

CoC General Meeting Minutes

April 11th, 2024, 10am-12pm

Introduction to CoC Administrator and CoC overview

- Allison Henry introduced herself as the CoC Administrator and provided a brief overview of the purpose of the CoC and the current funding structure. A map was shown for both HUD and DHCD Funding Streams. Allison emphasized the importance of funding transparency within the CoC and ensured the group they would learn of funding opportunities as soon as possible. A request was made by Jason Craig with Valley Health to have the map made including the agencies who receive the funding examples and Allison agreed to attempt to make this possible by the next General Meeting.

Committee Updates

- **Best Practices Committee:** Matt Tibbles, Committee Chair, stated that the committee is still working on best practice language for assessments used across the CoC. They also plan to review a Client Centered Data Approach webinar series offered by HUD and will make the information easily accessible for CoC Member Agencies.
- **Compliance & Evaluation:** Katie Vance, Committee Chair, informed the meeting attendees that the committee is currently working on scheduling site monitoring visits, which is an activity that has not happened since before COVID. She encouraged agencies to keep an eye out for emails with date options to choose for their site visits. She also invited others to join the Compliance and Evaluation Committee.
- **Data & Performance:** Rachel Rivera, Committee Chair, provided an update that the most important activity they've been working on is reviewing and updating the VHSP Performance Metrics, specifically the Monitoring Policy which they are hoping to complete and submit to the Executive Committee for review and approval soon. The group is prioritizing that data collected from all CoC activities will be more easily accessible to member agencies. The committee has also partnered with other CoC HMIS participants to join a system that allows agencies who may also serve clients within the Western VA CoC to communicate better. The committee is also looking for a Deputy Chair.
- **Executive Committee:** Shannon Porter, Deputy Chair, provided an update that the group has been discussing aligning better as providers and members of the CoC, how we share information, and how we build and foster trust in the CoC. The group also discussed how the CoC Administrator can help facilitate working towards these goals and the importance of the position.
- **Lived Experience Committee:** No specific updates were provided due to the group not meeting since the last General CoC meeting.
- **Media & Advocacy Committee:** Megan Bly, Committee Chair, stated they need more members for this committee. She provided the update that the committee has been working on keeping the website updated, and that the plan is to incorporate the PIT Count information into the



website and Facebook page after Kaitlin's presentation. Megan also stated that they are trying to highlight community member's lived experience stories into various media outlets.

Agency Updates

Aids Response Effort (A.R.E) update provided by Katie Vance: A.R.E will be not longer be facilitators of RRH, prevention, or street outreach beginning in June. Cheryl Franklin has been hired on contract to assist with RRH until the programs end within their agency. Horizon Goodwill applied to take over these programs. A.R.E will be operating an LGBTQ Center in Winchester. They will still be administering HOPWA and Ryan White housing assistance.

Faith Works update provided by Bob Boulter: Faith Works is about to launch a program funded by VA Housing, for which Faith Works will be the agent, in which they receive funding to be able to modify housing in order to make it accessible to those with disabilities. Examples given for this were ramps, widening hallways, and bathroom modifications. This can be for homeowners and renter and it will be up to an \$8,000 grant. It is the VA Housing Accessibility Grant and all information about the grant is on the VA Housing website. They are identifying contractors to do the work now. Funding can cover all counties in the CoC except for Rockingham. Bob requested people refer contractors interested in completing this work to Faith Works. They plan to bring on another part-time staff member for the project.

HCHC Care Management provided by Irene Bethel: HCHC started a Latino support that will happen once a month. A date is not yet determined. They also have one job position opening for a Medical Case Manager.

Bridge of Hope update provided by Deirdre Longacher Smeltzer: Bridge of Hope will have a job position opening for a Case Manager and it should be posted on their website soon.

Thermal Shelter Update: All thermal shelters within the Western VA CoC have ended their Winter shelter operations.

Open Doors update provided by Hannah Bailey: Open Doors will begin doing street outreach during the Summer months and will open their on-site, year round shelter in October. A Resource Coordinator will be available at different location at specified times to help connect people to resources. They will also have free meals on Sundays. The date these activities will happen is not set yet, but will be available on their website soon.

