

Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee January 2011 Notes

Mission: End Homelessness in Asheville and Buncombe County by 2015

Vision: The 10 Year Plan implementation process, through the Homeless Initiative, will end chronic homelessness and reduce all types of homelessness over the next decade by investing resources in a coordinated, sustained effort that addresses the underlying causes of homelessness.

Attendees

Members: Brian Alexander, Celeste Collins, David Nash, Gerald Hixson, Gordon Smith, Richard Letterman, Jenny Simmons, Lance Edwards, Robin Merrell, Scott Rogers

Staff & Guests: Jaime Matthews, Katherine McCrory, Rich Munger, Jerry Nelson, Amy Sawyer, Heather Spencer, John Spitzberg, Jeff Staudinger, Chris Sullivan, Emily Walters, Michael Woods.

Updates:

Homeless Persons' Memorial Day: To learn more, visit www.abhomeless.wordpress.com to see a description and list of names of those who died while homeless in our community.

CDBG/HOME grants are due on 2/4/2011, as are grants to the United Way. Homelessness is a priority for funding, to learn about all priorities, read the City's [Consolidated Plan for 2010-2015](#) (search "homeless" to save time)

Work study: Work study students from AB Tech have been very helpful to agencies working for them. The students learn how to use HMIS and then support high volume or other agencies requesting HMIS support. Currently, AB Tech works with the Homeless Initiative to find students suited for the position.

Discussion:

Bus Tickets:

At the last Homeless Coalition meeting the transportation sub-committee, formed to look at how people can better access the transit system, presented. The City's transit authority met with the sub-committee and in its budget for the upcoming fiscal year included the request to sell tickets at a discounted rate (50%) to agencies serving people experiencing homelessness. The Coalition voted to approve this, and also voted that a request go to council before July because the need is immediate.

- **Action:** the Homeless Initiative endorsed the work of the sub-committee and its proposal that bus tickets be offered at a discount to agencies as soon as possible. This will go before the Housing and Community Development Committee (HCD) this month. (Scott Rogers motioned, Gerald Hixson seconded)

Bus Pass it On

Is a community-based initiative to raise funds for the remaining 50% the agencies will still have to pay for bus tickets/passes. Over the next few months there will be opportunities for Homeless Initiative Advisory members to get involved.

10-Year Plan Update Interview questions were discussed by the group.

Chronic Homeless Sub-Committee of the Homeless Initiative, which meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month is going before the HCD and will cover:

Started in late 2009 and on 2/26/2010 first applicant was housed.

Number of people accessing permanent, supportive housing:

- Through 2010, people experiencing chronic homelessness who accessed permanent housing through this collaboration: 46 total
- Type of housing: Public Housing, PH (39 people), Housing Choice Voucher, HVC (5 people), Other Housing (2 People)
- Current number approved pending placement or move-in: 9
- Ineligible: 8 (some others have withdrawn or lost touch after application)
- Likely number to be approved or housed with one year of initial move in: 65
- Success Rate: 96% remaining in permanent housing.
- Impact on Participants:
 - 26 individuals have obtained public benefits (of these, 6 have SSI/SSDI, 7 have Medicaid)
 - 15 individuals have obtained employment
 - 10 individuals have obtained long-term substance abuse treatment
 - 7 individuals are engaged in long-term mental health treatment through a local agency.

Greatest need for expanded success: additional case management resources. The possibility of incorporating families now that the federal definition of chronic homelessness includes families was discussed as a possibility.

Contact David Nash for more info on monthly meetings (dnash@haca.org)

Presentation: Data

Handout: Managing Outcomes: A guide for homelessness organizations

- There are now 10 partnering agencies with numerous programs using HMIS.
- The number of client records in HMIS has risen from 2710 in FY09-10 to 5199 in December.
- The number of those cases with complete data: 91% (minimum standard: 85%)
- Bed utilization rate needs improvement - currently at 80% and needs to grow to having at least 90% of beds documented in the system used at any one given time. Note- if an agency is able to decrease bed use through program intervention, that is documented in HMIS)
- The Point in Time Count will cover all programs that offer housing or outreach; if the paper count matches the HMIS count, agencies will not need to do a paper count next year
- The AHAR - Annual Homeless Assessment Report - looks at outcomes over the past year. Results from Asheville-Buncombe should be available within the month.
- Looking head, data from HMIS will be used to look at demographics, length of stay, prior living situations, and the experience of people who stay in the system for a long time

Announcements:

Gerald Hixson commented that at a recent book reading on homelessness, the first thing people said was that agencies were not working together. It seems like the public perception of what we are doing is not there. Robin Merrill suggested that the 10-Year Plan update could be part of the messaging.

