say “brain injuries” instead.

For #21 the group agrees to reword it to “If you drink or use drugs, has your...”

***Next CCHA Coordinated Entry Committee Meeting: Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM, at Champlain Housing Trust, 88 King Street, Burlington, VT – 2nd floor conference room.