



VCEH September Meeting

October 15, 2013

Vermont Tech Enterprise Center, Randolph, VT

In attendance: Liz Whitmore (DOC); Brian Smith (DMH); Pat Burke (SEVCA); David DeAngelis (Brattleboro Housing Authority); Angus Chaney (AHS); Geoff Ayers (DMH); Richard Rankin (Data Remedies); Sarah Phillips (OEO); Daniel Blankenship (VSHA); Amy Perez (CVCAC); Whitney Nichols (Brattleboro); Lucie Fortier (BADIC); Andy Snyder (AOE); Justin Henry (VCEH/VAHC); Andy Lowe (Veteran Services at UVM); Chris Dalley (Economic Services); MaryEllen Mendl (VT 211, United Way); Kathy Metras (NEKCA Newport); Jim Proctor (NKHS Newport); Michelle Sayles (VAHC); Rick DeAngelis (VHCB); Sara Kobylenski (UVH); Jeanne Montross (HOPE)

On the phone: Sadie Fischesser; Ida Ginsberg –sp? (VA)

(1) **Introductions**

(2) **Consent Agenda: Motion to approve, seconded, unanimous approval**

(3) **Discussion of Draft Memo of Understanding between AHS, VSHA, and VCEH**

- Daniel: I believe a Continuum has to have one HMIS
- Angus: Chittenden is not included, not a single HMIS in the sense of being statewide, but for the Balance of State Continuum of Care
- Angus: As much as we respect our federal partners, we want something that works for Vermont, I think this does, it standardizes and institutionalizes a lot of our relationships, this will go a long way establishing that it's not Angus, Jeanne, or Daniel but it is the entities they are representing
- Angus: Not a lot of new things in document, substantial changes are new expectations, HUD has shifted gradually from we'd kind of like you to do this - to this will impact points on application, HUD regulations
- Angus: We looked at this document if it would be a danger from moving towards a statewide HMIS – I think we agreed we could offer an amendment or something if all 14 counties wanted to go to one HMIS
- Angus: The other change around HMIS, AHS wants to share that work within department, new expectations
- Angus: Want to shift the way we think about HMIS at the agency at least, the mantra has been how much can we get into the system?; I think we'll do ourselves a favor by starting with what we need to get out of the system?
- Angus: I want to be clear of how the state would like to use this data – what we want with HMIS is the identifier, duplicated



- Jeanne: I appreciate the work done on this; I like the clarification of goals, one of the things this group has wanted to do is have more of a directive role with the committee that ranks the HUD projects applied for, there is some language here that opens that up
 - Angus: In a good way?
 - Jeanne: Yes
- Jeanne: The capacity of this particular group of managing all the requirements of HUD, I want the discussions to continue of what is the role of this group – I want these meetings to be fruitful
- Pat: There is a lot in this document saying VCEH is responsible for, feedback from Brattleboro, what would that look like? There is a lot of stuff, develop performance standard of ESG, etc. how to we start that?
- Pat: Another thing we've discussed in Brattleboro, is talking about a place to be more collaborative with AHS that when grants rolled out, have AHS come talk to us with what their expectations are, as well as maybe have someone from AHS come visit us, not just someone from OEO, ask us how's it going? What is working, what is not? Have a true sense of collaboration, not just here's our numbers
- Daniel: HUD expects the government charter to be the template, it expects the Continuums to have working policies to implement these policies, that is kind of the next step, of how we do all these things, and who does it
- Sarah: I think that is an interesting point, the scope of this agreement really pertains to responding to HUD, and doesn't go into collaboration between these three entities, whether or not it should, or how it could may be complicated
- Sarah: In relation to ESG the role of the Continuum is very much in consolation with, not just about developing by self, that would be a lot to take on
- Jeanne: I would like to see this group have more input proactively with the data being collected and the performance standards for ESG and other grants, and this agreement would go into formalizing it
- Jeanne: Do you Daniel, Angus see an issue with having some of the more organic things we want to happen, not just what HUD wants?
 - Angus: Depends on your timeline, people should be aware the review process of MOU pretty robust, this version has gone through a lot of layers – if you don't need the MOU this year, then I don't see any problem – what you have here is something pretty focused on HUD expectations and I think there is some value of not attaching too much to it
 - Angus: When is the deadline to submit it?
 - Daniel: Depends when the NOFA comes out, when HUD reopens, we do need some form of governance charter this year because it did impact our points in our application last year
 - Jeanne: We could sign this to jump through a HUD hoop, but put a sunset in it to make it more of what we want
 - Daniel: That wouldn't be a problem
 - Angus: I don't see a problem with that, when would we propose as a sunset? We want something that gets us through every Vermont project
 - Daniel: It should be before sometime the NOFA comes out
 - Jeanne: That can be researched and sent to the Steering Committee
- Jeanne: A vote is to be warned for November meeting on agreeing to MOU.

