

HOUSING AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES NETWORK
Providing a Continuum of Care (CoC) in Washington County
May 1, 2024, 8:30 a.m. (Virtual Meeting)

Mission: Housing and service provider agencies working to bring a broad spectrum of organizations together as partners in the community to perform strategic planning, gaps analysis, prioritize resources needed to provide a continuum of care for individuals and families who are at-risk of or experiencing homeless.

Chair: Charlie Voss Flowers
Vice Chair: Open

Presentations and flyers are available on the [HSSN Agendas and Minutes webpage](#). Click the link, select “2024 Meetings” and scroll down to “May 1, 2024.”

I. Questions for Consultation Groups

- What are you seeing as your greatest challenge to providing housing and services to the community?
- What do you see as the biggest unmet needs/service for the communities you serve?
- What is the biggest challenge that the communities you serve are experiencing with keeping housing, and what is needed to overcome those challenges?
- Are there specific populations who are not being served within the current system of care?
- What is most important to you or the people that you serve when you think about where you want to live?
- What are the biggest challenges and barriers for people trying to find a place to live?
- What do people with rental assistance need?

II. General Homeless Population

Facilitator and Notetaking: Shannon Wilson, Meredith Cook and Nadia Mohammad

- Shayla Nice: ended up at Hanks parking lot by City of Hillsboro, near Community Connect
 - They have 129 clients the other day – too many people, not enough capacity, too much drug use, sexual harassment
 - Assessments were constantly changed to things she didn't agree to
 - Had to go in to do these assessments
 - Assessments took too long
 - No proof or verification needed – a person can say they've been homeless for months or disabled or drug user and they will jump the line
 - People trying to get stability facing barriers
 - Now in the Pods by Hillsboro – by accident – was told there was one but then there wasn't when she got there, so they gave her someone else's pod
 - Disorganized, told different things
- Staci Yehle: no funding to help with large debts
 - Those debts become barriers
 - Like a client who had a \$9000 car loan debt that they couldn't shake off
- April Long: works at Public Defenders Office
 - Clients cycle through periods of stability
 - Timing between need and availability is difficult to match up
 - Resource becomes available too late
- Charlie Voss: prioritization, who gets into what programs
 - A lot of people better suited for HCMS get sorted to rapid rehousing, for example
 - Transition not accessible
- Tachelle Dunford: HCMS provider
 - Seeing lots of folks who are not getting enough support

- Clients can't pay their bills, even with utility and rent assistance
 - No accountability for folks who have income and receive assistance and are not using it or are not paying their portion
 - Half of clients have had to have utilities paid
 - How to hold participants accountable to paying their portions or get them additional support in the first few months
 - Drug use and addiction seems to play a part?
- Dominique Gonzalez: issues with clients with addiction issues that are preventing them from getting jobs, housing, stability
 - When they do get some stability they end up making "too much" to continue affordable housing --- and then end up stuck again
- Shalya Nice: Housing first initiative approach – not everyone is ready for housing
 - "we throw them in and pull them back out." We need to help them get ready for housing
- Sage Magdalene: seniors showing up who can't take care of their basic needs get sent to generalized shelters but they need specialized support

III. Youth

Facilitator and Notetaking: Lauren Calo and Madeline Bonkoske

What are you seeing as your greatest challenge to providing housing and services to the community?

- Lack of housing for students/youth
- Very few family shelters
- Safe place is the one and only area where we can house unaccompanied minors – but always at capacity
- Young age (18-22) hesitant to place in adult shelters but too young to be places in younger/children shelters.
- Nothing readily available for our kids.
- Beaverton – success with Second Home, but lacks access to hosts in the rural areas of Washington County (Gaston Banks, Forest Grove)
- Summer programs – rural schools have limited summer/after school programs
- Host families, summer activities, and after school activities.
- Transitional Housing – voucher systems are built for adults – not for youth
- Pre-school through high school completion: shelter space, family shelter is limited
- Difficult to provide services where expectations are set for adults

What do you see as the biggest unmet needs/service for the communities you serve?

- Transportation. We have an obligation to keep the kids where they've been transferred (rural spaces).
- Mental health challenges – lack of accessible mental health resources to address those challenges.

What is the biggest challenge that the communities you serve are experiencing with keeping housing, and what is needed to overcome those challenges?

