

Balance of State Continuum of Care Homeless Steering Committee

Cle Elum, WA | October 26, 2015

Agenda

12:00 pm	Arrival and Lunch
12:30 pm	Welcome and Introductions with Brief Updates (Phoebe)
1:00 pm	State Interagency Council on Homelessness Update (Tedd)
1:10 pm	Supportive Services for Veteran Families Update (Joe)
1:30 pm	Subcommittee Break-outs by Population (Theresa) (10 minutes for set up and instructions)
2:30 pm	Subcommittee Reports and ACTION (10 minutes each) (John)
3:00 pm	Break (15 minutes)
3:15 pm	Continue Subcommittee Reports and ACTION (John)
3:45 pm	Policies and Procedures Discussion and ACTION (John)
4:30 pm	Tiers I and II Discussion and ACTION (John)
5:00 pm	Adjourn

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions with Brief Updates

- Members shared updates and new projects and services in their counties. 38 people were in attendance and two on the phone.

Mason County – Job placement is a major issue. They have a new Housing Coalition Coordinator

Grant County – Finding jobs remains a major problem.

Island County – A new wave of military families coming in will impact housing costs. A new shelter has been opened.

Walla Walla County – They have completed a 5-year plan update. They are shifting resources from Shelter and Transitional Housing to Rapid Rehousing

Whatcom County – They now have 3 outreach teams operating and are working to build trust to the most difficult populations. They are opening a large chronic homeless project. Vet services have co-located with the coordinated entry system staff.

Kittitas County – They started a cold weather shelter expanding its operation from 5 to 7 days/week. Working on SSVF but facing a 1% vacancy rate. However, progress being made in landlord relationships.

Thurston County – “Thurston Drive” underway (which is a centralized homeless services hub). Family Support Network is the designated CES. Currently working on a “landlord mitigation” effort.

Walla Walla County – RSN served over 200 clients and are now conducting a street outreach effort.

Jefferson County - They are switching all their Transitional Housing resources to Permanent Supportive Housing for chronic homeless. They have a new 10 year plan. There is a 0% vacancy rate. Exploring “Tiny Homes.” Holding (or held) a regional conference on homelessness.

Kitsap County – Working on a project-based Rapid Rehousing project. Retention Assistance Program. They are beginning to see more large families. Updating the 10-year plan. Veteran homeless outreach has increased. They have a Veterans group that meets weekly. They are working towards the development of a Tent City and establishing new permissive ordinances is in progress. They have in-jail workers who have transitional housing resources?

Skagit County - The Mount Vernon mayor is involved in working with police and the Downtown Association.

Grays Harbor County – New 10-year plan is in draft.

Okanogan County – Transportation is a huge issue. Redrafting their 10 year plan. The fires created a major issue with housing and many lost their homes. Looking at Seattle’s “Close to Home” (Tiny Homes for disaster mitigation housing) Working on housing for Vets and have a VISTA volunteer involved.

Clallam County – A significant number of the county’s chronic homeless have been settled in permanent housing. They are increasing outreach and have a Vet outreach worker. Are working hard on employment (including for chronic homeless persons) and have some new funds.

Benton-Franklin Counties – Working on programs to serve specific populations. Current high need for housing for young adults.

Whitman County – They are developing a plan for a 50-unit affordable housing project that would include some homeless slots.

Joe Ingram reported that in his discussion with the Washington State Association of Landlords they indicated an interest in providing housing for Veterans.

State Interagency Council on Homelessness Update

- Tedd Kelleher shared an update from the most recent State Advisory Council on Homelessness and Interagency Council on Homelessness. In October the Governor directed state agencies to coordinate to find a solution to improve stagnant rates of decline in overall homelessness and reverse the trend of increasing unsheltered homelessness. The Council is charged with

examining how agencies can interact in a way to meet the needs of persons facing homelessness and propose new ideas, even including new legislation, that would improve the homelessness system. Recommendations are due in January. Medicaid waiver would allow agencies to use Medicaid money to pay for supportive housing services. With rents rising and scarcity of affordable housing, a magic solution to dramatically reducing numbers is unlikely, but everything helps.

