



HOMELESS SERVICES NETWORK MINUTES

January 28, 2016 / 8:30am – 10:00am

Hope Haven Conference Center

ATTENDANCE

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

1) Ron Clark	Cardinal Innovations
2) Antoine Mitchell	Carolinas Care Partnership
3) Davena Mgbeokwere	Charlotte Family Housing
4) Tony Marciano	Charlotte Rescue Mission
5) Branden Lewis	Community Link
6) Tameka Gunn	Community Link
7) Dr. Pat Krikorian	Florence Crittenton Services
8) John Burns	Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont
9) Phyllis Pickens	Hope Haven
10) Alice Harrison	Hope Haven
11) Natalia Botella	Legal Services of Southern Piedmont
12) Peter Safir	Mecklenburg County Community Support Services
13) Courtney Morton	Mecklenburg County Community Support Services
14) Tracey Wallace	Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
15) Toyna Potts	Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
16) Carmen Goodman	Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
17) Erin Schroeder	Mecklenburg County Shelter + Care
18) Barb Cross	Mecklenburg County Shelter + Care
19) Ulinda Forehand	Mecklenburg County Shelter + Care
20) Stephanie Shatto	Men's Shelter of Charlotte
21) Kathy Gauger	Safe Alliance
22) Harry Mack	Salvation Army
23) Pamela Jefsen	Supportive Housing Communities
24) Kelly Lynn	Supportive Housing Communities
25) Chris Prysock	The Relatives
26) Ashley Clark	UNCC Urban Institute
27) Mike O'Sullivan	Unitarian Church Universalist Church Advocacy Group
28) Liz Clasen-Kelly	Urban Ministry Center
29) Carrington Cosby	YWCA Central Carolinas

GUESTS PRESENT:

1) Janice McNeely	Changed Choices
2) Bridgett Williams	Discovery Home Care
3) Janice Blakeney	Public Library
4) Brandie Meekins	The Harvest Center of Charlotte
5) Phyllis E. Finch	Victory Christian Center



MINUTES

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & DECEMBER MINUTES

- Meeting called to order by Chair, Liz Clasen-Kelly at 8:35am
- December meeting minutes were approved

VICTORIES

- Liz Clasen Kelly shared that the Point-in-time count is currently under way a large number of volunteers and will continue through tonight.
- Brandie Meekins shared that there is a new Harvest Center site with multiple agencies serving together, located off of Freedom Drive.
- Peter Safir shared that a Mecklenburg County collaborated with other agencies to open a warming station in response to the inclement weather last Friday, serving 157 people.
- Mike O’Sullivan shared that he and Ron Clark worked with The League of Women Voters to show Storied Streets, with 27 people showing up to see it on a Saturday morning.

UPDATE: EXEMPTIONS TO THE WORK REQUIREMENT FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

- Natalia Botella presented information on exemptions that impact individuals in Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Tracey Wallace and Toyna Potts answered questions on behalf of DSS regarding exemptions and paperwork needed.
- Natalia shared a handout which reviewed all of the major exemptions to the work requirement (attached to meeting minutes)
 - o In order to claim the unfit for work exemption due to medical, physical or mental condition when a person does not yet have benefits, they can provide a statement from medical provider to show they are unfit for work (example attached to meeting minutes)
 - o Chronically homeless individuals will be considered “unfit for work” under this rule. The definition for “chronic” in this context is not the same stringent HUD definition; an applicant statement is sufficient to verify chronic homelessness.
- Natalia reviewed some tips for providers:
 - o Encouraged everyone to begin communicating the change in the policy, including who it does/does not effect
 - o Share the screening guide and medical report (attached)
 - o Recognized DSS’s current work and encouraged others to help with providing opportunities for volunteer work
 - o Shared that Legal Services of Southern Piedmont represents anyone who has been wrongfully denied after completing an initial screening for eligibility; Legal Services is also interested in how this new policy is being implemented and in what ways they can improve it.
- Summary of Questions & Answers, Discussion:
 - o **What does ABAWD stand for?** = Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents



- **The HUD definition of chronic homelessness includes a disabling condition--Is that the definition this policy uses?** This new policy rule has not yet been finalized and until then, it is okay to interpret “chronic homelessness” more broadly.
- **If people have an active substance use disorder and can show proof of it, can they still receive food stamps?** The person has to be participating in a substance treatment program and provide proof of that on letterhead to DSS; this could also include going to McLeod for an assessment (only need for the substance use disorder to be verified).
- **Did this policy change any existing restrictions with criminal background?** No. The same restrictions are still in place.
- Liz Clasen-Kelly suggested that providers try out working to meet the new exemptions in the coming months with clients and report out victories at future HSN meetings. It was recommended that this could start immediately, but no later than March for April 1st cut offs. It was confirmed that you do not have to wait until the recertification period to submit for an exemption. The person can then “bank” their 3-month free period for another time.
 - **Pamela Jefsen and Stephanie Shatto** agreed to try the process and provide feedback re: homeless exemption to HSN.
 - **Alice Harrison** agreed to try the process and provide feedback re: substance use exemption to HSN.

PLANNING PROCESS: WHAT GROUND DO WE WANT TO COVER IN 2016?

