

Minutes
Vermont Council on Homelessness

June 26th, 2014

2:00 – 4:00

Pavilion 4th Floor Conf. Room

State Street, Montpelier

Present: *Jack Kearnan (VIA), Linda Ryan (Samaritan House), Calvin Smith (VCRHYP), Rick DeAngelis (VHCB), Denise Bailey (VCIL), Paul Dragon (OEO/DCF), Lily Sojourner (AHS), Shaun Gilpin (DHCD), Jen Hollar (DHCD), Jan Demers (CVOEO), Amy Perez (Cathedral Square), Daniel Blankenship (VSHA), Rachel Batterson (VLA), Margaret Bozik (CHT), Lucas Herring (DOC), Shaun Donahue (AHS), Auburn Watersong (VT Network), Amber Chase (VT Network), Michelle Fay (Umbrella), Richard McInerney (Springfield Supported Housing), Angus Chaney (AHS), Brian Smith (DMH), Denise Bailey (VCIL)*

Angus called the meeting to order at 2:04.

Introductions and Announcements: Initial announcement from VSHA about two approved projects through HUD: Shelter plus Care in Rutland (Pathways), and a Rapid Re-Housing Project shared between Morningside in Brattleboro and the Homelessness Prevention Center (formerly RCHC) in Rutland. VSHA and the Continuum are busy working through the new HUD regulations.

Public Comment: No one offered public comment.

Local Point-In-Time (PIT) Reports: The group reviewed local Point-In Time homelessness reports from four counties with the highest numbers of persons experiencing homelessness. To some extent, regional difference in characteristics is reflective of the type of programming in the area. For instance, one expects to see a higher number of identified homeless veterans in a county with a veterans' shelter. There was discussion around the accuracy of the PIT data and the process. Capacity issues make it challenging to address some of these concerns. There was hesitancy about relying on these data too much to make programming decisions because of those concerns. Rick recommended that preliminary PIT data go back to local continuum groups for review. Shaun: Would a second annual count, conducted in the summer, produce different results? Linda: Could we expand OEO one night count? Rachel: What about an intern from a college helping with data analysis? Lily: Agreed the methodology is improving but using different methodologies over time makes it difficult to see trends. Angus: The AmeriCorps position supports the PIT. Daniel: The turnover associated with the AmeriCorps positions makes that difficult.

Key AHS Housing Measures: Angus presented the summary agency measures with an explanation of how they're used. Rachel suggested they be a topic for a future agenda to be reviewed in more detail.

Rental Discrimination Report:

(<http://www.vtlegalaid.org/assets/Uploads/Rental-Discrimination-Report-May-2014.pdf>)

Rachel Batterson reviewed the testing process Legal Aid follows to generate this information and the group reviewed the data she presented. Most of the testing is done in the Chittenden County area due to the numbers in that region so it is difficult to make regional comparisons. If a family believes they are facing discrimination there are a few options: Providers, Legal Aid and the family can work with the voucher/subsidy provider to get an extension if discrimination is a barrier. A family can report the discrimination to Legal Aid. The family has up to a year to report it to the Human Rights Commission and two years to decide if they want to go to court. The group discussed ways to work with landlords or provide education around discrimination. Other resources available include Fair Housing

(http://www.cvoeo.org/?fuseaction=dep_intro&dept_id=1) and VT Tenants through CVOEO (http://www.cvoeo.org/?fuseaction=dep_intro&dept_id=15)

Housekeeping Items: The group reviewed a handout describing procedures for voting, etc. They will be voted on at the next meeting. Send any questions, comments, suggestions to Angus in the next few weeks so he can incorporate that feedback.

Approval of Minutes: Rick DeAngelis moved approval of the April 2014 minutes. Linda Ryan Seconded. There was no further discussion. The minutes were passed with no objections and abstentions noted from Daniel and Michelle who were not present at that meeting.

Vote on 2014 Annual Report and 2015 Update to the State Plan: The group reviewed the plan.

Three members notified the chair in advance that they would be unable to attend. All cast votes electronically: Deborah Hall and Elizabeth Whitmore voted for the plan. Morgan Brown voted against the plan. Daniel Blankenship, representing Richard Williams, made a motion to approve the plan. Jen Hollar seconded. Further discussion: There were two main points of discussion. The first was around strategy one and whether to include specific language about examining initiatives in other states to increase housing for extremely-low income households and see how to reproduce those plans in Vermont. The group agreed that the Council could pursue this under the broader language that exists currently in strategy one of the plan. The second discussion focused on the word "voluntary" in the 3rd strategy. There was discussion around the intent of that strategy, the priority focus of the strategy, the pros/cons of utilizing the word "voluntary," what "voluntary" meant, etc. The group discussed addressing this issue by having further discussions on the values of the Council and learning more about various programs to help gain consensus on definitions and the intent of phrases and strategies before the next annual update.

The chair called the vote and the report and action plan was approved by the Council with all present voting in favor. Angus will present the plan to the Governor's office.

Other Business: The chair asked attendees if their meeting experience was improved without the phone option. The consensus was that it was.

Meeting adjourned at 4:01 PM

Next Meeting: August 28, 2014 (2-4 PM)