

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes January 15th, 2009

<i>Bob Duranleau</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>Amanda Wells</i>	Preble Street Women's Shelter
<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>Paige Eclov</i>	PROP
<i>Mark Swann</i>	Preble Street
<i>Dee Clarke</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Heather Rhoda</i>	Frannie Peabody
<i>Scott Tibbitts</i>	MaineHousing
<i>Teyonda Hall</i>	PROP
<i>Seth Bruning</i>	Preble Street Women's Shelter
<i>Adriene Whitaker</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Public Health Nursing
<i>Tom Allan</i>	Milestone
<i>William Lee</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Greg Payne</i>	Avesta / Maine Affordable Housing Coalition
<i>Sarah Donlin</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Rose Strout</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Donna Yellen</i>	Preble Street
<i>Christopher Reiling</i>	Preble Street
<i>Maureen Clancy</i>	Mercy Hospital
<i>Cullen Ryan</i>	Community Housing of Maine (CHOM)
<i>Doug Gardner</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department
<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>	Maine Housing
<i>Christina Griffin</i>	Preble Street
<i>Amy Regan</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Raenae Moore</i>	PROP
<i>Kimberly Curry</i>	United Way of Greater Portland
<i>Megan Ward</i>	MAPS Shelter Services
<i>Aaron Geyer</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division

I. Introductions

Robert Duranleau, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed and thanked everyone for coming out on such a cold day. Brief introductions were made.

II. *December Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau*

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for December 2008:

	<u>December 2007</u>	<u>December 2008</u>
Adolescents	8 Individuals	10 Individuals
Adults	215 Individuals	213 Individuals
Families	<u>38 Individuals (15 Families)</u>	<u>76 Individuals (30 Families)</u>
Total	261 Individuals	299 Individuals

Adolescent Shelter

The total adolescent bed nights for December 2007 were 233 while the total bed nights for December 2008 were 276. These figures indicate an increase of 43 bed nights, or 16% between December 2007 and December 2008.

Adult Shelters

Adult Shelter bed nights usage decreased by 6% in December 2008 compared to December 2007. Total bed night usage during December 2007 was 6453 while it was 6081 during December 2008, a difference of 372 bed nights.

During the month of December, there were 117 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 54 individuals into permanent housing, with zero (0) of those individuals returning to the shelter within 90 days of housing placement. Bob stated that this was a record high for the Oxford Street Shelter for Men housing placements. Josh O'Brien mentioned that the more efficient inspections process and an expanded housing team at the Oxford Street Shelter for Men has greatly aided in placing individuals into permanent housing. Bob also mentioned that MaineHousing funds were used to hire an additional housing counselor.

Preble Street Women's Shelter served a total of 81 women during the month of December, including 17 new intakes. The Shelter placed seven (7) individuals into housing, with two (2) women returning. These seven (7) women had been homeless for over one year. A tremendous amount of work went into locating permanent housing for these more challenging residents.

Amanda Wells stated that the number of women served at the Preble Street Women's Shelter has decreased due to several long-term residents securing housing with the help of Logan Place.

Family Shelters

There was a total of 2888 bed nights used for all Family Shelters in December 2008 as compared to 956 bed nights in December 2007. This represents an increase of 67% in Family Shelter bed usage between December 2007 and December 2008.

Due to overflow in the Family Shelter, hotels were utilized from December 14th through December 21st in order to accommodate the increase in families seeking shelter. Bob mentioned that the Family Shelter has seen an increase due to an influx of Iraqi families, serving approximately 20 Iraqi families in December.

The Family Shelter received 24 new families (intakes) for a total of 94 individuals in December.

III. *Point in Time Survey – Scott Tibbits*

Scott Tibbits discussed that the Point in Time Survey, remains similar to last year's process, with only minor changes. The most prominent change is that some agencies, service point uploads will be able to enter information directly through HMIS. Service point uploads done this way. For those agencies that use batch upload, as the City of Portland does, there will be a supplemental form to fill out and additional questions to answer if applicable. There are three interactive trainings scheduled to update everyone on the process, the new PIT forms and questions, as well as the new HMIS based PIT reporting methods. These trainings are being offered in person, online and via conference call on: Tuesday, January 20th from 2:00pm - 4:00 pm, Wednesday, January 21st from 10:00am – 12:00pm and 2:00pm – 4:00pm at MaineHousing 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine. Scott added that he hopes the changes aid in the process running smoothly, as well as focusing solely on necessary information. This year's Point in Time Count will take place on January 28th, 2009.

IV. *Homeless Point in Time Survey - Unsheltered – Josh O'Brien*

Josh O'Brien mentioned that organizing the unsheltered count for the Homeless Point in Time Survey will begin with outreach to consumers to determine the best times and places to look in order to maximize the unsheltered population surveyed. Oxford Street Shelter for Men will be working with Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice on homeless outreach the eve of January 28th, 2009.

V. *Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice Campaign 2009 – Dee Clarke*

Dee Clarke stated that education surrounding how policy affects the homeless and how the homeless population can affect policy is important. She mentioned that last year she and a group of people from the shelters had the opportunity to tour the State House and have conversations with Glenn Cummings and Governor Baldacci. With last year's efforts being such a success, Dee will take another group this February to tour the State House, meet with the Governor, and administer a mock passing of a bill.

