

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes September 23rd, 2010

<i>Bob Duranleau</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>Aaron Geyer</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>John Shoos</i>	United Way
<i>Doug Gardner</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department
<i>Ginny Dill</i>	Shalom House
<i>Diane Geyer</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Public Health Div., Healthcare for the Homeless
<i>Linda Brown</i>	Milestone Foundation
<i>Linda Janson</i>	Step Up! Shelter Services
Thomas Natalie	Milestone Foundation
<i>Amy Faulkingham</i>	2-1-1 Maine
<i>Leah Bruns</i>	Cumberland County HPRP / PROP
<i>Diane Geyer</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Public Health Div., Healthcare for the Homeless
<i>Robin Oxenhorn</i>	PROP
<i>Ashley Kuntz</i>	Salvation Army
<i>Susannah Harnden</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Melissa Wedge</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Elizabeth Szatkowski</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham/CSS
<i>Josh O'Brien</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Div., Oxford Street Shelter for Men
<i>Jeff Tardif</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Family Shelter
<i>Travis Heynen</i>	Shalom House
<i>Amy McAuliffe</i>	Portland VA Clinic
<i>Robert Dodge</i>	LearningWorks
<i>Glenda Demers</i>	LearningWorks
<i>Susan Stiker</i>	Catholic Charities Maine/RIS
<i>Aerial Richardson</i>	Preble Street HPRP
<i>Shana Pike</i>	Step Up! Shelter Services
<i>Mary Ellen Welch</i>	Portland Police Department – Midtown Community Policing
<i>Patty Robinson</i>	Preble Street – Florence House
<i>Laurie Diggins</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Maria Tripp</i>	Preble Street – Florence House
<i>Annmarie Rotolo</i>	Southern Maine Agency on Aging/ADRC
<i>Susie Whittington</i>	TOGUS VAMC

I. Introductions

Bob Duranleau, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made. Bob reviewed changes in the meeting's agenda.

II. *August Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau*

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for August 2010:

	<u>August 2009</u>	<u>August 2010</u>
Adolescents	11 Individuals	14 Individuals
Adults	249 Individuals	243 Individuals
Families	<u>75 Individuals (30 Families)</u>	<u>71 Individuals (28 Families)</u>
Total	335 Individuals	328 Individuals

Adolescent Shelter

The total adolescent bed nights for August 2009 were 335 while the total bed nights for August 2010 were 432. These figures indicate an increase of 97 bed nights, or 29% between August 2009 and August 2010. Three (3) individuals stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Adult Shelters

Adult Shelter bed nights usage decreased by 2% in August 2010 compared to August 2009. Total bed night usage during August 2009 was 7718 while it was 7541 during August 2010, a difference of 177 bed nights.

During the month of August, there were 135 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. Based on self-reporting, 61 individuals stated they had never been homeless before in August.

Oxford Street Shelter for Men Support Services team placed 21 individuals into permanent housing, with no individuals returning to the shelter within 90 days of housing placement.

Florence House Women's Shelter served a total of 98 women during the month of August, including 30 new intakes. Based on self-reporting, 13 of these 30 intakes stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

The Shelter placed 15 individuals into housing, with two (2) women returning.

Family Shelters

There was a total of 2189 bed nights used for all Family Shelters in August 2010 as compared to 2323 bed nights in August 2009. This represents a decrease of 6% in Family Shelter bed usage between August 2009 and August 2010.

The Family Shelter placed 20 families for a total of 65 individuals into housing in August.

The Family Shelter received 32 new families (intakes) for a total of 100 individuals in August. Based on self-reporting 19 families for a total of 61 individuals stated they had never been homeless before in August, of these 6 families for a total of 21 individuals were refugees.

First Time Homelessness

For the month of August 138 individuals, or 50% of all new intakes, reported experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP)

Bob presented the Portland HPRP stats for the month of August. In the month of August 2010 the Portland HPRP Program housed 52 households, for a total of 112 individuals. These housing placements represent 2,033 bed nights at the Oxford Street Shelter for Men. Bed night information was not available for Florence House or Milestone at the time the statistics needed to be finalized.

Amy presented the 211 Maine housing and shelter call statistics. There were 1,813 total calls in

Cumberland County in July of 2010; 159 of these were housing/shelter calls. There were 5,472 total calls statewide, in July of 2010; 436 of these were for housing/shelter. There were 1,859 total calls in Cumberland County in August of 2010; 189 of these were housing/shelter calls. There were 5,949 total calls statewide, in August of 2010; 493 of these were for housing/shelter. Amy stated that in July of 2010 a total of 43 calls were referred to General Assistance programs statewide, with the majority of inquiries regarding utility assistance, rents, and temporary assistance. In August of 2010 a total of 41 calls were referred to General Assistance programs statewide, with the majority of inquiries regarding utility assistance, rents, and temporary assistance.