(4) Discussion of GA data, Changes in GA Rules; Sequestration; Clarification of CHG Data and DV clients



- Jeanne: I asked Chris to give us a break down of the numbers because at last meeting we were having discussions where we are seeing some areas have lots of requests by homeless people, and in other areas not seeing the numbers, so we wanted to try and keep an eye on what is happening in our communities with the changed GA rules, sequestration
- Jeanne: What is jumping out at me is the fluctuation in the proportion of applications granted to those denied
- Rick: My question is this typical, how does this compare to last year?
 - Chris: We weren't collecting the data in the same way last year; we may be seeing some more denials; we may also see in the weather, where we typically don't see as many requests
- Angus: So statewide we are seeing 50% granted rate, but something different in Newport
 - Chris: I don't know if we have looked into it yet
- Chris: from those granted about 50% granted from catastrophic, which is what we have seen in past, about 50% under automatic vulnerable population, only 1-2% under the vulnerable population point system
- Jeanne: The three areas where there is significantly smaller is all up north, Newport, Morrisville, St. Albans
- MaryEllen: From 211 in September 2012 total request of housing of 337, of September 2013 we had 180.
- Jeanne: Was not a big jump in 2012 from previous years?
 - MaryEllen: Definitely in the winter – had 1065 requests for housing in February
- Rick: This data is great, I have a request: we need to get this info to local continuum meetings, send out an email who knows who reads
- Jeanne: I'd like consistency in system of collecting data
- Jeanne: What are people seeing in their community and agencies?
 - Andy Snyder: I'm new here, I oversee homeless among other hats for the Agency of Education, we were just monitored by the Feds before their vacation, we don't have the report, we were blessed by their visit because Vermont has not applied for a waiver around No Child Left Behind – six states our outstanding Vermont is one of six states. We did visitations regarding homelessness in two districts in Burlington and Winooski – there certainly will be findings – they don't like the way we have administrated grant funds – sequestration will lose \$10,000 in funds we can distribute for this upcoming school year – we need to change things to meet their standards – lots of calls and needs we are finding in the schools – Change in agency with new secretary - I'm your go to guy, call me
 - Pat: I don't have exact data with me, but our offices are seeing an increase in folks who need housing – in Brattleboro in July in that one month we have turned down 17 households for ESG and that's just one office. Tough to sustain those most vulnerable. Tough on those on the edge who are working, tough to help them out. A lot more restrictive in terms of eligibility.
 - David: To piggyback onto that, in Brattleboro at the Housing Authority, most federal funds have maxed out or closed such as the Section 8 program, the list in Brattleboro has been closed for four and half years, our waits for public housing



has doubled in the last year – those folks who potentially be served by the Housing Authority are turning more to state programs – nothing on the federal level.

