

# State Advisory Council on Homelessness

**Attendees:** Chris Lowell, Annie Conant, Rose Ann Jacobs, Kathy Wahto, Bill Block, Kari Burrell, Christina Huelet, Diane Christie, Cathy Cochran, Judy Combes, Lael Duncan, Melinda Dyer, Kim Eads, Judith Gidley, Marilyn Highberg, Megan Karch, Jean Kim, Mary Looker, Tom Pennella, Steve Washington, Gary Williams, Larry Wright, Rick Butt, Sophia Kouidou-Giles, Jael M. LaSalle, Dan Robertson, David Charler, Joe Ingram.

**Interested Parties:**

**CTED Staff:** Annie Conant, Cheryl Bayle, Kathryn Stayrook

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Chris welcomed everyone and introductions were made around the table. Among the guests at the meeting were three members of the General Rehabilitation Administration, Jael M. LaSalle, Dan Robertson, and David Charler; Laurie Lippold from Children's Home Society; and Sophia Loudou-Giles and Rick Butt from DSHS.

Chris Lowell went over the agenda and asked if there were any suggestions for changes. There were no responses.

## **Approval of Meeting Notes from Last Meeting**

It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the minutes from the last meeting.

## **Independent Youth Housing Program**

Cheryl Bayle from CTED's Housing Division, the manager of the new Independent Youth Housing Program established by House Bill 1922, spoke about providing housing stipends to eligible youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

Eligibility includes: age 18 up to age 23 and an income level at or below 50 percent of the median income. There is a priority for youth who have been dependents of the state for at least one year. In addition to a housing stipend, money can be used for security deposits, first and last month's rent, case management, and administrative costs. The bill requires consultation with DSHS and other stakeholders.

CTED held an initial meeting on May 21, 2007, with Sophia Kouidou-Giles and Rick Butt of DSHS, along with Laurie Lippold of Children's Home Society. There was much discussion about how the Independent Youth Housing Program could coordinate with the Independent and Transitional Living Programs of DSHS, how workgroups of varying sizes could be used, and how CTED could better work with DSHS in the data area. Bill 1922 requires a report on a number of performance measures, some of which will be tracked by DSHS. The bill also requires a study of

program outcomes. CTED is strongly considering establishing a unit position to focus on data collection, evaluation, and reporting for the Independent Youth Housing Program.

The preliminary schedule for program implementation is: July, finalize the program design; August, release the RFP; September, due date for the RFP and announcement; and November, contracts begin.

Cheryl then introduced Laurie Lippold from the Children's Home Society. Laurie gave an overview of CHS's priorities since the end of the legislative session.

There was much more focus on the needs of youth aging out of foster care this session. In addition to HB1922 passing, HB1201 (extension of Medicaid for youth aging out up to 21 years), and HB1131 (post secondary education for foster youth) both passed. The interest in foster youth aging out has been due (at least in part!) to: more research available on outcomes associated with former foster youth; and the involvement of foster youth/alumni of the foster care system in the legislative process.

The support for HB1922 from the broader housing community was greatly appreciated. Working in collaboration (child welfare advocates and housing advocates) made a significant difference in Olympia.

Work between DSHS and CTED will help ensure that resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible. Each agency has their particular areas of focus with respect to housing and coordination and collaboration between the two agencies is well underway. It is unlikely that more resources will be sought by stakeholders in the 2008 session. More likely in 2009.

### **Governor's Initiatives on Health Care**

Chris Lowell introduced Kari Burrell and Christina Huelet from the Governor's office. Kari presented the Overview of the 2007 Legislative Session Key Deliverables in a PowerPoint handout.

The main topics were Responsible Budgeting, Education, Health Care, and Jobs & Economic Development. Under A Healthy Next Generation—Children's Health Bill (SB 5093) and Budget Highlights: A comprehensive approach to children's health including insurance, medical home, parental responsibility, outreach, performance measures, physical activity and nutrition in schools, and preventative care.

About 4.4 percent of uninsured children in the state are homeless and 60 percent of uninsured kids are eligible for state programs, including tribal children and 18-year-olds. One of the goals is for better nutrition and physical activity in our schools. The Governor's office will be working closely with schools on outreach to find the children who need more support, education, and healthcare. Six million dollars has been allocated for at-risk parents with young children.

The costs of medical care for the homeless increases because patients are let go early from care. Kari said that agencies will report in September about how the state pays for care and pointed to the goals adopted by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care: population health indicators that are consistent across gender and income levels; an increased use of evidence-based care to achieve better health outcomes and more consumer satisfaction; total health care spending increases no more than the growth in personal income. This will be accomplished by changing how we pay for health care, paying for quality care and prevention, expanding chronic care management programs,

establishing the WA State Quality Forum, encouraging evidence based medicine, creating health record banks and investing in health information technology, reducing administrative costs and unnecessary ER visits, and linking public health funds with performance outcomes.

On the subject of prescription cards, Kari reported that all Washingtonians are eligible, but it is on a volunteer basis on behalf of the pharmacies. Some pharmacies are not on the program. The cards are free and the average savings is 60 percent on generic drugs, and 20 percent on brand name drugs.

For low-risk mental health offenders, they can choose treatment or jail. There is an emphasis on diverting non-dangerous misdemeanor offenders with mental illnesses from jails to treatment services. There will be expansion of the “expedited Medicaid enrollment” program for individuals leaving institutions.

Looking ahead—2008 is a supplemental budget and short session year. The Governor’s office is not expecting any big ticket initiatives or programs.