Bob stated that the B2 Visa (visitor's visa) numbers are going up. He stated that people here on a B1 (work) or B2 (visitor) visa are not eligible for services paid for with federal funds, such as Federal Food Stamps and TANF, and are thus completely dependent on General Assistance. He mentioned that the B1/B2 visa numbers have been going up at the Oxford Street Shelter for Men and the Family Shelter. Bob stated that GA is seeing an increase in clients with B1/B2 visas as well.

III. *CoC Update – New Members for Priority Committee –*

Bob stated that the Continuum of Care application process has started. Agencies should begin to compile leveraging letters, support letters, and also start entering information for their Exhibit 2. Bob stated that he will schedule a Priority Committee meeting in the very near future to make arrangements to go over all of the project applications for review. If anyone is interested in becoming a part of the committee please contact Bob. Bob handed out and discussed the 2010 Continuum of Care changes (please see handout). This information is also detailed in the Continuum of Care Minutes (to be distributed electronically via e-mail).

Bob handed out an overview of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The complete report is available on the HUD HRE website.

IV. *Oxford Street Shelter for Men Year End Report*

Josh distributed and gave an overview of the Oxford Street Shelter for Men Fiscal Year 2010 Year End Report. All Social Services Division Year End Reports are available on the City's website:

<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/hhsreports.asp#Miscellaneous>

Josh stated that most of the numbers and services stayed fairly consistent in FY 2010 compared to last fiscal year. He mentioned that this report does not reflect any HPRP information; there will be a separate Year End Report for the HPRP program. Josh highlighted that in FY 2010 the Oxford Street Shelter for Men surpassed the 50,000 bed night mark for the first time since FY 2006. Josh mentioned that there will be a new HPRP Human Services Counselor position working directly out of the Oxford Street Shelter for Men beginning in October. He is hoping this will make a real impact at Oxford Street as it has at Florence House in having an HPRP staff member stationed directly at the shelter. Josh stated that the Oxford Street Shelter for Men has worked hard to build a great collaboration with the VA. He mentioned that a VA Benefits liaison began working out of the shelter six (6) weeks ago and this has proven to be very successful. This fall the VA has committed to send a VA medical liaison to the Oxford Street Shelter for Men in addition to the VA benefits liaison, which should happen within the next few months.

V. *Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) - Updates*

Leah presented the new Cumberland County HPRP stats for the month of August. In the month of August 2010 the Cumberland County HPRP Program had 49 new intakes (individuals), composing 15 households, including 27 children. In the month of August 8 households attained permanent housing without a subsidy, 5 attained permanent housing with a subsidy, and 1 household that secured its current housing (owned by client). Based on input from the last meeting, Leah stated that they have started tracking statistics on where people move to, whether they move to a new town or stay in their current town, and if they move what town they're moving to. Leah reported the 9 households remained in their town of origin and 6 households relocated to a new town in the month of August 2010. She stated that Cumberland County HPRP has started tracking where people are moving to if clients are moving out of

their town of origin (as report in the HPRP monthly stats for August 2010).

Josh gave an overview of the Portland HPRP stats for the month of August 2010. Josh stated that the diversion and prevention program has been depleted of funds at this point. He stated that they strategized how best to spend the money and it was determined to make as much of an impact over the summer as possible; the numbers indicate that if this hadn't happened there would've been a crisis due to the high numbers at the Portland shelters. Due to this there is no more financial assistance available for the diversion and prevention program, though case management services remains open. Doug asked if MaineHousing had numbers available regarding any money available statewide. Bob stated that MaineHousing is in the process of determining this and collecting information for a large report which will be out soon. Josh stated that once the HPRP report is out they will be in a good position to advocate for any possible available funds based on the impact they have been able to make.

