

**River Valleys Continuum of Care Meeting
Thursday, April 21, 2011
RPU
400 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN**

***It is our mission to prevent, respond to and help end homelessness in Southeastern Minnesota
by coordinating services and maximizing resources.***

Attending:

Amber Statz, Lutheran Social Service
Angie Peterson, Zumbro Valley Mental Health
Beverly Jacobsen, Rochester Family Y-Link
Brian Lipford, Southern MN Regional Legal Services
Carol Juvland, Three Rivers Community Action
Cindy Norgard, Rochester Salvation Army
Colleen Hansen, Three Rivers Community Action
Corrine Erickson, Olmsted County Social Services
Diana Miller, Project Home
Erin Hoksch, Community Action Center of Northfield Intern
Gary Lueders, Olmsted County HRA
Gretchen Blais, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
Jennifer McNallan, Zumbro Valley Mental Health
Jennifer Slabaugh, Semcac
Jessica Geary, Phoenix Project
Jessica Wolf, Project Home
Julie Ackland, Austin HRA
Julie Anderson, Steele County Transitional Housing
Karen Kroll, Three Rivers Community Action
Kathryn Hansen, Rural AIDS Action Network
Kris Kvols, HOPE Coalition
Maggie Sjoquist, Project Home
Mary Ulland Evans, Three Rivers Community Action
Mary Vrieze, Southern MN Regional Legal Services
Patrick Arden Wood, Street Talk, Elim Transitional Housing
Patrick Leary, MN Department of Human Services
Randy Sutter, Light House
Renee Lorence, Red Wing HRA
Robin Yaffe-Tschumper, Bluff Country Family Resources
Ruth Hickey, Ruth's House
Sheila Alba, Project Home
Sue Warring, Community Action Center of Northfield
Warren Duncan, Hearth Connection
Recording Secretary, Kelli McMullen, Three Rivers Community Action

Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.

Approval of February Minutes and April Agenda

Sue Worlds (Sorenson) noted that MACV was not included in the list of applications declaring intent to re-apply. It will be noted in the February Minutes that MACV did announce their intent to re-apply.

Robyn Yaffe-Tschumper motioned to approve the February 17, 2011 minutes with the addition listed above; Mary Vrieze seconded the motion; motion carried.

The Education Law Project will require less time on the agenda at today's meeting; Bruce Beneke from SMRLS was unable to present the project in the time available so will be our speaker at the June meeting. Brian Lipford brought some brochures about the project and will cover it briefly. Hearth Connection will be added under Certifications of Consistency.

Beverly Jacobsen motioned to approve the April 21, 2011 agenda with the changes listed above; Warren seconded the motion; motion carried.

Committee Reports

Executive

This committee has not met since the last meeting, but will convene soon.

Data

This committee has not met since the last meeting. The Point in Time Count was finalized. This covered sheltered and unsheltered persons. The homeless population has dropped; this year the shelters were not as full as in previous years. It is unclear why the decrease but it could be because a lot of the chronically homeless folks in our region are now in housing. Or we could have missed them without street outreach in place. We have been told the homeless camps leave well before the count due to the weather, moving south and then returning in the spring/summer.

The Executive Committee will discuss the possibilities of holding a summer count. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) count is the last Thursday of July. If a summer count is feasible, it will be planned and discussed at the June meeting.

Planning

This committee does not meet unless there is a reason such as reviewing applications or with competition between applications as will happen this afternoon; applications for OEO's homeless programs will be reviewed after this meeting.

HMIS

Colleen is the new HMIS representative. The 5.0 update is delayed to at least next winter.

A survey has been sent out from Wilder to HMIS user organizations about their computer/technology capacity. They want users to complete the survey, not the IT person. Emily said that if user's computers are more than five years old and/or less than 1GB, they would need a new computer to accommodate the ServicePoint upgrade.

Transition Fairs

This committee has not been developed yet. We, as a CoC, have been asked to have representation at Transition Fairs throughout the state. They are asking for each CoC to have a table with information available to those attending the fair in preparation for their release. Mary's plan is to gather information about each participant's expected needs upon release and provide them with resource information. Program information can then be sent out by the applicable provider as needed. A process for effective participation in these fairs needs to be developed.

If you would like to participate in this process, please let Corrine or Mary know. Before attending a fair, they do criminal background checks so anyone entering a correctional facility will need to have that clearance.

HEARTH Act and/or NOFA Updates

There was no word on new projects at the meeting. [HUD has since announced the new project funding and our CoC's new project, Silver Creek Corner, was funded. Every Continuum in Minnesota scored well enough to get new projects funded.]

The 2011 NOFA will not include all of the regs in the HEARTH Act, but only those pertaining to the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and perhaps the definitions. (There are three other sets of regs that will not be ready for this year's application, and maybe not for next year's either.) Pat said the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) is under a continuing resolution through July 1st. There was a 40% increase in these funds. The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) activities will now be funded under ESG. The increase will mean \$500,000 for our office (OEO) and \$500,000 per entitlement community. These funds will replace the HPRP funds.