- Education around being a renter
- Mental health challenges that pop up when someone is OUT of crisis mode and then access to resources to address those
- Loneliness. Choose to exit housing services because they do not want to be alone. Trying to meet a need of human connections (i.e. allowing people to stay with them who are not on the lease)
- Challenge in creating safety plans for kids who have been detained, navigating the legal/immigration services.
- Dramatic increase of unaccompanied youth
- Climate changes/culture shock
- Children in foster care – experience some form of trauma - come from broken homes, experience trauma, parent-student relationships (conflict)
- Host families changing their minds
- Lack of services in the further out areas of the county

Are there specific populations who are not being served within the current system of care?

- Unaccompanied houseless youth
- Newcomer students from other countries
- 17,18, 19, 20, year-old age bracket – difficult to place. Too young/too old.
- Youth with disabilities (physically challenged) – shelter space

What is most important to you or the people that you serve when you think about where you want to live?

- Community
- Safe
- Access to transportation
- Affordability

What are the biggest challenges and barriers for people trying to find a place to live?

- Lack of rental history
- Criminal history
- Lack of affordability

What do people with rental assistance need?

- Community
- For young folks – the basics (furniture, things to make a home feel like home)
- Access to mental health services
- Crisis mode to stability is a very big change. This needs to be addressed/mental health supports.
- Lower caseload for youth workers specifically would allow more engagement with this population.

IV. Persons with disabilities

Facilitator and Notetaking: Omar Martinex and Kathy Anderson Peoples

Attendees: WASCO Homeless services- Lindsay Dent; Easterseals Oregon serves 55+- Shonia Heston; MHAHO Mental Health & Addiction- Michelle Markus; Miracles Club serves 18+ - Danita Worthy; Advisory council WASCO /Behavioral Services- Karen James; Short time solution in WASCO- Hanin Arqasous; Community member/Hillsboro farmers market board- Angela Noble; Program manager Forest Grove works with homeless - Krishelle Lucas

What are you seeing as your greatest challenge to providing housing and services to the community you serve?

- Karen- Involved with folks with mental health and addiction issues. Not enough people that supporting with care. Would like to see more work surrounding wrap around care for people. Would like to see how we are measuring the services that we are providing in the county. Would like to see 24/7 wrap around services. Not serving the population as well as we should be.
- Krishelle- Biggest barrier/challenge folks with mental health, not able to access housing like the general population are. Folks have a lack understanding in the process. They services need to be tailored to help each and everyone since they all have different care needs.
- Ensuring that those who do get housed continue to get the support in services that are tailored to their needs.
- Danita- Lack of retention, lack of partnership between agencies. A lot of times they get them into the housing and are left alone. To create retention the need to partner and work together and continued check in with the person would be very beneficial. This would give people a sense of belonging. The biggest issue is trying to work with the agencies and getting the backstory of the person who is being helped. Greater communication and partnership to support each other is what is needed. Having a group of people to be there to support the person regardless of them getting into a home or not. Building a support group for people with consistent check ins for up to 1 year.
- Hanin- Worked with mostly Asian 18+, dementia/Alzheimer folks. Assisting them with homelessness. Currently there is a large gap in support for this group. The programs available aren't qualifying them although they should be getting qualified. Need homelessness that suffer in Dementia/Alzheimer's. Creating a program or informing where they could go to get help with resources to assist this group.