- Rick: I have something interesting out of Washington County. The overall housing need is great. Long waiting lists for affordable housing. But our shelter is below capacity all summer. There could be a number of factors for that – but that is a curious phenomenon.
- Amy: So defiantly uptick in people. A lot of people not being helped because of qualifications issues. Our housing review team have helped share the money that is in the community which has been good. In Barre meeting two hours a week, in Morrisville an hour a week. An increase from what we agreed to originally because of so much need. A lot of agencies are picking up slack. In Morrisville in particular there is all the community housing money come to the table, not just the community housing grant funds, we've been able to help people who might not be eligible or at least help with case management - It's not a perfect system, still people in the cracks, but has been going very well.
- Brian: Daniel, how is Shelter Plus Care going?
 - Daniel: When I started three years ago we were serving 131 households, with savings increased to 240 households. Over the last year we have clamped down due to not knowing the impact of sequestration and reductions from new fair market rents, we are serving about 175 right now. New subsidies are very rare – focused on chronic homelessness.
 - Brian: From my perspective, hearing shelter beds may be down in some areas, I think Shelter Plus Care focuses on chronic homelessness, the housing subsidy care program at DMH focuses only on those in hospital and who are high end users - for many years heard from shelter providers how many the Department's people continue who come back. People who come back are not necessarily CRT. CRT folks can get a subsidy to wait for section 8– at this point though with the chronic folks being served with housing subsidy care and having a required treatment plan, even if they are not CRT, the recidivism rate is very small. I think that is a contributing factor to reduce numbers for traditional numbers who come back and back and back. I've heard that from some of the agencies and communities.
 - Angus: I think that's a great point. Where would we be now, if we hadn't made investments with subsidies?
- Angus: Rick, you made a great point about the data getting back to the locals. Two things, we need to look at districts where numbers don't match the state trend. Also, I can't promise monthly, but we'll get quarterly updates, with data. I can't promise last year because we don't have as Chris mentioned. We'll build so we can have a trend and be able to share with both CHG grantees and local CoC Chairs.
- Rick: Brian's point of success makes the case for the importance of tools. So we can show results.



(5) Olmstead Act

- Whitney: I just wanted people to know there is an interest to reinvigorate the state Olmstead plan. I want to find out more of interface with housing . Will be on a conference call tomorrow.
 - Jeanne: Can you give a suggestion next meeting?
 - Whitney: Yes
- Brian: There is also guidance from HUD how to best participate in Olmstead. Olmstead is for people who have disabilities to live in least restrictive settings. Vermont has been pretty good at that. I've been appointed to be on state independent living council. I look forward to working more with Whitney and with members to see how we can get your input. If there is a way to simply explain Olmstead so your local housing groups can understand.

(6) New Members for DQS Committee and PIT Work Group

- Jeanne: Data Quality Standards committee has lost two members, Danny Preston and Kim Woolaver. Would any one volunteer to be on that group?
- Brian: For a long the requirements of HMIS that made people not happy to join. But we've made some great strides, in terms HMIS participation, data quality, DMH has funded Geoff's position. The committee look at unmet needs, what we need to do be in compliance, to engage with all the providers. Getting APRs and final reports to be submitted on time and less burdensome. And regular policy discussions. The group is not that cumbersome. We generally have a meal together. We've been putting out better than average work for the Continuum. We look forward for some new people on the committee.
- Andy: I'd like to add, I think the committee, one place I see it going is not just about data in, but what the data out can do for people. There is an opportunity for the data to improve efficiencies and outcomes for everyone's clients. We've got to get how HMIS works for you.
 - Brian: That's really important. Whether people like it or not, a review of who gets services and who does not, who is vulnerable. As the resources become more and more scarce, the process for determining uniformly and consistently who gets what – and knowing what is available in the system and making a referral to them –all are going to be new things the continuum will be learning. Not necessarily because we want to, but I think if you want to know how it shapes up, this would be a good opportunity.
- Jeanne: On that note, do we have any volunteers?
 - MaryEllen: I think I would. I am particularly interested in the policy piece.
- Jeanne: Thank you MaryEllen. Other people, think about it. Talk to Brian.
- Jeanne: We are starting to work with what will be happening with the PIT. We decided not a full committee, but a work group. I did volunteer Chair, if that is okay with everyone. Who wants to be on PIT group?
 - Justin: I would
 - Brian: I would
- Jeanne: Let's think about having a meeting in Williston before the next VCH meeting. Other people please consider joining. I've been talking with Marcy Krumbine in Chittenden with the two Continuums coordinating. Marcy and I have been talking about what a statewide report look like. Make sure it gives information we want as well as HUD, and make sure it is the same year to year. Not all over the map.



