Chittenden County Homeless Alliance
Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 4, 2017
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Champlain Housing Trust, 88 King Street, Burlington, VT – 2nd floor conference room

MEETING MINUTES

1. Introductions and Announcements.

CCHA Steering Committee Members in Attendance: Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust, committee co-chair), Erin Ahearn (Safe Harbor Health Center, Community Health Centers of Burlington, committee co-chair), Mary Esbjerg (Community & Economic Development Office, City of Burlington, collaborative applicant), Lacey-Ann Smith (Burlington Police Department, committee secretary), Kevin Pounds (ANEW Place), Jan Demers (Chittenden Community Action, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity), Rita Markley (Committee on Temporary Shelter), Stephen Marshall (Homeless Community), Lindsay Casale (Pathways Vermont), Jason Brill (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs), Jason Williams (UVM Medical Center), Maria McClellan (UVM Medical Center), James Richmond (Vermont 211, United Ways of Vermont), Kim Colville (Vermont Center for Independent Living), Daniel Blankenship (Vermont State Housing Authority), Sarah Russell (Burlington Housing Authority), Elaine Soto (Howard Center), Mark Redmond (Spectrum Youth & Family Services), Diana Carminati (United Way of Northwest Vermont), Jane Helmstetter (VT Agency of Human Services).

Other Attendees: Paddy Shea (Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, meeting note taker), Meghan Morrow (Institute for Community Alliances), Caitlin Ettenborough (Institute for Community Alliances), Adam Wager (Committee on Temporary Shelter), Jessica Radbord (Vermont Legal Aid), Chris Brzovic (Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity), Meg MacAulan (Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity), Travis Poulin (Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity), Allyson Laackman (Burlington Housing Authority), Will Towne (Spectrum Youth & Family Services), David Przepioski (Homeless Community), Geoffrey Pippenger (VT DCF/ESD), Sarah Phillips (VT Office of Economic Opportunity), Laurel Chen (Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness/Vermont State Housing Authority), Valerie Brosseau (ANEW Place), Rebecca Gural (UVM student), Brian Smith (VT Department of Mental Health), Susan Ainsworth-Daniels (Champlain Housing Trust), Laura Wilson (Cathedral Square Corporation), Jonathan Farrell (Committee On Temporary Shelter).

There were no announcements.

2. Point in Time Count (Marcy Esbjerg, Community & Economic Development Office, City of Burlington)

The total Chittenden County, VT, 2017 PIT count was 291. Overall, the numbers were down substantially from last year. See forthcoming email from Marcy for more detailed numbers.

Next steps: decide on standardized assessment tool for each population (individuals, youth, families, veterans, and survivors of domestic violence), implement coordinated entry process for all, implement a prioritization for each category with a community-wide list, begin planning for CoC funding and possible reallocation if needed.

Discussion:
COTS - Remember that the Point In Time Count is just a snapshot, and is greatly impacted by weather.
CEDO - True, but it is a snapshot over a period of many years, which is still helpful.
CHT - There is some funding to use for data analysis.
VCIL - We also need to remember those who are precariously housed, even if they don't fit the definition for homelessness.
Spectrum - They saw the worst winter – all their beds were filled almost every night for the first winter ever. People they referred to COTS, ANEW Place, the Warming Shelter, etc., were full, and then maybe they got a voucher for a hotel from the state.
COTS – There definitely is value to seeing the data trends over the years.
Stephen – The perception in the homeless community is not that there are fewer people who are homeless. We should start getting ready for the PIT count now, not in October or November. There were people who didn't get counted if they didn't respond from inside their tent.
Vermont Legal Aid – They are seeing people who are using up all their money to stay in hotels for a week or 28 days, and they aren't counted in the PIT count. (They're considered "precariously housed.")

Referring this discussion to the CCHA Strategic Planning Committee.

Marcy/CEDO – Showing Housing Inventory Chart for shelter, etc., housing in Chittenden County. See forthcoming email from Marcy for more detailed numbers.

3. **Housing Opportunity Program Grants (Margaret Bozik, Champlain Housing Trust)**

New HOP Grant Requests:
Pathways Vermont – They'd like to expand a program to include those who are not veterans as opposed to only veterans like it has been. They don't have the total sum of money they are asking for yet.

