

**Western Virginia Continuum of Care  
August 8, 2019  
Woodstock VA  
CoC Meeting Minutes**

**Welcome/Introductions (5 mins)**

- a. The facilitator acknowledged Harrisonburg City Manager's Assistant Amy Schneider who was in attendance on behalf of the Harrisonburg City Council.

**New Business:**

**1. *Review and Approval of June's minutes (15 mins)***

- a. Action Steps: Sheila moved that the minutes be approved, Zanata seconded, all were in favor.

**2. *CoC Grant Applications (10 mins)***

- a. Emily McCarty gave an overview of the grant process and where we are thus far in the timeline, as well as an overview of the ranking and review process. There are four applicants total.

**3. *Youth Homelessness: Dr. Alex Wagaman (20-30 mins)***

- a. Youth homelessness in our region is about 5% but Dr. Wagaman pointed out that data is affected by where outreach is being conducted. She referenced youth statistics from <http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/>
- b. In her research and interest of the issue, she started out by looking into qualitative data but also talking with youth who were experiencing homelessness to get an actual grasp of the scope of youth homelessness versus just relying on the quantitative data.

To learn about and tackle youth homelessness, she suggested:

- 1) Connecting with communities that are similar to us

- 2) Coming up with a plan for tackling youth homelessness specifically; in which areas is the issue most prevalent and how can efforts be tailored to these areas and the barriers youth face in these areas?
- 3) Recognizing gaps for youth in their region. Areas to tackle: emotional, mental, physical, and reproductive health; inclusivity and connections/relationships; financial and educational needs.
- 4) Learning how to be data-driven; their youth advocates do yearly studies.

**Lessons she has learned:**

- 1) Do not wait for the data to indicate a problem before understanding there is a problem and addressing it (“one’s too many; let’s get moving.”)
- 2) Do not wait for data to be perfect before getting started with initiatives, though that is not to say that data quality should be disregarded.
- 3) Start with who you have, build from there; it will grow with time.
- 4) Do not reinvent the wheel; copying is the best form of flattery. Learn from other successful organizations.
- 5) Ask where young people are showing up (e.g. food pantries); many youth are not actually showing up at the centralized intake points.
- 6) Know the types of youth who are at risk of homelessness (LGBTQ youth, pregnant youth, immigrant and refugee youth, youth who have experienced abuse, domestic violence etc.)

**Q & A:**

- a. **How do you define youth?** Using the federal guidance of 13-24 but it is difficult to respond to those below 18 because in Virginia, the law says you’re under custody of parents/guardian. But most of the work Advocates for Richmond Youth (ARY) is doing is focusing on 18-24.
- b. **Who do you consider to be stakeholders in this issue?** The youth they’re working with would say everyone. Funders, local government, community leaders, anyone who’s interested in coming to the table.

- c. **Where are your housing solutions coming from?** RRH does not work very well. ARY has Hope Homes where a youth stays with someone in the community who gets a stipend; the youth gets a lease contract. Some communities are able to get the stipend setup but ARY does not have that yet. They have added a peer navigator to some of their housing plans and are working toward a permanent supportive housing model for young people.

## **Old Business:**

### *1. Committee Updates (30 mins)*

#### *a. Centralized Intake Committee*

- i. Shannon Porter and Sheila Orndorff gave an update with how CI is working toward consistency across the board. They also mentioned the need to mesh CI with Built for Zero case conferencing. Currently all CI intake centers are at full capacity, no more resources available to help people because the volume currently is at the max.

#### *b. Best Practices Committee*

- i. Lynn Gray thanked Candy and Zanata for their longstanding service and explained that at this point, the best practices committee really just needs to increase membership. It can't really go forward without more members; would hate to mandate membership but that will be the next step if people do not voluntarily step up to the table.
- ii. Vine Adowei will create a webpage that delineates each committee, what they do, and current members.

#### *c. Compliance and Evaluation Committee*

- i. Sheila Orndorff gave the update that the committee just finished working on a policy and schedule for pre-audits for VHSP and CoC grantees. They will be checking spenddown every quarter and watching the benchmarks that funding federal and state agencies have designated.

#### *d. Data/Performance Committee*

- i. Laura Black gave the update that Salvation Army of Harrisonburg is now in on HMIS as of June 1<sup>st</sup>. Since last July, we have had 13 new users in HMIS.
- ii. From our PIT count in January 2019: Of 248 homeless individuals counted, 11 of those were between the ages of 18 and 24.
- iii. Data is important in tracking what is going on and should also inform the work we are doing, so HMIS is particularly important. It is important that we keep data as up to date as possible. Overall, we are putting data in at 6 days or less. If you are interested in joining the committee, contact Laura at [lblack@harrisonburgrha.com](mailto:lblack@harrisonburgrha.com).

*e. Media and Advocacy Committee*

- i. Oscar Cerrito-Mendoza gave the update that the committee did not meet this past month because of schedule conflicts but they sent out the CI brochure and CoC PowerPoint. They could also use more members.

*f. Executive Committee*

- i. Shannon Porter gave the update that in their last meeting, the committee had approved transfer of primary applicant from NSVRC to HRHA.

**2. By-Name List and Case Conferencing (15 mins)**

- a. Emily McCarty stated that the Built for Zero team has been engaged with learning about and preparing for case conferencing. We had our first case conferencing meeting on July 24 and discussed how the case conferencing process will be held. Emily will be handing off to Vine at the next case conferencing meeting on August 21<sup>st</sup>.
- b. With the BNL, we will know everyone in our area experiencing homelessness, prioritize the most chronic, and go through each case, gathered around the table, to come up with a long-term sustainable housing plan for each person.
- c. DV providers cannot partake in the BNL process because of confidentiality issues, but they can let chronic DV individuals know they can opt into the process.

**Housing Initiatives/Announcements (15 mins)**

- d. Sheila stated that SAS has moved to People Inc. The next case conferencing meeting on August 21<sup>st</sup> will be held in their new space.
- e. Shannon stated that in Harrisonburg, the issue of homelessness is front and center because of a downtown incident and the repeal of the panhandling legislation. The climate right now is such that this issue is front and center, so we need to take advantage of it.
- f. A representative of Catholic Charities in Woodstock said the school told them that there are 13 homeless teens in their school. Sheila asked why the school had not contacted centralized intake. It may be that they are not informed about CI or maybe the individuals fit the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness but not HUD's.
- g. Strength in Peers with Page One is opening a community resource center; it will be walk-in.
- h. Northern outreach RFPs are due Friday, August 16th.
- i. Rescue Mission is having a rescue ride where they will ride motorcycles across the country and stop by a number of missions/coalitions to learn what other agencies are doing. It will also raise a lot of awareness because the ride will be captured by local news and a live feed can be followed on Facebook.

**Meeting Adjourned**