### **After Lunch**

Chris Lowell introduced Steve Washington from HUD in Seattle sitting in for John Peters. Steve reminded us that the deadline for the HUD McKinney application had been changed from June 8 to June 15. He then handed out new brochures just published covering all of HUD’s programs.

### **Legislative Update**

Cathy Cochran, DSHS – meeting with the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) at the conference in Yakima was very helpful and had a lot of rich information. At that same meeting, Chris Lowell took the opportunity, representing the SACH, to let the ICH know that, “if they wanted to give us an assignment, we would like to be helpful.” At the Homeless Conference, Nan Roman from the National Alliance to End Homelessness said that Washington State is on the cutting edge. The only state in the nation that is even close is Michigan, and they don’t have funding like 2163 and 2060, which makes Washington the definitive leader in the fight to end homelessness.

Mary Looker, Department of Health – acknowledged the great benefits of the Blue Ribbon Commission bill and the health initiatives. Mary pointed out that having more and better health coverage for low income and homeless people equals a whole lot more work to recruit health care workers to have the capacity necessary, out in the communities, to provide the care. Washington State has a shortage of primary care providers. “As we add more people into the system, we are going to be struggling to get more folks trained and increasing accessibility.” On the Federal side, there are no new dollars to serve the homeless. The Federal dollars are slated for the 100 neediest communities in the country.

Judy Combes, Department of Corrections (DOC)—the new focus is on offender reentry. The Offender Reentry bill 6157 was signed on May 15. DOC is focused on programs in prison and increasing services to persons when they come in, at the point of intake, to do the assessment to determine what the person needs and what facility that person would be best placed in. They are looking at the expanding work release sites across the state and looking at prioritizing individuals who are within a year of their discharge date. If people don’t have an address, DOC might prioritize them for work release. They are looking at what else they can do to prevent discharging offenders into homelessness. DOC is also looking into the Fair Share allocation piece which is the disparity in

the number of offenders who are released into one county or another. Maybe one county might have more services, social support systems, or educational and employment opportunities, making these counties appear more desirable. To alleviate this problem, DOC will be releasing a person into the county where their first conviction occurred.

DOC is also establishing workgroups, one of which is analyzing cases of persons who are incarcerated past their earliest release date, as a result of not having a viable address. DOC cannot keep a person past their maximum release date and so the workgroup will be charged with coming up with recommendations to better handle this situation.

Melinda Dyer from the Office of Public Instruction—at the state level this last session, the most promising are the drop-out prevention work and a new program that will support kids who have parents that are incarcerated. On the Federal level, McKinney Vento is going to be reauthorizing more funds in 2008, so OSPI is doing a lot of groundwork now to find out where more support is needed for kids in schools. Headstart is also being reauthorized. The state is trying to better coordinate services for homeless kids who are very young.

Kim Eads, Food Programs Manager, Department of General Administration—GA originally requested 7.9 million for the purchase of food for food banks and shelters; that did not go through. But, advocates came through and \$200,000 in state funding was given to the program. GA fills about 75,000 requests per month from families, for individuals that is about 224,000. But the numbers are stabilizing. “We’re not seeing an increase in usage. Rural areas, supported 80 percent or more with a few USDA commodities, are now only receiving half of what they received in the past. It’s not much incentive for folks to stop in and to get only two cans of a product.”

Annie Conant, CTED—HTF increased \$30 million which will go towards more development and preservation of affordable housing and more units weatherized. There is also a requirement for CTED to complete a housing inventory of affordable housing in the state. As now stated, the scope of the inventory is very broad. It requires an inventory for all housing assistance programs both at the state and federal level. “We have yet to decide whether we will do this internally or contract it out.”

### **Offender Reentry Programs**

Annie Conant—From Bill 6157, CTED received \$3.9 million. A portion of those funds are to establish pilot community transition coordination networks (CTCN) in up to four counties in the state. That portion of the bill is going to be implemented by the Local Government division at CTED. \$260,000 dedicated for that effort. These CTCNs are supposed to help offenders find services that might be available from the county. The other portion is for an offender transitional housing program. The bill asks us to establish a minimum of two pilot sites in communities that have Community Justice Centers. There are CJsCs in King, Pierce, Yakima, Spokane, Clark, and Snohomish. CTED has until January of 2008 to select those pilot sites. The bill prioritizes services to offenders who are high-risk or are high need. It is not only housing assistance (up to 1 year), but life skills training, mentoring, and basic skills.

A challenge facing the state is that DOC has had a housing program that is ending. They had been providing temporary (30 to 90 days) shelter and housing assistance but that will be ending June 30, 2007 and CTED’s pilot program will not begin until January 2008. One of the things being discussed is where people could be referred to, in the interim.

It was noted [Bill Block, Committee to End Homelessness] that the DOC has been spending \$7 million a biennium on temporary 90-day housing. And, while 6157 recognizes that you need a longer period of time to let somebody stabilize in the community, the number of people served in housing in the future is going to shrink; not only because funding is cut in half, but the length of assistance is extended up to one year.

**Planning for Next Meetings**

- **MEETINGS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR ARE SCHEDULED FOR JULY 26, AND SEPTEMBER 7, FROM 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.**
- **For the meeting on July 26, we need to work on recommendations on issues to move forward for prevention, diversion, and reentry strategies.**
- **Chris Lowell will not be able to attend the July 26 meeting. Nola Renz will Chair the meeting.**