



Housing Workgroup Minutes

DATE: August 10, 2017

TIME: 1:00 - 3:00 PM

LOCATION: Portland Housing Bureau
Steel Conference Room
421 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204

ATTENDEES: Robin Davis, Ryan Deibert, Sharon Fitzgerald, Alex Glover, Monet Gonnerman, Naima Nur, Neisha Saxena, RJ Stangland, Danny Stribling, Gregory Twiss, Emily Volpert, Bobby Weinstock,

MEETING DISCUSSION

- Welcome and Introductions
 - Ryan Deibert, Joint Office of Homeless Services, led the group through introductions and updates
 - [Taft Home](#), a residential care community, has 15 beds open for individuals in personal rooms, with three meals a day plus snacks, and nurses on staff. This is open to men and women of all ages. Contact Danny Stribling, Community Outreach Specialist, at marketing@tafthome.org with any questions or connections to potential clients.
- Continued Chronic Homelessness Planning
 - The Executive Committee presented a charge for us to assess the need for chronic homelessness populations and inform further conversations to lead to resource allocation.
 - Ryan Deibert described the work for the day, including reviewing the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data, results of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis from the July meeting, and brainstorming of recommendations for the Executive Committee and Coordinating Board.
 - Bobby Weinstock, Northwest Pilot Project, mentioned that the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data is a real driver for planning processes, and asked that maybe the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data (which is collected more consistently) could be used more heavily in planning processes.
 - The group discussed the importance of both types of data, including both information from folks who have been screened for coordinated access and folks who have not, as well as folks who are involved in a service organization and those who are not.
 - The group started with the PIT Count data, discussing the available information from the PIT Count from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homelessness PowerPoint.
 - The count is inherently limited, in that there is an expected undercount, HUD definitions may limit the folks who can be included, and we are not able to answer a lot of the “why?” questions that we may have. The report found, in part:
 - The unsheltered population is down, the sheltered folks are up, and HUD-defined homelessness has increased.
 - Most folks experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County are adults without children (77% of the total that were counted).

- Racial disparities persist, with some progress. There is prominent disparity in the American Indian/Alaska Native populations and the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations in our community. This is in comparison with the data from 2015.
- More people are homeless longer within their current episode of homelessness.
- There are high rates of disabilities, especially among the unsheltered folks.
- Racial disparity in disability rates exist especially within the Native American Indian/Alaska native population.
- Mental illness, physical disabilities, and substance use is common within the unsheltered population.
 - This data is incomplete and the information from Portland State University (PSU) to be released in the coming weeks will likely provide more information and answer some of our questions.
- Chronic homelessness is up, though there are more sheltered generally
- There is a racial disparity in chronically homeless status—the same disparity among the Native population as the disparity noted in mental health.
- Chronically homeless are nearly all adults, and 66% of chronically homeless folks identify as male.
- The group reviewed the Summary of Key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats when it comes to our ability to meet the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness document. Individuals took ten minutes to read the document and answer the following question:
 - What do you see as some of the most pressing needs and gaps that we should address within the next two years?
 - Disability and mental health and addiction need has increased and will only grow if not properly addressed. The chronically homeless population that we see has those distinguishing traits, and rapid recovery housing doesn't meet that need. There are only two facilities for residential help (Taft and McDonald) that consider these folks for services.
 - Challenges with no-case evictions and for-cause-evictions. Keeping folks housed is difficult. We could use a legal team/mediation/rapid response team to provide services for folks who are being evicted and who suffer from mental health issues.
 - Need for more permanent supportive housing.
 - Domestic violence and chronic homelessness.
 - Use of rapid rehousing dollars, which may set people up for failure when they are forced into the next open spot that may not be right fit for them. Clients may need a higher level of care than is available for them.
 - Housing services for folks with mental health and substance issues.
 - Residential treatment, intensive services, recovery housing... rapid rehousing push needs to be both rent assistance and addiction services, as well as long-term case management.
 - Legal services could help through coordinated access, with reducing barriers before folks get a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) voucher.
 - Prevention: Catching folks who are caught up in institutions before they may become homeless. Creating a greater understanding of general houseless-ness—racial disparities in institutions such as hospitals and prisons,
 - Lack of 25,000 needed apartments in Multnomah County for folks paying 0-30%. Some folks meet chronic homelessness definition with physical disability who need subsidy (with such a low income in social security). There is another set whose

disability is substance abuse or mental health related—they may need on-site services. We need to avoid painting the chronically homeless population with one brush—there are unique experiences within the population.

- The definition of chronic homelessness should be expanded in order to more accurately represent youth, families, doubled-up populations, etc.
- Many people do not identify as homeless within the definition within policies, and within the actual populations, considering the cultural complexities involved in self-identification.
- Lack of safety within family shelters is preventing some families from accessing shelter. (Domestic violence + safety for children).
- Peer model in terms of getting longer term services that folks need
- 0-30% employment availability
- What are some of the key strategies or program approaches that we should use?
 - How can we systematically recruit and support landlords? How do we quantify and balance the amount of money that landlords are receiving from subsidies?
 - How can we simultaneously support tenant protection?
 - Increase access to affordable units and permanent supportive housing
 - Higher contract through residents through Medicaid. If we provide more incentives to companies like Marquee and Prestige, they may be able to take people with more difficulties.
 - Create vouchers that are targeted specifically for chronically homeless folks (using local funds as opposed to federal funds that we had for our effort with veterans). Home Forward could be administering locally-funded vouchers, or through the STRA system model. If they are general funds, less restrictions would be associated with the allocations.
 - Expanding coordinated access to family, youth, domestic violence systems, (may improve in the next few years with coordination around specific cases and the most vulnerable folks)
 - Danny Stribling is planning a project to have quarterly or monthly mass-screening events at the Taft Home (on-site with health providers, advocates, case managers, etc. available)
 - Coordinated access at Transition Projects (TPI) has been really successful for folks aging out of the youth system.
- Where are the most promising opportunities to leverage and align existing resources?
- Where are some of the most promising opportunities to look for expanded resources?
 - Leveraging existing resources
 - ◆ Eviction prevention in legal services, early intervention and mediation (Eviction Prevention Voucher)
 - ◆ Juvenile Justice Centers, courts, jails
 - ◆ Lowering the barriers for Rent Well—increasing accessibility and interaction with this program.
 - ◆ State and Oregon Health Authority around the opioid and substance use crisis—day treatment and supportive housing
 - ◆ Redistribution of money should be considered—rent assistance is helpful, housing assistance is helpful, but we need more staffing, expertise, and ability to follow clients and keep them stable over the longer term. Why should we house people and then not provide the support they need so they become homeless again?

- ◆ Add priority for Home Forward housing for folks who are chronically homeless (folks who are financed with Portland Housing Bureau funds could possibly be given a leg-up).
- How can we look for more resources?
 - ◆ Medicaid to pay for housing in rent assistance program—housing is a health need.
 - ◆ Collaborations through courts and legal systems, including probation programs, Department of Community Justice, community health, etc.—this needs to be a community effort involving many organizations.
 - ◆ Bond opportunities
 - ◆ Tourism industry
 - ◆ Creating a locally protected class
- To what degree do these strategies, approaches, and resources produce intentional benefits or unintended consequences for communities of color? Are there specific strategies, approaches, or resources that decrease disparities and lead to systems change that addresses institutional racism?
 - Coordinated Access, as painful as it is, can hopefully coordinate folks with the right place the first time around. There is a sense that folks will be able to get the right fit the first time instead of the 10th, because they're hopefully getting connected to relevant and helpful services.
 - Peer models in addiction, mental health, could be built out in permanent supportive housing systems
 - Acknowledging that racism exists in the private housing market
 - Increasing criminalization of homelessness—private security, policing, etc.
 - Targeting the certain percentage of resources (vouchers) should go towards people of color—if it is allowed—through culturally specific providers. General funding may be more flexible for folks. This can get complicated legally.
- Identifying Next Steps
 - Ryan Deibert thanked everyone for their thoughtful participation
 - He explained that this feedback will be shared internally in the Joint Office of Homeless Services in the creation of a plan to address and reduce our chronically homeless populations. This will be presented in September/October, and recommendations will be made to the Executive Committee in November.

NEXT MEETING

September 21, 2017
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Lincoln Building
Columbia Room
421 SW Oak Street
Portland, OR 97204