Spectrum – They'd love to start a warming shelter, and expand their age limit to 24 or 25. The reason is that their shelter was so full all this winter, and also because many people in their early 20s do not like staying in the warming shelter with the older population who usually stay at the other warming shelter, often due to recent traumas they've experienced from adults. The Spectrum warming shelter would be a lower-barrier shelter than their normal Spectrum shelters. They've estimated it would cost $75,000-$100,000 for them to operate an 8-10 bed warming shelter for the year. They will look for a space that does not need renovation.

Burlington Housing Authority – Looking for a grant to continue to fund their full-time person on the Housing Retention Team, serving folks outside of BHA's portfolio.

Discussion:
United Way of Northwest Vermont- suggestion: CCHA should look at ranking and access programs applying for HOP funds, to ensure relevance and alignment with CCHA's priorities and funding, since new funding will not be allocated (which leaves the potential for some existing programs to lose funding)
Stephen/Homeless Community – It's not supposed to be competitive, it's supposed to be collaborative.

Motioned: Stephen Marshall from the Homeless Community.
Seconded: Daniel Blankenship from Vermont State Housing Authority.

VOTE: To support the submission of the proposed projects.

In Favor: 14
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 6 (Spectrum, Vermont 211, Community & Economic Development Office, City of Burlington, Pathways Vermont, VT Agency of Human Services, and Burlington Housing Authority)

4. Data Sharing Agreement (Lindsay Casale, Pathways Vermont)

The CCHA Coordinated Entry Committee presents its recommendation for a data sharing agreement and universal HMIS release. The purpose of data sharing is to promote easier and more streamlined access to resources for those experiencing homelessness. Clients will have the ability to limit the information that is shared or abstain from sharing. The document in its current format was vetted by privacy practice officers at all social service agencies involved with Coordinated Entry. Four key talking points around the details of the document will be shared with providers to allow for uniform conversations with clients (the language of the talking points was adopted from the VT Balance of State CoC).

Motioned: United Way of Northwest Vermont - Diana Carminati
Seconded: Safe Harbor Health Center/CHCB - Erin Ahearn

VOTE#1: To adopt the data sharing agreement and common release for all CCHA members participating in the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

In favor: 18
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 1 (Vermont 211)

VOTE #2: To require the use of the data sharing agreement and common release as part of the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance Coordinated Entry system for all CCHA members participating in the Chittenden County Homeless Management Information System.

Motions to hold a vote: Stephen Marshall – Homeless Community
Seconds holding a vote: Marcy Esbjerg - CEDO

In Favor: 12
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 7 (Steps to End Domestic Violence, Committee on Temporary Shelter, Vermont 211, Vermont Agency of Human Services, Pathways Vermont, Burlington Police Department, Vermont State Housing Authority)

5. Elimination of Data Import Option in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) (Meg MacAulan and Chris Brzovic)

To promote easier and more streamlined access to resources for those experiencing homelessness, the CCHA is re-examining its earlier position on periodic data imports into our HMIS, especially in light of the difficulties experienced with data imports.

CVOEO (Chris)- Using coordinated entry can help us to see individuals who are chronically homeless who haven't accessed certain services that would benefit them, so we could introduce them to those services.HUD wants us to use HMIS. In other places, people use the HMIS to pull reports and you can do all sorts of things with the data, such as getting a better idea of the total number of people using the system in this area. That only works if people are doing real-time data entry (ideally daily), because the quarterly data imports aren't at all real-time.

COTS (Adam Wager) - Section 4.4 (see handout) is basically about data integrity (e.g. avoiding incomplete data, avoiding duplicate records). COTS requests that CCHA continue to allow data imports, and they have invested a lot into using it. They argue that it improves data integrity.

COTS (Rita Markley) – they are so invested in the Foothold system, and a few other groups use it too, and if they had to do direct data imports, it would take staff time away.

Spectrum – could we do data imports weekly?

ICA (Meghan Morrow) – Bowman fixed the "household issues" and now it's ready to "go into the live site."

CHT (Margaret Bozik) – what's the cost of each import?