Our Community Place (OCP) update provided by Matt Tibbles: OCP has begun hosting an Unhoused Women's group in Harrisonburg weekly on Mondays.

VHSP Collaborative Application Update

Shannon Porter stated that the application has been submitted with a request for 10% across the board funding increase, as well as a request for some additional supplemental funding specifically for Coordinated Entry and Street Outreach. It is agreed that Street Outreach is under-funded CoC wide. Shannon was hopeful about the opportunity for additional funding.

PIT findings presentation

- Kaitlin provided an in-depth overview and the Point In Time (PIT) Count Findings. The PIT Count is a once a year census count on the last Wednesday in January to count people who are experiencing literal homelessness. HUD uses this report for their Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Purpose of obtaining data is largely for reporting. Much of reporting is for funding purposes, but we can also use the data for accountability, improving services, and coordination. It is important that the CoC understand and share the data in order to educate the community on what homelessness looks like in our areas. We can also use our understanding to advocate for the people we serve.
- Kaitlin presented graphics that represent that data collected regarding the following:
 - PIT Count totals over time
 - Demographics including location, gender, age, sheltered vs unsheltered by age group, race, and comparing racial proportions of homeless and general populations
 - The following statistics:
 - 1 in 4 adults reported a serious mental illness (24%)
 - 1 in 6 adults identified as survivors of domestic violence (17%)
 - 1 in 7 adults reported a substance use disorder (15%)
 - 1 in 33 adults identified as veterans (3%)
 - 1 in 100 adults reported having HIV/AIDS (1%)
 - Chronic homelessness by shelter type and by region.
 - Agency location of those surveyed for the PIT
 - Household type
 - Length of time homeless with the following specifics:
 - People experiencing homelessness for the first time by racial/ethnic identities
 - Amount of time spent homeless in the past 3 years
 - Reported length of time throughout life
 - Last residence
- Contributing factors, including top 3 reasons for experiencing homelessness and top single reason
- Common Challenges faces by those surveyed, including specific about Employment and Income
- Health challenges with the following categories:
 - Health status
 - Health status by length of time homeless
 - People who reported illness in the past 2 years
 - Adults with self-reported disabilities
 - Self-reported mental illness
 - Rate of receiving mental/physical health treatment by race and ethnicity
 - Access to healthcare by region
 - How stressful the health challenges were
 - People visiting the emergency room by region
 - People admitted to the hospital
 - Self-reported substance use by educational attainment
 - Having ever used opioids by region
- Life experiences including:
 - Highest level of education
 - Were you ever in foster care by age
 - Rate of experiencing a violent attack by shelter situation

- Have they ever been incarcerated
- ACES
- Discussion of the PIT Data Presentation:
 - Zanata Fenn expressed that the expectation from case managers in helping resolve a housing issue was that they address what the barrier was at the first meeting, and now it is known that the cause can be multiple reasons and can take time to be clear.
 - Kaitlin Heatwole agreed and stated this validates that the VISPDAT is not the best measure to use to gather information. Begs the question is the PIT Count the best time to ask the questions related to reasons for homelessness.
 - Rachel Rivera responded that when people are in survival mode, they may not be able to share the most accurate and complete information and, as time goes on and they are in a more comfortable housing and/or shelter situation, it may become more clear what the root causes are.
 - Allison Henry added that another factor to think of when considering whether it's appropriate to ask questions related to cause during the PIT Count is who is asking the survey questions and their relationship to the person being surveyed. Asking one of your own clients about their trauma history, whom you have a working relationship and established rapport with, is different than walking up to someone on the street that you suspect may be homeless and asking the same questions. People are more likely to divulge complete information to people they trust.
 - Rachel Rivera agreed and mentioned that one way this was addressed in the Winchester area was advertising host locations so that even more people could participate by choice and less were being approached randomly.

Announcements

- **Next Meeting is June 6th for the HUD NOFO Information Session:** HUD's notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) happens every year in the summer/fall; start planning now if you're interested in submitting a proposal
- **Next General Meeting is June 13th in Harrisonburg at the Lucy Simms Center**
- **Save the Date- Excel Trainings May 16 and May 30:** look for registration invite in email
- **Watch for invitation for inventory requests**
- **Watch for invitations for Monitoring Visits**