- Greg Winter asked about further research (possibly through partnership with DSHS) to explain the sharp rise in unsheltered homelessness. More data would help explain effect of economy on homelessness and respond to assumptions that more services for homeless populations equals more homeless populations entering community.
- Theresa Slusher added funding available is not keeping up with rising costs (rent, etc). Tedd added subsidies have not kept up with inflation.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Update

- Joe Ingram started with his takeaways from the SSVF grantees post-award conference in San Diego. The role of Steering Committee has changed from our reaction to the requirements in the NOFA to examining ways to end homelessness in each subpopulation. The emphasis from HUD and the VA now is on ending Veterans homelessness. Functional zero means more people leaving homelessness each month than people experiencing homelessness (newly homeless or already homeless). Communities get to functional zero by having a master list or “by name” list of all homeless Veterans, employing a uniform vulnerability assessment tool like the VI-SPDAT, utilizing all mainstream resources and service providers and working together. SSVF reaches every county in the Balance of State CoC. Valeri Knight from Metropolitan Development Council also attended the conference in San Diego. Other states in the west coast face similar issues such as identifying landlords willing to rent to homeless persons. Other states give signs or stickers to landlords to share and celebrate the fact they are serving homeless Veterans. Other states have landlord support staff to respond to issues landlords face or answer questions. Successful states treat landlords like businesses rather than housing programs.
- Joe asked members what issues they were having related to serving homeless Veterans. Lael Duncan said many homeless Veterans are remotely located in their large county and travel is difficult and expensive. Joe suggested if funds were available outreach can be improved if everyone was supplied a phone for communication. Other members agreed that transportation is an issue, especially in rural counties with limited public transportation. Joe said more will be discussed during the Veterans subpopulation committee.
- Valeri Knight reiterated focus of SSVF to reach functional zero, create a plan for entire community that will not just end homelessness for Veterans but eventually all chronic, family and youth homelessness by learning what works and what doesn’t through the initial focus on Veterans. What SSVF needs from the CoC is for every county to buy in and dedicate resources for Veterans, help with the master list, help from landlords and transportation help getting Veterans to resources. Valeri has been working with Emily Nolan from Vets@Home technical assistance to identify counties with the most need based on numbers of homeless Veterans in the 2015 PIT count. If a large impact is made in the 6 counties with the most homeless Veterans a huge step will be made in reaching functional zero. After functional zero is reached improved

prevention and participation in coordinated entry can make the change long-term. Tedd asked if SSVF has enough funding. Valeri said funding for SSVF is not an issue but there are other issues such as landlord relationships and locating and reaching Veterans. Community partners need to help locate homeless Veterans. Tedd asked if there are enough VASH vouchers. Valeri said we need more VASH vouchers and standard Permanent Supportive Housing for Veterans without an honorable discharge (not eligible for VASH). Mark Hollandsworth from HopeSource reiterated Valeri's points on the need for a master list of homeless Veterans and housing options for Veterans without an honorable discharge. Tedd asked if we know for sure how many more VASH vouchers are needed. Valeri said it is difficult to know because not everyone served with SSVF is eligible for VASH, but she would run some numbers to try and find out.

- Joe asked about communities that are already receiving referrals and using HMIS for the master list. Greg Winter said they have VASH voucher staff in their office and use coordinated entry and outreach to identify homeless Veterans. They also work closely with Whatcom County and integrate those funds into their funds for serving Veterans. They don't rely on HMIS for their master list because they already identify the Veterans before they are entered into HMIS.

CoC Plans for Ending Homelessness

Due to time constraints instead of breaking into groups for each subpopulation the group combined a brief overview of the subpopulations with a larger discussion about ending homelessness in the CoC. That discussion provided material for the 2015 CoC Competition application and the CoC policies and procedures. Subpopulations committees to be developed include Veterans, Families, Youth and Individual. Committee members can volunteer for subpopulation committees via email to Nick Mondau. The 2015 CoC application is extra demanding this year and requires lots of input from counties and grantees. Below are the ideas provided to John by committee members.

- 1. Steps to shorten the length of homelessness (measure: reduce the average length of time homeless- currently down to 83 days from 98 days one year ago)**
 - Reallocate McKinney-Vento funds to Rapid Rehousing
 - Encourage and submit new Rapid Rehousing projects for new McKinney-Vento Bonus Funds
 - Strengthen the Coordinated Entry System throughout the Continuum/provide technical assistance to any County CES that need assistance/Survey County CES to determine which need assistance
 - Fully implement the Vulnerability Prioritization System for placement to assure that the most vulnerable are served first
 - Utilize the information available through the Fair Screening Act to work with landlords to place the most vulnerable. Have the knowledge of past issues of a participant so you can knowledgeably talk with the landlord about how the participant will have support to prevent a reoccurrence of any past issues
 - Encourage the use of Low Barrier policies among McKinney-Vento and other non-M-V homeless housing programs
- 2. Steps to Identify and Help Veterans not eligible for VA resources (including assessment and referral to VASH and SSVF) & How do we prioritize them for M-V assistance?**
 - Determine the categories of Veterans not eligible