COTS – says its free

ICA (Meghan Morrow) - $10,000 for unlimited vs. $2,500 for quarterly. Expensive to do imports.

CEDO (Marcy Esbjerg) – I don't remember them ever saying we could do free imports

ICA (Meghan Morrow) – COTS would have to have at least one person licensed for ServicePoint in order to do "housekeeping" on the data. Even if they were doing data imports, COTS would still have to log into ServicePoint and check that the data was accurate.

United Way of Northwest Vermont (Diana Carminati) – If it were 5 years from today, and we are thinking about the amount of information we'd like to be in HMIS, and all the places it might come from, would getting rid of the data imports be in service to that, or not? Long-term, is it better to allow a data import entry, or not?

Jonathan – if we keep importing available, we'd allow more people in the future to join into HMIS, and that's a good thing.

CHT (Margaret Bozik) – We are getting new people to join all the time—even the hospital has gotten a license and is joining. The only other large group I could see joining is the state, and they probably couldn't use the import feature anyway, because their data system is so antiquated, that it couldn't connect. If data isn't entered at least weekly, it's not useful.

Stephen –Homeless Community – What are the charges?

CEDO (Marcy Esbjerg) – We got a letter laying out the charges. It wasn't part of our regular contract with ICA/Bowman.

Stephen – Homeless Community – Can we go back to Bowman and try to get them to provide free imports, since some people thought that was what we were signing up for initially?

COTS (Rita Markley) – Agree that we should look at the initial proposal they made and compare it to the contract and see if it does/doesn't match up. Paying for the data import is cheaper for COTS than paying a staffer to do double-entry of data.

ANEW Place – the ServicePoint license is only $300.

ICA (Meghan Morrow)- if you are doing data imports, you still have to pay for at least one license per organization.

CVOEO (Chris Brzovic) – we should be taking a client-centered position, so we'd like as close to possible to have real-time data entry to support clients. This will make us more competitive for NOFAs (notice of funding availability)/HUD grants.

COTS (Jonathan) – weekly imports is pretty close to real-time.

COTS – Could we allow data imports for another year, and then compare it to how it did against the direct data entry?

Others: There have been no successful data imports in a year. There have been problems every time. The test site is finally working, but it hasn't gone live yet.

CEDO (Marcy Esbjerg) thinks we should keep using it until we can see how a data import actually works.

Stephen – there should be a timeline on when the next vote happens

Jane – who will work on it? (Jane got a list of names)

Between now and August we will work to make it go live, have a successful import, and get more information from Bowman about data imports/cost.

Motions – Marcy

Seconds - Diana

VOTE: To table the vote (about refusing exceptions under Section 4.4) until August 2017, and revisit it then.

In favor: 17

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 2 (Vermont 211 and Vermont State Housing Authority)

VOTE: To refuse exceptions under Section 4.4 of the Burlington/Chittenden County CoC ServicePoint / Homeless Management Information System Policies and Procedures and to disallow imports into the Homeless Management Information System.

In Favor: N/A **not voted on/tabled**

Opposed:

Abstained:

6. **Committee Reports**

      a. CCHA Strategic Planning Committee (Jane Helmstetter, Agency of Human Services) tabled

7. **Communication (Stephen Marshall, Homeless Community)**

Stephen presented an update on issues confronting those with lived experience of homelessness and the group will discuss possible means of resolving those issues.

8. Quarterly Meeting (Jane Helmstetter)
We will schedule a date and the process for setting the agenda for our next quarterly CCHA meeting.

The next CCHA Quarterly Meeting will be June 6, 2017, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, Location TBD.
The people who will help plan that meeting are Jane Helmstetter, Margaret Bozik, Stephen Marshall, Sarah Russell, Dave Przepioski, Diana Carminati, Erin Ahearn, Marcy Esbjerg, and Paddy Shea.

9. Schedule and Agenda for June Steering Committee meeting
* Next **CCHA Steering Committee Meeting**: Thursday, June 1, 2017, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM, at Champlain Housing Trust, 88 King Street, Burlington, VT – 2nd floor conference room

- Locker item from Marcy Esbjerg
- Continue conversation around precariously housed & homeless families