- Angela- Outreach to community member inform and engagement. Something more than a hotel with a shower. It's so much more than this. They need to focus more on trauma and build a community and support system for them. It goes so much deeper than a roof over their head and meals.
- Shonia- Mental health. Easterseals housing program 55+, early 80's even now that they are housed 1 year plus she will not utilize the whole apartment because she's scared that this is too good to be true (PTSD). Sometimes the only interaction they have is with the person who checks in on them once a month and they need more help with wrap around care.
- Lindsay- There is a group of individuals who fall through the cracks. Who would need higher need of care. The need of wrap around care.
- Not enough people for wrap around services in the county. Persons with mental health often face eviction.
- How are we measuring outcomes and how providers are providing services to people with mental health and are non-conformists (HIQ?)
- Homeless folks put in housing/apartments/hotels not being served. They don't know how to maintain housing. Need wrap around services.
- Need to be able to access housing support and what program expectations are. More advocacy is needed. Services needed to be tailored to fit their special needs.
- People who lived on the street struggle to have the skills and services needed to be successful as a housed person. Some still live as if they are homeless while housed.
- Lack of retention and partnership between the agencies. They hop between agencies when agencies should collaborate instead of dropping them with new agency taking over. All agencies should be involved in the support system for maybe 6 mo to 1 year.
- Need ongoing care and assistance to show previously homeless folks how to use basic life skills.
- Gap between homeless services and accommodating for those who have dementia and Alzheimer's. Can't find resources for this population.
- Outreach to community members to inform them about what the reality is for folks being helped. Build community around the assisted. Missing the mark in helping the community understand.
- More outreach. People are still connecting to services only by committing a low level crime and becoming justice involved.
- Placement for elderly persons previously on the street and in shelter – help people adapting to having a place to live. Housing first model for Easter Seals visits once a month but needs more mental health support and assist people with the trauma from.
- There is no system of support available for those experiencing mental illnesses transitioning back into housing.
- Geriatric support for those with mental health issues experiencing homelessness who need life skills and support for follow through. Counseling to work through what they need to work on – Wrap around services.
- Most haven't been part of this con plan process in previous years.
- Omar asked: Have you seen any improvement in process?
- We are falling back, not moving forward and not providing services. People are being evicted due to a lack of life skills.
- Where is all the money going? There's a lot of money to be had, but it's not being used for wrap around services.

Are there specific populations who are not being served within the current system of care?

- Geriatric population
- Dementia/Alzheimer's neurogenetic disease
- High acuity folks not in need of hospital care and not imminent danger but want them to be independent.

V. Other special populations – Seniors, Veterans, Survivors of Domestic Violence, etc

Facilitator and Notetaking: Eva Pauley and Kelvin Valdovinos

- Kimberly Garrett, Rowie Taylor (Domestic Violence Survivors, transitional, shelter) , Mercy Koffa-Henderson (tri—county), Christine Pettefer (minor children - Rapid Re-housing CM Good Neighbor Center) . .

What are you seeing as your greatest challenge to providing housing and services to the community?

- Credit scores (650 +), landlords requiring.

- Referrals for renting assistance. Process is too tedious. Must know how to read/write. Application process very difficult. Big organizations do not meet the needs of everyone.
- Application process – credit score – public defender who can write letter about veterans being a protected class. Older veterans have not filled out an application online. They must come into the office.
- DV – must follow federal rules. Barriers – diverse population, cultural sensitivity sometimes gets in the way. Not tuned in to what is happening. COMMUNICATION is a big issue and more MONEY/FUNDS. More bed spaces. Without appropriate funding hard.
- Relying so much on government becomes an issue. Red tape of the system can get in the way. Creative solutions: shared housing (oxford homes). Mental health, group living. A little bit more creativity in housing options.

What do you see as the biggest unmet needs/service for the communities you serve?

- The housing is not appropriate for tenant. Mercy – 7-person family and was placed into \$3k apartment for limited time. What happens to after assistance, refugee can be very difficult. How to make sure you can help with no income and no documentation.
- WA County is very diverse, with geographic also not just population. A lot of people that live in rural county. TRANSPORTATION. No financials to travel or go to services. Public transportation takes a very long time.
- Mental Health and Addiction – Improving outreach to those people, employment, peer support and outreach.
- Energy Assistance/Assistance - families/ individuals come in without jobs, no source of income. Apartments collect water, sewer, trash, and that has no financial assistance. If they need services – don't have money to travel to services.

Are there specific populations who are not being served within the current system of care?

- Newly arrived – but without documents but can be here legally. A lot of bumps on the way: language, education. They want access but do not have a way to get it.
- Seniors – Monitoring before they get evicted. More outreach – decline in mental health, cognition. Formulate special committees.

Extra:

- People just right above the income limit. Not eligible. Cost of living has gone up significantly. Unfortunately, between taxes and life – getting slammed on whether to pay rent or buy food.
- Single adults – In DV world programs for individuals with kids, but singles are left out and housing.
- Shayla– Could not get access to services. Lives in pods by Winco. More training to deal with suicidal, emergencies. Staff being trained on Trauma-Informed situations. Homeless do not have access to these meetings. Searches are being done and very invasive.

To be added to the HSSN listserv, contact homeless_services@washingtoncountyor.gov