- x: Any standardization about the outreach? Collection going in is a huge factor.
- Jeanne: We have some VISTAs willing to help.
 - Justin: We have VISTAs from VYT program who might be able to assist. They have agreed to help, but I'm trying to determine what needs are with the individual CoCs and if they would like VISTA support. I will be meeting with Rick on the 28th for Washington County. My guess how it will work out, there will be a few spots around the state with concentrated support but not for everywhere in the state.
- Justin: It was requested at last meeting to get a copy of the 2013 PIT Report, so I printed some copies to pass around here. It is also posted on our website, helpingtohousevt.org.
- Brian: Geoff Ayers has did some work on better inclusion of youth. He distilled a report and it is available. Who has the list of Chairs? Maybe Geoff and Justin can get together to send out report. It is critical data to work at homeless youth. If we start to count youth in a better way, we have a benchmark of what we are doing. Focus some attention on youth, even a minimum of better counting. Understand best practices.
- Justin: Geoff emailed me, and I'll put it up on the website.
- Geoff: The report is from the Urban Institute and took a look at nine pilot sites nationwide.
- Jeanne: If people could take a look at this report, and if you think a significant change could be happening, let us know.
- Jeanne: Marcy wanted to know, would someone from Chittenden County have to enter all their own data. Would you have capacity to do that? A lot of times thrown all on Daniel.
- Brian: Begs the question, does one county or all counties. Is data quality for PIT more important for others? I'm happy to entertain that.
- Geoff: I'll be a part of the work group and that is something we can discuss.
- Jeanne: We need to get the data entered much earlier and it was said Geoff would be able to help us. It doesn't have to be decided today.
- Brian: I would like to think about that seriously.
- Daniel: VSHA is still committed to do the entry of forms.
- Jeanne: One of things we will have to do, is to make sure reports are in on time.
- Brian: Delay was unfair for all those who did get their data in on time.
- Daniel: One of the things I think I'll do this year I'll write down Housing Inventory Chart of homeless beds, so they know CoC who is supposed to submit PIT forms. And having CoC's self policing. Having more access to Service Point would be helpful.
- Pat: Is there any way to break it down to AHS districts?
- Richard: It can be, just a matter of resources, it has been done in the past.
- Brian: Year before last we did break down shelter and unsheltered. We could clearly break down, then there was change in the form. I think uniformity is a big deal. Not just this year. We did AHS one year, but that changed another. Every time there is a change, we have to relearn, creates a problem you can't compare year to year.

(7) **NOFA Committee Report**

- Sara: NOFA committee has not met and does need to meet. The committee needs to meet to consider some policy considerations. Been having a tutorial with Daniel. How serious are we really are to responding to federal frameworks and expectations on how we use money here in Vermont. Where will we make priority investments, will we make changes to investments to keep up with federal changes. A lot of background work – VSHA does a lot of the management



of a variety of HUD funding streams into the state. To be able to address federal expectations and allocate dollars for the most advantageously.

- Daniel: VSHA has different roles. We work on behalf of the Continuum, we work with AHS – making sure ESG grants are met, we administer vouchers for veterans, we serve 60% of section 8 elderly or disability. We have multiple hats, we do inspections, we are the grantee for most of supportive housing programs, shelter plus care.
- Sara: I would like to ask those who have volunteered this committee, in the next week or two to either in person or conference phone to meet. Does that sound reasonable? What is the best way to convey the meeting?
- Jeanne: Do a Doodle for those having a meeting in person and have a number to call in.
- Sara: Excellent, I will do that. By the next meeting it can be presented. Let's get this done.
- Jeanne: Thank you Sara for your work
- Sara: I appreciate all those who understand how all these pieces work together.
- Sarah: One more thing, Chittenden has a performance committee, that is looking at what are HUD's performance measures, so they had a statewide meeting – inviting groups all around - that group is putting together another meeting in November, what to look at moving from transitional to permanent housing, length of stay, employed at exit. They want to know if Balance of State wants to be included; if so the meeting can be held in Randolph, tentatively on November 8th.

Motion to Adjourn, Seconded.