Scott Rogers announced that ABCCM is applying for the Veterans Families Grant. This will bring financial assistance and support to veteran's families in Western Carolina experiencing a housing crisis. He'd like to get a letter of support from the Advisory Committee.

Action Steps:

- Brian Alexander will represent the Homeless Coalition and Homeless Initiative before the HCD committee to present the bus pass proposal.
- Amy Sawyer will keep the Homeless Coalition & Homeless Initiative aware of the "Bus Pass it On" activities.

- The Chronic Homeless Sub-Committee will present to the HCD on its successes and underscore the need for case management resources in order to see continued success.
- The Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee will look at messaging options.
- Scott Rogers will provide the Advisory Committee with a summary of the Veterans Families Grant for the February meeting.
- The Homeless Coalition will keep the Advisory Committee up-to-date on Code Purple policy development.

Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee March 2011 Notes

Introductions: Scott Rogers introduced Millie Hersenshen, who is the director of the Steadfast House.

CDBG/HOME: More than twice the amount of available funds have been requested, of the funds available, homeless program requests make up between 10% and 15% of total requests. The Housing & Community Development Committee will review HOME requests on 3/15 and CDBG requests on 3/17 on the 5th Floor of City Hall.

United Way: Homeless Program requests fall under the "Income Focus Area" of United Way funds. Requests are currently in consideration, UW has about \$700,000 dedicated to the "Income Focus Area"

HEARTH ACT: This act will direct how federal homeless funds managed by HUD for the Continuum of Care are spent. To date, HUD has not published details as they are waiting on funding decisions from congress.

Homeless Coalition: Bus Tickets/Passes are being dispensed but have some glitches. Anyone with a problem can contact Amy S. for the time being until a formal process is created. A video bit about the Bus Tickets/Passes is in final draft; a link will be sent out to committee members once it is available on YouTube.

Point in Time Count: Preliminary numbers suggest slight decrease across the board. Scott suggested that this could be in part because of the HPRP (Homeless Prevention and Rapid ReHousing Program).

Action Steps: The advisory committee would:

- an HPRP update
- a comparison across time of PIT data
- the % of people who are homeless in comparison to total pop.
- PIT report from City/County schools that includes households

Plan Update, update: Data is being collected for the 5th year update of the 10YP. Qualitative and Quantitative. So far, 18 individual interviews and 3 focus groups have occurred, more are scheduled through March. In addition, surveys are in the process of being completed by staff, clients, and community leaders. Outcomes will inform the homeless summit.

- **Action Step:** As an advisory committee member, please complete the community leader's survey. Follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/4tfyzkh>
- **Action Step:** Gerald suggested finding accessible ways to talk about the work we're doing. Advisory Committee members are invited to offer feedback and/or come up with phrases, etc. to help tell the story. Blog posts are welcome. They should be 500-700 words long.

VA Summit: Helped spur the conversation about homelessness in our community. David reported that the summit showed that there is a great level of interest in the VA and the community.

Homeless Summit: See below for more info. A concern that the length of the summit might turn people off was raised. In general, the structure of the summit seemed to work. Focus on successes with speakers from the Advisory Committee was discussed.

- **Action Step:** Keep your eyes open - in the next week or so we'll send out some updates on the progress of the summit. Feel free to comment & give feedback so that this summit makes sense and is worthwhile for everyone who comes!

- **Action Step:** Celeste will invite Shuler & Burr, Dan will invite Haagen, and Brian will invite Fisher. Everyone should send invitations out to their friends, colleagues, and neighbors who could benefit from attending the event. (Cut-and-paste invites are below)

Group Discussion: With the help of sticky notes, the group looked back at what has happened over the past several years and created a timeline that put all the work of the community in perspective. Dan suggested that this would be a great tool to use with boards and groups in the community. Amy agreed, suggested that the committee is ambassadors for the 10YP, helping keep the tension between the vision and the reality, always looking at what is and what is possible to ensure that there is movement.

- **Action Step:** Amy will type up the time-line and get it out the group for review. Advisory committee members will add more events and refine dates. (They can be hard to remember off the top of the head).

HOMELESS INITIATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APRIL 2011 MEETING CANCELLED