

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes June 18th, 2009

<i>Bob Duranleau</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>John Shoos</i>	United Way of Greater Portland
<i>Dee Clarke</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Tom Allan</i>	Milestone Foundation
<i>Cullen Ryan</i>	Community Housing of Maine
<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>Missy Leeman</i>	Milestone
<i>Donna Yellen</i>	Preble Street
<i>Aaron Geyer</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>Elizabeth Szatkowski</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Susannah Fuentes</i>	Preble Street
<i>Josh O'Brien</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Div, Oxford Street Shelter for Men
<i>Teyonda Hall</i>	Prop
<i>Jon Bradley</i>	Preble Street
<i>Ginny Dill</i>	Shalom House
<i>Kendra Danse</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Stacy Carpenter</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham, The Bridge
<i>Susannah Harden</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham, 22 Park
<i>Tara Kosma</i>	Prop
<i>Daniella Cameron</i>	Preble Street
<i>Kimberly Curry</i>	United Way of Greater Portland
<i>Amanda Wells</i>	Preble Street
<i>Whitney Smith</i>	Preble Street Women's Shelter
<i>Heather Rhoda</i>	Frannie Peabody Center
<i>Linda Janson</i>	MAPS Shelter Services
<i>Amy Regan</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice

I. Introductions

Dee Clarke, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made.

II. *May Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau*

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for February 2009:

	<u>May 2008</u>	<u>May 2009</u>
Adolescents	7 Individuals	9 Individuals
Adults	220 Individuals	222 Individuals
Families	<u>48 Individuals (19 Families)</u>	<u>70 Individuals (28 Families)</u>
Total	275 Individuals	301 Individuals

Adolescent Shelter

The total adolescent bed nights for May 2008 were 218 while the total bed nights for May 2009 were 289. These figures indicate an increase of 71 bed nights, or 25% between May 2008 and May 2009.

Three (3) individuals stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

John asked about changes at Youth Alternatives Ingraham. Elizabeth mentioned that YAI will be closing two programs. Kendra added they have also cut the number of beds at other facilities. She added that the state has cut back funding for youth residential programs, thus they have been receiving fewer referrals. As far as contributing to higher adolescent shelter numbers, Elizabeth stated that the larger impact will be seen down the road when these programs aren't there as a referral source.

Adult Shelters

Adult Shelter bed nights usage increased by 1% in May 2009 compared to May 2008. Total bed night usage during May 2008 was 6817 while it was 6886 during May 2009, a difference of 69 bed nights.

During the month of May, there were 118 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.

The Oxford Street Shelter for Men is now tracking the number of individuals who are experiencing homelessness for the first time. Based on self-reporting, 11 individuals stated they had never been homeless before in May.

Oxford Street Shelter for Men Support Services team placed 52 individuals into permanent housing, with 8 of those individuals returning to the shelter within 90 days of housing placement.

Preble Street Women's Shelter served a total of 105 women during the month of May, including 25 new intakes. Based on self-reporting, 9 of these 25 intakes stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

The Shelter placed 9 individuals into housing, with 3 women returning.

Family Shelters

There was a total of 2175 bed nights used for all Family Shelters in May 2009 as compared to 1481 bed nights in May 2008. This represents an increase of 32% in Family Shelter bed usage between May 2008 and May 2009.

The Family Shelter placed 14 families for a total of 46 individuals into housing in May.

The Family Shelter received 20 new families (intakes) for a total of 69 individuals in May. The Family Shelter is now tracking the number of families and individuals who are experiencing

homelessness for the first time. Based on self-reporting 8 families for a total of 32 individuals stated they had never been homeless before in May.

John asked about the ethnic backgrounds of the secondary migrants coming to the shelter. Jeff responded by stating that the shelter has seen a wide range of ethnicities, with families from West Africa, the Congo, and Somalia, moving to Maine from various states in the United States. Bob stated that due to the nice weather, refugees have begun moving to Portland again, a continuation from the early months of this past winter.

III. Continuum of Care Update – Nominations for Priority Committee

Bob mentioned that the Continuum of Care process should start sometime in the fall. He added that the CoC 2008 scores were discussed at the Wednesday, June 17th CoC meeting. Bob stated that we did very well, especially in the HMIS data collection portion, and considering that HUD is heavily focused on data quality this is a very good thing. Bob mentioned that Patti Capouch has been on the Prioritizing Committee and has performed wonderfully, however Patti would like to pass the role on to Heather Rhoda, nominating Heather as her replacement. All were in agreement to Heather's nomination and congratulated her on the new role.