Dee also mentioned that Adult Education will be coming to administer basic computer classes as a part of the WELLness program, with classes starting on Tuesday, January 20 2009. This will be a pilot program established in hopes of building confidence in people who currently have a hard time connecting with the community because they have been in shelters for so long. The goal is that eventually, with the help of this program, they will have the desire to go into the community, to take the classes offered at Adult Ed rather than at the shelter. The information covered in these classes will prepare people who attend for additional computer classes that are predicted for mid-winter. These additional classes will address skills such as how to complete a resume and apply for jobs online.

VI. *Homeless Youth Act Update - Chris Reiling*

Chris discussed the Homeless Youth Act, how it is expanding the definition of homeless youth. A coalition of homeless youth providers worked together to determine who "homeless youth" are and what services would best serve them. Additionally, the act provides definitions for "runaway" and "homeless youth," (omitting medical and psychiatric qualifiers, as homelessness in and of itself is sufficient qualification). The act itself is based on a federal act as well as similar policies enacted in other states, utilizing the better portions of the acts and condensing them into one that would best serve the state of Maine. Chris went on the state that those involved hope that the Department of Health and Human Services will be responsive to the act, as it could open doors to new collaboration in the future. He also mentioned that an additional benefit for DHHS is that there is no new financial responsibility, only the responsibility that has already been established.

VII. *Cumberland County Reducing Homeless Initiative PROP/Preble Street – Raenae Moore & Christina Griffin*

Raenae Moore discussed the increase that PROP has seen in the past three months. In the past six months alone the program has seen 100 clients, whereas the entire program last year serviced 102 clients. She mentioned that this number is expected to at least double within the next six months. Raenae added that looking at the towns people are coming from remains important. Last year PROP/Preble Street received large numbers from Windham, whereas this year the numbers are down quite drastically, with only 8 from Windham. They also received large numbers from South Portland. Another town where there is increased need is Scarborough. PROP has been expanding its contracts with General Assistance and taking over in new towns, such as Naples and soon Pownal, and expect numbers in these areas to increase steadily. As far as family demographics, last year there were far more two-parent families. So far this year there have been only two two-parent families, in contrast to thirty-eight single parent families, with a total of 59 individuals (52 children) from Cumberland County. Additionally, Raenae noted that of these individuals, the trend has been more towards the older (50's and 60's) and younger (19-21) populations.

Raenae went on to mention that the program is progressing, with help from three new college graduate students in aiding clients. They are attempting to work with South Portland for quicker referrals, in order to get women on fixed incomes out of motels and into more stable living arrangements. Additionally, establishing good working relationships with General Assistance programs has proven to be quite successful, as quick response on behalf of these programs has allowed chronically homeless people to obtain housing. Raenae also mentioned that it would be very interesting to look at the historical background (over the past few years) and examine General Assistance data. Data regarding the people that have been served, as well as the phone calls, and referrals, in regards to who they are coming from and who they are referring them to.

VIII. *Other Business*

Cullen Ryan discussed a bill that will be put forth by the Statewide Homeless Council that would combine services provided by the Department of Health and Human Services in order to provide services and housing to one hundred and eighty (180) homeless individuals. These services would be spread across that state, in both urban and rural areas. The bill would call for funds in order to cover the salaries of nine (9) individuals, for overhead and mileage in order to assist people in caseloads to make the transition into permanent, stable housing with the proper support system in order to get these individuals settled into a community.

It was mentioned that the Federal Stimulus package being discussed in Congress had a housing component that would allow for the expansion of emergency shelter funds. He asked that people go beyond traditional supporters and allies and reach out to other arenas that would have an interest in this expansion (such as contractors and engineers that would benefit from the work they would receive if said expansion were to occur) in order to create a broad base of support. Additionally, Greg Payne discussed Maine Affordable Housing Coalition's Housing Bond Bill, that if passed would allot a total of \$180 million (with \$30 million used during each of the next two years), with the hopes of not only securing the home fund but also going above and beyond this. Commenting that the Home Fund took a hit this year, and that even though it leverages a lot of federal money inconsistent reports regarding how much it actually leverages raises many doubts on the part of the government. As is stands, MaineHousing leverages ten times itself in resources, and the Housing Bond, if passed, would leverage the same. Thus, if the Housing Bond Bill does passes there will be a net gain.

Bob asked if everyone was in agreement that the next meeting be held on the fourth Thursday, February 26, 2009 due to school vacation occurring during the regularly scheduled meeting date. All were in agreement.

Donna Yellen suggested that we invite legislative staff to the February and/or March meeting to discuss possible economic initiatives proposed by President Obama which would impact homeless consumers. Everyone was in agreement with her suggestion and Bob offered to follow up and schedule the presentation.

Ricker Hamilton DHHS Program Administrator for Protective Services is scheduled to give a presentation at the February 26th meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, February 26th, 2009

8:30 – 10am

Refugee Services Area

190 Lancaster Street

Please contact Robert Duranleau, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division at 775-7915, 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.