VI. *Florence House Women's Shelter Overflow*

Maria stated that looking at the August numbers they have significantly increased the numbers in overflow. Last night there were 19 women at the overflow shelter and five (5) sitting in the Florence House lobby, as they were inappropriate choices for the overflow space. Maria stated that the numbers are consistently in the 20's in the overflow shelter each night and they're not seeing much of a decrease. She stated they're seeing a lot of first time homelessness and a large number of people from Portland. She stated they have had housing tables in the overflow shelter, as well as HPRP housing tables at Florence House. They are working hard to work with women as soon as possible. Maria added that there is an HPRP housing table tonight at Florence House. They are hoping to have other options soon, as the overflow space is getting very full. John asked what the reasons have been for first time homelessness. Maria stated many have gone through foreclosure; many have been staying with friends and family and wore out their welcome, evictions, and domestic violence - which Maria stated is usually a significant number, around one third of intakes. Patty stated that the reasons have been very consistent, just in higher numbers. Doug asked that there has been a push to gather demographic information in order to know what services are needed and what to look for. Patty stated they've been looking at trends and gathering this data. In the data examined the demographic information is the same just in higher numbers; there isn't a trend or something new that's occurring. Doug asked if there's any effort to move folks through the Florence House apartments, for people who have reached a level of stability. Maria stated that the women in the apartments are all chronically homeless and they require a substantial amount of services. She stated that it probably is not realistic that a lot of women would move on based on these factors, though it would be encouraged if someone was able to make the next step as part of their individual plans. Elizabeth asked if any men were utilizing the overflow shelter. Maria stated that men were not, the overflow shelter is currently only sheltering women. Bob stated that when the Oxford Street Shelter for Men numbers were over capacity they were thinking that opening a second overflow site would be necessary; however the numbers went down and this did not occur. If the numbers were to surpass capacity again it would be the plan to open a second overflow site. Elizabeth asked when a safe haven bed is determined as not being used. Maria and Patty stated this is determined around 10:00 PM, but that they generally have a good idea as to whether or not individuals utilizing the safe haven beds will be returning.

Laurie, a member of Preble Street's Homeless Voices for Justice and a consumer, commented that the overflow shelter organization is not up to par. She stated that previously she was able to call ahead to see if she would have to go to an overflow space; however now she must first go to Florence House only to be taxied to the overflow shelter. She stated that this process is wasting time and money and is very hard on the consumers. Laurie added that their methodology for determining who goes into overflow and who is able to remain at Florence House is flawed and she feels that some consumers are not getting the attention and case management that they deserve. Maria stated that she would be more than happy to discuss matters with Laurie after the meeting and assured the group that everyone at Florence House is doing all that they can during this difficult time.

VII. *MaineHousing Shelter Funding – Update*

Bob stated that Cindy could not attend the meeting today; however Cindy will be at the next ESAC meeting to discuss Maine shelter funding. Bob added that as of January 1, 2011 service providers will have to enter data into Service Point in order to receive Maine shelter funds. There is a mandatory Service Point training for current licensed Service Point users as the system has been upgraded. Bob distributed information regarding HMIS training.

VIII. *Salvation Army – Tools for Life Workshop Series*

Ashley stated that she has taken over for Danielle as the Salvation Army and is organizing the Tools for Life workshop series. She stated that Tools for Life is starting up again. She mentioned that the first workshop in the series, a stress management training, was held yesterday and it was very successful. Workshops will be held each Wednesday from 10:00 AM to noon at the Salvation Army beginning on September 22nd. Child care is provided, however you must pre-register for the workshops any time prior to the date of the workshop. Ashley mentioned that people can choose to attend however many workshops they would like, anywhere from only one to the entire series.

IX. *Veterans Administration Update –*

Susie and Amy gave a VA update. Susie stated that there is a very public push to end veteran homelessness in the coming years. The current data indicates that the highest need is for homeless male veterans. She stated that it's important to know that if a veteran is not registered at the VA for healthcare this can occur at the 509 Forest Ave location to register for VHA health care. Individuals will need a copy of their DD214, which can be obtained online if they do not already have it. Susie stated that the VA Benefits liaison at the Oxford Street Shelter for Men can work with veterans in applying for service-related pensions and non-service related pensions. Disabled persons who served during a period of conflict (even if they were not stationed in the conflict) may qualify for non service related pensions. Amy stated she is a psychiatric nurse practitioner at the Portland VA mental health clinic. They provide services for individuals with substance abuse issues, mental health issues, services for people dependent on opiates, therapy, groups for mindfulness based stress reduction, suboxone program, and really anything related to mental health. Currently they are attempting to determine the needs of area service providers in order to meet the needs of the veteran community they serve. Leah asked if only Portland residents are able to access the Portland clinic. Amy stated they will see individuals from any town as long as they are registered with the VA, which they can assist with. Susie stated that they are working on transportation in order to get individuals to the clinic. Mary Ellen asked about any outreach services. Susie stated that they're working on being able to provide outreach services; however they do not have the resources to be able to offer this at this time. Susie and Amy stated that a VA medical clinic is in the works and hopefully opening within the next year. It will include medical and mental health care services and will serve any registered veteran, not solely homeless veterans. Amy will e-mail release forms to the group, as having individuals sign the release is imperative due to HIPAA laws. More information will be disseminated via email to the group.

X. *Other Business*

Bob stated that the State of Maine, including the three Continuum of Cares, has received a Best Practices award from HUD regarding the HMIS system and its tie in with HPRP and data standards. Bob congratulated MaineHousing for all of their outstanding work.

Bob stated that there is a Continuum of Care meeting schedule for Wednesday, October 6th at 10:00AM in the Refugee Services Conference Area (190 Lancaster Street).

***NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, October 21st, 2010
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.