Mary is currently working on submitting the Point in Time count and Housing Inventory into the HUD Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX). The Grant Inventory Worksheets (GIWs) will be coming soon as well. Grantees will need to confirm their renewals and work out any discrepancies with HUD; what is submitted on the GIW is considered the final listing of renewals.

Certification of Consistency – Washington Village East, Sheryl Block

Sheryl said ZVMHC has provided services to clients in Washington Village West for over two years. Joe is going to build Washington Village East which will include four one-bedroom units for the homeless population. Washington Village West is at 100% occupancy with a waiting list. A recent study has shown there is a need for 500 affordable housing units needed each year for the next three years.

Mary Vrieze motioned to approve the Certification of Consistency for Washington Village East; Robyn Yaffe-Tschumper seconded the motion; motion carried.

Corrine thanked Joe for attending the meeting to share his perspective on the project. It is great to have a developer come talk about the project. We are asked to certify projects many times with minimal information.

Certification of Consistency – Hearth Connection, Warren Duncan

Hearth Connection is re-applying for funding for the Long Term Homeless (LTH) Project. There are three mobile teams providing services in our region: ZVMHC, Project Home and Blue Earth County Human Services. We will broaden our coverage from the current 17 counties to include all 20 counties covered

by this CoC. Hearth Connection requested an increase in funds, wanting to serve an additional 150 households and to cover a new service team member with ZVMHC who will work with homeless youth.

Mary Vrieze motioned to approve the Certification of Consistency for the Hearth Connection Long Term Homeless Project; Renee Lorence seconded the motion; motion carried.

HMIS and AHAR, Emily Warren, Wilder Research

Handout: *Southeast CoC AHAR data – comparison to previous years*

Wilder will be sending out another survey. HUD is requiring more information on those who serve homeless persons, even those not using HMIS. We are starting with the users. We will send the survey to the agency's main contact person.

The new APR will be used in June for those with an APR due in June and July. There is a short window of time to learn and use the new APR.

Emily reviewed the handout showing the missing data. If you do not have the information or if a client refused, enter refused. DO NOT leave it blank. This leaves missing data errors in the report. Missing data will affect our Exhibit One Score. Emily will put together a report with comparisons by CoC.

Impartial Justice Coalition, the Honorable Al Quie, Former Governor of MN

Handout: *Coalition for Impartial Justice*

Governor Al Quie is working with the Coalition for Impartial Justice to change how judges are elected. They propose when going to the polls, there will be available to voters a report on each judge up for election. The goal is to have this available online as well as in many public locations. When a judge is running unopposed, voters can vote yes or no. If they receive more no votes, it would go to a merit selection. The committee would nominate three people. If the Governor doesn't like any of the three, he/she could ask for another three nominations. Many times a sitting judge will leave the bench early. This allows the Governor to appoint his/her replacement.

We are working to get the legislation to agree to this for the next session. We urge you to take the resolution to your precinct caucuses.

Break

Stories and Video of Homeless Youth, Henry and Theresa

Leadership Greater Rochester's project this year is to raise awareness of homeless youth. The video was presented to the CoC. They put together the video to raise awareness and it is presented at "Diners from the Street" fundraisers. The fundraisers are held at restaurants in the area. People can come and dine with youth who are or have experienced homelessness.

Education Law Project, SMRLS Brian Lipford and Mary Vrieze

Handout: Brochure *Education Law Advocacy Project*

Bruce Beneke will attend the June meeting to cover the Education Law Advocacy project. There are Federal and State laws designed to remove the barriers for homeless children. Through this program, SMRLS provides free legal advice and assistance on educational issues to low-income families. If there are issues with a homeless family regarding education, please call SMRLS or the schools homeless liaison. The priority is to enroll, provide transportation and free lunches. The law states the child should remain in the school of origin while a dispute is being settled.

State Resources for Homeless Youth, Beth Holger-Ambrose, DHS

Handouts: Power Point Presentation *Youth on their Own & Homelessness in Minnesota* and *Runaway and Homeless Youth Service Providers in Minnesota*

There are an estimated 2500 homeless youth on any given night in Minnesota. There are only 100 shelter beds designated for youth. Between 2006 and 2009 there was a 46 % increase of homeless youth.

Beth reviewed locations of the drop-in centers available in MN for homeless youth. A youth shelter must be licensed so it is much more expensive to administer. Host Homes are volunteers with an extra bedroom. They go through three background checks. The training to be a host home is different than foster care.

Next Steps for the CoC Re: Youth Homelessness

The March 31st meeting generated many good ideas for serving homeless youth such as:

- Develop protocols for sharing information between youth homeless providers and school homeless liaisons.
- Hold a Project Community Connect (PCC) aimed towards youth in the region.
- Educate at the student level by addressing the students on homelessness.
- Youth mentorship.
- Transition fairs for youth.
- Formal collaborations.
- Gather input from homeless youth, what they consider needs or gaps.

There will be a Youth Connect in St. Paul on May 12th, 1:30 – 5:30.

Mary will schedule a youth committee meeting.

Adjourn

Meeting unanimously adjourned.

It is our goal to identify, determine and implement solutions that meet the needs of the homeless in our communities.