IV. American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 – Homelessness Prevention & rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) Update –

Bob stated that the City of Portland will use its HPRP funds in collaboration with Preble Street, citing August as the projected to start date. He added that the HPRP's first quarterly report will be due in October. Alongside, HUD has been very clear that it is very focused on data collection, making documentation necessary for all consumers receiving aid via HPRP funds. In order to execute the best quality data possible, the City of Portland will be participating in data sharing with Preble Street. Jon mentioned that county's information will be integrated as well. Bob added that this will be the first time they will be using a unified assessment form, with the state hopefully using the same form once it has been developed. Bob added that there are two main parts HPRP: homelessness prevention and housing placements. The City of Portland Social Services Division and Preble Street will be hiring seven case managers with HPRP funds. Bob reiterated that the City of Portland has been allotted \$876,000, a portion of which will be used to retain existing staff, and also for data collection such as obtaining licenses for Service Point, reporting, inspections for any HPRP money that goes towards rents or security deposits. Alongside, Cumberland County will be adding one other PROP full time case manager, based out of Windham. Bob added that in regards to data collection, consumers don't have an option as to whether or not their information is recorded, as HUD mandates that all persons receiving aid through HPRP funds be documented.

V. Frannie Peabody Center Haven Project Update – Heather Rhoda

Heather gave a presentation on Housing Opportunity for People With AIDS (HOPWA). Currently there are three HOPWA grants, with the Frannie Peabody Center being the grantee for two of the three, the City of Portland being the grantee for the third, with Shalom House Sponsoring all three. Heather explained that the HOPWA Haven Project provides tenant based rental assistance, similar to S+C, Section 8, and BRAP, as well as short-term rental, mortgage and utility assistance, similar to HPRP homelessness prevention projects. There are two pieces of criteria that must be met to qualify for HOPWA funds: an HIV/AIDS diagnosis, and must meet set low income guidelines - at or below 80% of the median income for the family size. Recently, all three renewals were submitted, and they have received confirmation on one of the grants, scheduled to be renewed in July. She expects all of the renewals to be funded, for total of almost \$4 million for the next 3 years. Heather added that they requested increased in tenant based rental assistance, and subsequently received approximately a 5-10% increase, and it is the hope that they will likely be

able to serve more people. She stated that she is working on developing a flyer for social services agencies detailing all of the services, opportunities and resources available through the Haven Project. Jeff added that they have had great luck with the program, enabling them to move people out of shelter quickly. Heather added that what is great about the program is that individuals do not have to be homeless to utilize the services, as it's also a prevention program. If anyone has any questions, wants more information, or a more detailed program presentation please contact Heather Rhoda via phone (774-6877) or email (hrhoda@peabodycenter.org). Elizabeth asked about statistics regarding the percentage of the local population with HIV/AIDS. Heather stated that the data exists and can bring it to the next meeting. Bob added that he would add this as an agenda item for the next meeting. Dee mentioned that many people do not know what their resources are and the correct information. Heather mentioned that it would be beneficial to have the qualifications for many of the different agencies available, possibly providing presentations, so that consumers receive the details needed to determine their eligibility for certain programs. Dee mentioned that simply having the general information available would be a great start. Elizabeth agreed that we need as many ways to as possible to access the information as well. Amanda mentioned that the housing fair at the Oxford Street Shelter for Men would be an ideal venue to get this information out. She also mentioned that educating staff and then providing that information to clients in as many different ways as possible would be ideal. Heather mentioned that maybe we need to have housing fairs more often, though Josh mentioned that every Thursday night at Oxford Street they have small-scale housing fairs.