- Liz Clasen-Kelly provided the framework for the group visioning process 2016:
 - Liz reviewed that HSN has shifted to provide more content with longer conversation, and this would continue as a trend.
 - Liz shared her hope for each meeting in 2016 to have portion around a specific topic, with the overall vision to create a learning environment that leads to action, bringing solid content and opportunities for discussion and action.
- Liz shared with the members the rationale for adding “challenges” to the agenda:
 - The goal is for the group to share challenges from the front line – in order to articulate it in a group setting and then have the opportunity to stay after and problem solve with others. Plan to see how it goes and are open to feedback.
- The group broke up into 5 groups and discussed the following three questions:
 - What is an example in recent history of when you believe HSN has functioned at is best?
 - Do you have suggestions for how HSN could be more effective?
 - What are essential topics and/or issues we should address in 2016?
- Notes from the groups are included below:

QUESTION 1:

What is an example in recent history of when you believe HSN has functioned at is best?

- Share information (example: Food and Nutrition Services Exemption)
 - Presentations related to homelessness are better
 - Improvements with increased focus on specific topics and inclusion of data
- Provide Networking + Advocacy
- Celebrate Victories in the community



- Successes:
 - o Homeless Court
 - o Conduct Point-in-Time Count
 - o Establishment of Coordinated Assessment
 - o Establishment of COSH / A Way Home referrals
 - o Brought Storied Streets to community
 - o Hosted forum for candidates running for office
- Macro Focus, Forward Thinking
- Energy + Upbeat + Good Participation
- Welcoming, Collaborative, Diverse Organization
- Professionally Run + Ends on Time
- Provide Scholarships for Individuals to attend Conferences
- Maintained identity in the midst of change among other organizations
- Challenge Each Other and Breakdown Assumptions about Roles/Agencies

QUESTION 2:

Do you have suggestions for how HSN could be more effective?

- Connect and integrate different kinds of organizations beyond this field
 - o Strengthen and broaden connection with faith community
 - o Increased representation from law enforcement and landlords
- Invite more elected officials to attend meetings and engage with group
- Leverage our strengths
- Feature an Agency – either at a meeting or via email
 - o Increase education of current services available
- Announce the Topic of the HSN Meeting at least a month ahead
 - o Send information ahead of meeting so that members can do pre-work ahead of time
- Need more compelling mission and clarity around goals for HSN
- Provide facts and myths about what homelessness looks like
- Clarity around role of HSN Chair leadership activities
 - o Look at leadership diversity and succession planning
 - o Create opportunities for leaders to mentor others within group
- Improve engagement among all members and provide opportunities for input
- Create taskforces to address certain issues and report back to larger group
 - o Connect the dots and follow up on questions / action items

- Each group selected 3 topics to bring to the larger group as options for a monthly topic in the coming year. Due to time and overlapping topics, it was decided that a survey would be sent to the group with the topics listed. This would allow for all HSN members to vote if they



did not attend the meeting. Link to the survey is included in minutes email. Topic list is below:

QUESTION 3: What are essential topics and/or issues we should address in 2016?
- Resources for Clients Receiving SSI Only (housing)
- Housing Opportunities for Hard-to-Serve Clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Landlord relationships, eliminating barriers to housing and supporting the maintenance of housing
- Strategies for Providing More Affordable Housing, including zoning laws
- Economic Mobility
- Current, Past and Future Community Movements
- Coordinated Assessment
- Best Practices
- Voter Registration
- What does quality Mental Health and Drug/Alcohol Look Like from a Wellness Perspective and Where Can Clients Access It in our Community?
- Domestic Violence and Trauma
- Human Trafficking
- What does it take to end chronic homelessness by 2016?
- Where are the Gaps in Our Community and How do We Prioritize for Action?

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Advocacy Committee: Mike O’Sullivan shared progress on some of the initiatives:

- Budget proposal for \$240,000 for the homeless court / diversion process was recently put in front of county commissioners.
- Members have an upcoming meeting with Ann Clark, CMS superintendent, to discuss affordable housing for teachers and others working in the school system as well as on issues facing children experiencing homelessness.
- Storied Streets showing was a success.
- Discussion about an alternative site for the HRC when it closes at the end of March 2016 is happening. It was mentioned that finding a venue a challenge—groups are speaking with churches and partner agencies to find a location inside the beltway; members are open to suggestions for ideas for alternative locations.

Continuum of Care: No update

Coordination Of Services in Housing (COSH): Kathy Gauger shared updates:

- Next month will feature a presentation from Anuvia
- In response to question, Kathy described the purpose of COSH: it is a group of direct service providers that come together to better coordinate resources and figure out what to do if a household in need of housing does not meet the 72 hour definition for homelessness



CHALLENGES

- 1) Alice Harrison shared that she serves on the committee and holds the sole vote that is against pushing against the movement to develop the North Tryon area.
- 2) Alice Harrison asked if anyone knows who currently occupies the old Carolina Manor nursing home in Druid Hills; if you know, contact Alice.
- 3) Liz Clasen-Kelly shared she has seen an increase in people becoming homeless as a result of landlords selling their entire apartment building to shift to higher rents.
- 4) Kathy Gauger shared that there are education opportunities for local law enforcement regarding domestic violence.
- 5) Peter Safir shared that our community needs to address the issue that the emergency shelter is always full and there is a significant need to better serve families with children who need shelter.
- 6) Branden Lewis requested more information about the A Way Home fund. Kathy Gauger plans to connect Branden to information, and was offered that this be included as a potential topic.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Tax time – Community Link offers a free, VITA site; requested that members circulate the flyer (attached to minutes)
- 2) Hope Haven will hold its first annual luncheon on 4/19. See Alice for tickets.
- 3) DSS is currently accepting LIHEAP applications for one-time assistance through March 2016.

ADJOURN

- Meeting adjourned at 10:00am.
- Minutes submitted by Secretary, Courtney Morton.

Next Meeting – Thursday, February 25, 2016