- Determine how to locate them
- Determine what services are available to them
- Maximize the use of the Vulnerability Priorities to quickly house (i.e.: many of the non-eligible Vets have PTSD, Substance Abuse issues, mental illness, etc. that would place them at the top of the list for housing)
- Encourage awareness on the part of M-V grantees and CES Coordinators on the needs of this population
- Encourage M-V grantees to consider the needs of the non-eligible Vets/include in the prioritization for PSH beds
- Assure CES are aware of the Vet eligibility rules so they can consider the needs of the non-eligible Vet category

3. Plan to Increase Outreach and Engagement to Landlords to house Veterans

- Utilize SSVF Landlord Liaisons
- Work on the state level to develop incentives
- Develop a stronger relationship and better coordination with the County Veterans Relief Fund
- Encourage local agencies to provide information for development of a Veterans Master List on the local level (to develop an "RO")

4. What Steps in the past 12 months to impact ending Vet homelessness in the immediate future

- Coordinate with SSVF in planning and implementation
- Encourage the co-location of veterans outreach workers with CES staff (already done in Clallam (housing service center) and _____? Whatcom?
- Encourage the provision of office space for Vet liaisons with homeless services providers (*already being done in Whitman Co CAC*)
- Create a Hotline number for Vets (future)
- Work to improve coordination between Vet Medical Centers and the CES

5. Plans to Reduce the Rate of persons Returning to Homelessness (Describe 3 strategies have implemented to identify and minimize returns and demonstrate use of HMIS to monitor and record returns to homelessness)

- Use HMIS to identify returns by each M-V program
- Use HMIS to monitor by type of homeless assistance (TH, PSH, ES & Homelessness Prevention) -*Currently doing this*
- Encourage the provision of 6 months of follow-up supportive services following moves to PH (M-V and non-M-V)
- Use Progressive Engagement as a tool for following up to meet current needs once in PH.
- Survey the use of Hargrove funds to help on follow-up services (especially returns from treatment)

6. Strategies Implemented by CoC-funded projects to increase the rate by which homeless increase income from employment and from non-employment. Include a least on strategy for each and name organization responsible for each strategy)

- Approach the Gates Homeless Children with Families Fund to expand the Pilot program into at least one Balance of State County.
- Employ persons “as they are” (not necessarily wait until they have training to help overcome their handicapped)
- Support the Medicaid waiver
- Use examples of the THOR Program
- HARP – Program to assist coming out of Institutions
- North Sound Mental Health administers a program that that includes employment and housing

Policies and Procedures Discussion and ACTION (John)

- After a brief discussion, the group agreed that the CoC should adopt [USICH Opening Doors](#) goals to end Veterans homelessness by 2015, end chronic homelessness by 2017, end family and youth homelessness by 2020 and set a path to end all homelessness by 2020. Motion was made by Michaelle Sorlie and seconded by Theresa Slusher. Motion carried ☺
- John Epler is developing a final version of the CoC Policies and Procedures document. Coordination with other agencies, funders, service providers, CoCs, consolidated plan jurisdictions and planning bodies remains important and is an emphasis in the policies and procedures document. The document also outlines the decision-making structure including subcommittees and subpopulation committees, goal setting, performance monitoring of the CoC and CoC Program projects, technical assistance and the annual application process. John hopes to have the first draft of this updated document available for review early in November.

Tiers I and II Discussion and ACTION

- CoC Competition ranking process this year is totally different than in any previous year. The CoC has 38 renewal applications and 7 reallocation applications (projects changing from transitional housing or supportive services only to permanent housing in the form of permanent supportive housing or rapid re-housing). There are 10 bonus applications (only 4-5 will be chosen and submitted along with the rest of the projects in the application to HUD). 85% of the CoC renewal request goes into tier 1 and 15% goes into tier 2. HUD projects to have enough money available for all of the projects in tier 1. And has indicated they expect to have enough funds nationally to fund the national renewal need. Projects in tier 2 are subject to not receiving any funding from HUD. HUD will choose how many of a CoC's projects in tier 2 will be awarded funding based on the score of the CoC compared to the score of other CoCs. Bonus projects may also go into tier 2. Projects in tier 2 are scored based on project type, HUD's priorities (housing first and serving most-vulnerable populations) and priority project types (PSH serving CH, Rapid Re-housing for families with children or unaccompanied youth or TH serving unaccompanied youth) and ranking by the CoC.

- The group voted on how to rank the bonus projects and renewals in tier 2. The three options were: a) put the bonus projects first, b) put the renewals first or c) alternate between bonus and renewal projects. The results of the vote were a) 4, b) 2 and c) 12. Tier 2 will alternate between bonus projects and renewals. Members voted to task the rating and ranking committee with determining whether a bonus project or renewal is first on the list.

The next in-person meeting will be in February 2016 in either Olympia or SeaTac. The next webinar will be in two weeks.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm