

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes March 19th, 2009

<i>Bob Duranleau</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>Kimberly Curry</i>	United Way of Greater Portland
<i>Tom Allan</i>	Milestone Foundation
<i>Melissa Leeman</i>	Milestone Foundation
<i>Shana Pike</i>	MAPS Shelter Services
<i>Silver Shea</i>	Family Crisis Services
<i>Nancy Berg</i>	2-1-1 Maine
<i>Mary-Ellen Welch</i>	City of Portland, Midtown Community Policing, Portland Police Department
<i>Jeff Tardiff</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Division, Family Shelter
<i>Maureen Clancy</i>	Mercy Hospital
<i>Aaron Shapiro</i>	Cumberland County
<i>Teyonda Hall</i>	PROP
<i>Donna Yellen</i>	Preble Street
<i>Cullen Ryan</i>	Community Housing of Maine (CHOM)
<i>Tara Kosma</i>	PROP
<i>Josh O'Brien</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Div, Oxford Street Shelter for Men
<i>Kathy Pratt</i>	Maine Department of Health & Human Services
<i>Cindy Namer</i>	MaineHousing
<i>Adriene Whitaker</i>	Maine Department of Health and Human Services – Public Health Nursing
<i>Rose Strout</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Sara Gallagher</i>	PROP
<i>Melany Mondello</i>	Shalom House
<i>Aaron Geyer</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>Elizabeth Szatkowski</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Marcia Frank</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Alex Thorn</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Public Health Div, Healthcare for the Homeless
<i>Kate Carter</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Div, Oxford Street Shelter for Men
<i>Heather Rhoda</i>	Frannie Peabody
<i>Jon Bradley</i>	Preble Street
<i>John Shoos</i>	United Way of Greater Portland
<i>Beth Eilers</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Public Health Div, Healthcare for the Homeless

I. Introductions

Robert Duranleau, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made.

II. *February Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau*

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for February 2009:

	<u>February 2008</u>	<u>February 2009</u>
Adolescents	6 Individuals	11 Individuals
Adults	206 Individuals	219 Individuals
Families	<u>32 Individuals (13 Families)</u>	<u>42 Individuals (17 Families)</u>
Total	244 Individuals	272 Individuals

Adolescent Shelter

The total adolescent bed nights for February 2008 were 176 while the total bed nights for February 2009 were 306. These figures indicate an increase of 130 bed nights, or 42% between February 2008 and February 2009.

Jon Bradley mentioned that the drastic increase in numbers could be contributed to a consistent staff that is doing well, settled in and more comfortable with doing outreach. However he added that this may or may not have anything to do with the spike in numbers and that the figures are very unpredictable.

Adult Shelters

Adult Shelter bed nights usage increased by 2% in February 2009 compared to February 2008. Total bed night usage during February 2008 was 5978 while it was 6117 during February 2009, a difference of 139 bed nights.

During the month of February, there were 89 intakes at the Oxford Street Shelter for Men. An Intake or New Arrival is defined as an individual that has not stayed at the Shelter for a period of three (3) months or longer.

Oxford Street Shelter for Men Support Services team placed 29 individuals into permanent housing, with four (4) of those individuals returning to the shelter within 90 days of housing placement.

Preble Street Women's Shelter served a total of 103 women during the month of February, including 24 new intakes. The Shelter placed four (4) individuals into housing, with zero (0) women returning.

Bob added that a new statistic has been added to the Shelter Stats for the Oxford Street Shelter for Men. The total number of unduplicated clients is now included, mirroring the data presented in the Preble Street Women's Shelter monthly stats.

Family Shelters

There was a total of 1631 bed nights used for all Family Shelters in February 2009 as compared to 987 bed nights in February 2008. This represents an increase of 39% in Family Shelter bed usage between February 2008 and February 2009.

The Family Shelter received 19 new families (intakes) for a total of 61 individuals in February.

The Family Shelter placed 12 families for a total of 31 individuals into housing in February.

Bob mentioned that based on feedback that Family Shelter's intakes will now be broken down into the number of families as well as the number of individuals in the monthly shelter stats, as well as housing placements.

Bob also stated that the Social Services Division section on the City of Portland, Health and Human Services' website has been updated to include a separate section for the Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee (ESAC) (which can be found by visiting: <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/ssesac.asp>). The ESAC section of the Social Services Division Website features the Monthly Shelter Reports and Meeting Minutes, both archived with the past seven (7) months of data.

III. *Continuum of Care Update– Bob Duranleau*

Bob mentioned that there was an esnaps feedback session at MaineHousing on Tuesday, March 17th. It was admitted that the electronic application process was very problematic, and that HUD wishes to change the process to make it more user friendly. Bob added that any feedback should be emailed to esnaps@hudhre.info. Additionally, Bob mentioned that there is a Continuum of Care meeting on Wednesday, March 25th at 10:00am at 190 Lancaster Street in the Refugee Services Conference Area. He stated that the meeting agenda would be out later in the day. Scott Tibbitts from MaineHousing will present results on the 2009 Point In Time Survey. Bob invited ESAC members to the presentation.

IV. *Milestone Foundation Substance Abuse Shelter Update – Missy Leeman*

Missy stated that Milestone has revised its restrictions list, allowing better accessibility for clients to utilize the shelter and its services. She continued by stating that Milestone is working on its welcoming policy, and that now anyone who is intoxicated is permitted, thus lessening the barriers to service and establishing a more welcoming atmosphere. Tom Allan added that these changes are part of a grant through the Office of Substance Abuse, which lists access to care as essential criteria. Heather Rhoda inquired about the details of the changes in the restriction list. In response, Missy stated that the shelter is more tolerant in regards to behavior, and instead of turning an enraged client away would instead ask him or her to take a walk to cool down and come back for the situation to be reevaluated. Previously Milestone would not take clients who were not able to walk, however this restriction has relaxed and instead clients may be advised to take a nap to better their physical condition. Heather asked about Milestone's policy on Sex Offenders and whether this had changed. Missy replied that Milestone continues to service sex offenders, as with all clients they must be intoxicated to receive services. Jon Bradley asked if people are aware of these changes, and suggested connecting with people at Preble Street in regards to this. Tom mentioned that Milestone is addressing this and working on transportation. Mary Ellen Welch commented that the Bayside Neighborhood Association is concerned with how bad the neighborhood is becoming, and angered with the volume of layouts, and mentioned an ideal resource would be a van. Bob and Tom both mentioned that this is something that the City has actively been working on with Mercy Hospital. Missy mentioned that Milestone has seen more clients now with the policy changes. Bob noted that this has aided the Oxford Street Shelter for Men. Josh added that Oxford Street has noticed these changes and appreciates them; however, he stated that the shelter still has approximately twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) intoxicated clients each night, even with Milestone being full and the revised restrictions list, numbers that the shelter hasn't seen this high in quite some time.

V. *Stepping Stones Presentation – Shana Pike*

Shana introduced Stepping Stones, a licensed residential children's program with three locations (Houlton, Saco and Bangor) for a total of twenty-four (24) beds in the state of Maine. The program offers a safe, supportive, and education environment with the hope of family reunification. Stepping Stones serves children 0-5 years of age with single parents. Entrance into the program requires involvement with the Department of Health & Human Services, Department of Corrections, or the Department of Education. Shana added that inquiries regarding referrals should be directed to Mindy Knight. A handout was provided describing the program, including contact information, which is available upon request. Please contact Vickey Schroth via email (vls@portlandmaine.gov) or by phone (775-6315 ext. 244) for more information regarding copies of these materials.

**VI. *American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 – Homeless Prevention Fund*
– *Cindy Namer, Aaron Shapiro, & Bob Duranleau***

Bob stated that on February 17, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. As part of this, a one-time economic recovery payment of \$250 will be distributed in May to people who receive Social Security benefits. He handed out a brochure produced by Social Security Administration which thoroughly describes guidelines and addresses many anticipated questions regarding the recovery payment. Additionally Bob mentioned that as of April 1st, 2009 the food stamp amount will increase by twelve percent (12%), and that since General Assistance programs follow the federal food stamp amounts, GA food vouchers will reflect this increase as well. Specific food stamp amounts, based upon the number of persons in a household, were included in a handout. Both handouts are available upon request. Please contact Vickey Schroth via email (vls@portlandmaine.gov) or by phone (775-6315 ext. 244) for more information regarding copies of these materials.

Bob mentioned that part of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Homelessness Prevention Fund was created. Funding allocation for Maine is as follows: the State of Maine \$6.5 million, Cumberland County \$605,000, and the City of Portland \$876,000. Guidelines detailing how the money can be spent are due to be released today, March 19th on HUD's website. These guidelines will detail exactly what HUD permits the money be spent on, however in the interim MaineHousing, Cumberland County and the City of Portland each have developed plans for how they wish to utilize the funds.

State of Maine – Cindy Namer

Cindy stated that MaineHousing plans to use the funds based upon recommendations received thus far. These recommendations include a focus on prevention and outreach, both primary focal points in the Homelessness Prevention Fund overview. The target group for prevention outreach would be homeless persons as well as households at high risk for homelessness. These target groups would be linked with resources for stabilization, such as General Assistance, rental vouchers, housing searches, moving costs and security deposits, and would continue to receive assistance until they are permanently housed. These resources would act as a toolkit, equipping people with the services they need until they are stabilized. Another target group that MaineHousing would like to devote resources to is homeless persons with mental health and co-occurring diagnosis'. This target group would receive the same resources as previously mentioned and case management throughout the stabilization process, both before and after emergence into the community. Jon Bradley commented that he hopes with these initiatives that the barrier of definition of "diagnosis" will be reduced, thus being able to service a larger population. Cindy stated that they also have plans to expand the security deposit program, opening up these resources as preventative measures for high-risk persons (eviction prevention etc.) instead of making them solely available to people in shelters. Additionally, an advocacy project aiding Pine Tree Legal to expand and continue to provide assistance is also hoped to be included. Cindy mentioned that there will be a feedback forum on Monday, March 23rd from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Augusta Civic Center and encouraged members to attend or send their suggestions to MaineHousing.

Cumberland County – Aaron Shapiro

Aaron stated that Cumberland County wishes to use the new funds to continue and expand the Preble Street PROP GA Program, with the hope of doubling services. Expansion could include adding more staff and/or expanding services. He added that based on the lower intake numbers at shelter in Portland from the twenty-four (24) towns in PROP's scope, the program is proving to be very successful. Cindy asked if there were any plans to attempt to expand into Westbrook as part of the Homelessness Prevention Fund. Aaron replied by stating that Westbrook is already on track to join the program in 2010, and that it would depend on HUD's guidelines whether or not this could

occur earlier as a part of new funds. Cindy asked whether or not there were any plans to establish or expand any other services. Aaron responded by stating that it depends on HUD's guidelines, but he hopes to be able to add more.

City of Portland – Bob Duranleau

Bob stated that the City of Portland's primary focal point is establishing the outreach van project, which has been in development partnered with Mercy Hospital, Milestone and Preble Street. The van project would act as prevention outreach, going back to the previous van project Operation Sundown. Bob mentioned that this would require a large portion of the City's allotted funds. ESAC member were strongly in favor of this proposal. Additionally, the City of Portland did not receive Rapid Re-Housing funds this year, and it is the City's hope that in lieu of this HUD's guidelines will permit money from the Homelessness Prevention Fund to be used. The City plans to use funds for Soft Rental Subsidies, security deposits, moving costs and other fees amounted with keeping individuals in permanent housing. Bob mentioned that Doug Gardiner had discussed possible uses of funds at the Region 1 meeting and he encouraged members to contact Doug if they should have any suggestions or comments. Jon Bradley mentioned that Mark Swann at Preble Street had already been in contact with Doug.

Cindy stated that with this money comes significant accountability. Bob commented that there is a strong focus on accountability and HMIS documentation, as every client given assistance must be thoroughly documented. Cindy added that there is also the aspect of accountability with the Governor and special committees, and that they need to develop a way to configure all of the data to send to the state. Bob, Cindy and Aaron encouraged ESAC members to contact them with their ideas, suggestions or comments.

VII. Day Program Summer Hours – Jon Bradley & Bob Duranleau

Jon mentioned that the Portland Public Library will act primarily as a lending library until renovations are complete, thus eliminating shelter where Preble Street clients often spend time when the Day Program closes. The Day Program usually ends its winter hours the first week in April, however this has been extended until May due to the library renovations. Additionally, the City agreed to work with the Oxford Street Shelter for Men, allowing the day room to open at 10:00 am on weekends, as opposed to 1:00 pm, for both men and women. Preble Street will serve breakfast from 8:00 am – 9:00 am on weekends, with the dining room available until 10:00 am, when Oxford Street opens. Oxford Street's new hours will take effect the weekend of April 11th.

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, April 16th, 2009

8:30 – 10am

***Refugee Services Area
190 Lancaster Street***

Please contact Robert Duranleau, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division at 775-6315, extension 224; John Shoos, United Way at 874-1000, or Dee Clark, Preble Street at 775-0026; if you should have any agenda items for the next meeting.