VI. *Youth Alternatives Ingraham, Mediation Program – Elizabeth Szatowski*

Elizabeth provided a handout detailing the Mediation Services at Youth Alternatives Ingraham. She mentioned that mediation is a tool that can be used for almost any situation. The Mediation program was originally a part of Youth Alternatives and has been operating for close to twenty (20) years. The program originally received money from the State's budget, which was then cut and ultimately eliminated. However, due to great community connections and support the services remained. The program is facilitated by volunteer mediators, who go out into the community to meet people where ever they feel most comfortable for the mediation. Consumers determine what the mediation will focus on, and then mediators aid in the discussion and setting clear expectations, while simultaneously assessing what other service needs might exist. Mediation provides clear communication which primarily addressed the current situation, and then transition on to uncover the under lying issues. Elizabeth stated that the program is great at helping to resolve issues. She added that the program does not require a crisis situation for mediation to take place. Another helpful aspect for many consumers is that mediation is not like case management in the fact that the mediator, unlike a case managed, doesn't ever have to be in the consumer's life again if he/she so chooses. Mediation Services at YAI are completely confidential, can be used once or multiple times at the wish of the client, can end and resume at the clients discretion, and are very tailored to the needs of the individual. Elizabeth provided everyone with the intake number (207-523-5049). Dee asked what other methods are available for people to learn about the program? Elizabeth stated people can get information regarding YAI's Mediation Services through 2-1-1 Maine, and she added that the mediation program practices proactive outreach in the community for referrals. Amanda asked what type of assessment precedes the mediation. Elizabeth stated that when a person calls he/she will have a very simple assessment over the phone, detailing the location of the individuals, what the problem is, whether he/she wants to meet with the mediator first to find out more information, and so on. Nancy asked how long it takes for the mediation itself to be scheduled. Elizabeth answered by stating that as soon as the call is received, mediators communicate amongst themselves via email to determine who will be taking the client, and sometimes a response can be available within an hour of the time the call was first received. Dee asked what the training is involved for the mediators. Elizabeth mentioned that the mediation staff is trained in Transformative Mediation Training. This entails one week of training, observing a certain number of mediations, and having a certain number of the trainee's mediations observed by a trained mediator. Elizabeth commented that mediation is a great tool, which allows the consumer a good deal of control, with the goal of people hearing each other and coming to a resolution.

VII. HMIS – Maine Homeless Initiative Website – Acceptable Use Policy

Bob mentioned that at the CoC meeting yesterday, Wednesday, June 17th, Doug Barley from MaineHousing gave a presentation on the new Maine Homeless Initiative Website. Bob provided everyone with the Acceptable Use Policy Agreement, which must be signed and submitted in order to gain access to the site. He asked that everyone who submits HMIS information to MaineHousing mail their completed, signed forms to Doug or Cindy at MaineHousing. He added that it is a great tool, allowing people to go online weekly to view reports, post information, and communicate. The site is very useful as it clearly illustrates what data fields are missing and where alterations are needed, ensuring better data quality on the whole. Bob added that Laurie will be using it for communicating with the shelters, thus everyone must accommodate to the new site. In addition, we will be able to post meeting times and minutes, as well as eventually include Mainstream Resources and ESAC information. The Maine Homeless Initiative Website is a great way for Continuum of Cares to connect and communicate with each other, as well as ensuring accurate information, eliminating worried calls to Doug to compare data. ESAC members requested that MaineHousing be asked to present on this exciting new initiative at the July meeting. Bob stated that he would arrange for MaineHousing to conduct a presentation at the next ESAC meeting.

VIII. Summer Meeting Schedule –

Bob asked the group what their desires are for the July and August meetings. Amanda and Jon both mentioned that with everything happening with HPRP in the near future it would be ideal to continue meeting. Bob mentioned that this was his thought as well and stated that the next meeting would be on July 16, 2009.

IX. Other Business –

Nancy asked if the group would like the data for 2-1-1 housing/shelter calls submitted to Bob and attached to the ESAC Shelter Stats handout each month. Everyone agreed that this would be a wonderful idea. Nancy added that ultimately the report will break down different housing services into other classifications, separating “housing” and “shelter” calls. Nancy distributed the 2-1-1 call report for May.

Dee mentioned that HVJ is holding their second annual solstice gathering at Monument Square on Friday, June 19th from 12:00-1:00PM. The gathering is to recognize the longest day of the year, and statistics confirm that violence increases with homeless people targeted, on this date.

Amy stated that Preble Street Homeless Voice for Justice has started the second book for its book club. She mentioned that the previous book, Jonathan Kozol’s Savage Inequalities, generated a crowd of over a dozen people and that the endeavor went very well. Preble Street’s new book, which the group started last week, is Pema Chodron’s Practicing Peace in Times of War. Amy mentioned that the book club meets every Wednesday at Preble Street and that everyone is welcome. Dee added that the project has been going very well, and encouraged everyone to spread the word.

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, July 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.