

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes September 17th, 2009

<i>Bob Duranleau</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>Dee Clarke</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Doug Gardner</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Service Department
<i>Cindy Namer</i>	MaineHousing
<i>Nancy Berg</i>	2-1-1 Maine
<i>Thomas McLaughlin</i>	UNE
<i>Tara Kosma</i>	PROP
<i>Aaron Geyer</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>Angela Havlin</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Div, HPRP
<i>Josh O'Brien</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Div, Oxford Street Shelter for Men
<i>Jon Bradley</i>	Preble Street
<i>Kendra Danse</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Ginny Dill</i>	Shalom House
<i>Jeff Tardif</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Div, Family Shelter
<i>Rebecca Lamer</i>	Prop- Community Initiatives
<i>Amanda Wells</i>	Preble Street Women's Shelter
<i>Alex Thorn</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Health Care for the Homeless
<i>Aaron Shapiro</i>	Cumberland County
<i>Linda Janson</i>	MAPS Shelter Services
<i>Amy Regan</i>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<i>Leah Bruns</i>	Prop
<i>Jennie Soares</i>	Preble Street – HPRP
<i>Kathy Pratt</i>	Maine Department of Health & Human Services, ICM Program
<i>Donna Yellen</i>	Preble Street
<i>Kimberly Curry</i>	United Way
<i>Jon Sheffield</i>	Frannie Peabody Center
<i>Adriene Whitaker</i>	Maine Department of Health and Human Services; Public Health Nursing
<i>Daniella Cameron</i>	Preble Street Lighthouse Shelter
<i>Cliff Marchant</i>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<i>Stacy Carpenter</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham – The Bridge
<i>Amy Grommes Pulaski</i>	City of Portland, Planning & Development Dept., Housing & Neighborhood Services
<i>Melany Mondello</i>	Shalom House
<i>Andie Bisceglia</i>	Mercy Hospital
<i>Maureen Clancey</i>	Mercy Hospital
<i>Susannah Harnden</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Mark Swann</i>	Preble Street
<i>Tom Allan</i>	Milestone
<i>Elizabeth Szatkowski</i>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham
<i>Heather Rhoda</i>	Frannie Peabody Center
<i>Leanna Bruce</i>	Shalom House

I. Introductions

Bob Duranleau, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made.

II. Homeless Voices for Justice (HVJ) Study on Women's Shelter – Migration of people experiencing homelessness – Tom McLaughlin

Tom shared some preliminary data regarding the homeless migration study. The study addressed what migration patterns look like by comparing homeless migration patterns to general migration patterns in Maine. When looking at migration it is important to note that people move for an assortment of different reasons, such as to be closer to work, family, certain change in one's situation. The national Census tracks these factors as to why people move, how they move within census tracts within a state and from state to state. This data was compared to data in the homeless population in Portland. In order to collect the homeless data Tom went to the Preble Street Women's Shelter, the Oxford Street Shelter for Men and Milestone. Samples data was taken to calculate generalizations for the homeless populations in Portland as whole. There were twenty-eight (28) questions in interview form that was used to compile the data, with a total of ninety-three (93) people comprising the sample group. Of the ninety-three (93) individuals questioned, 78% identified as Maine residents, with 65% identifying Portland as home. Out of the ninety-three (93) people, twenty-six (26) people came to Portland for some reason, such as looking for employment, stating it was a good place to live, fleeing bad situation, and so on. There is a piece of that population who came to Portland solely for services, but by and large those in the sample group migrated to Portland stated they came for other reasons. Tom stated that we know based on Census data that 60% of the population does not move once settled; thus, 60% of the people in Portland do not move, and have not moved in the past ten (10) years. When the sample group was asked whether or not they will move, only a small percentage said they would move, and 53% of those from Maine said they had no intention of moving. The study demonstrates that the patterns and reasons for migration in the homeless population coincides with that of regular migration. Tom stated that they are just now starting to go through and cut the data even further, but that is what the results are showing currently. Doug asked how they picked their sample group. Tom responded by saying that the individuals in the sample group had to be picked by chance in order for the results to be accurate. At Oxford Street and the Women's Shelter they took first individuals in certain groups, such as age brackets, who came through the door at opening. At Milestone samples were chosen as individuals were leaving. Cliff asked how many people from each facility were interviewed to comprise the sample group? Tom stated that they used calculations to determine this, for instance they calculated Oxford Street's sample by figuring if there are 140 people per night how many people are needed there to obtain accurate information, and then interviewed that number of people. Cliff asked if the information was skewed when the data was compiled from all three shelters? Tom mentioned that by selecting those within the sample frame it gives a better representation of the full sample. Doug stated he was curious whether or not there is any bias when people enter the shelter. He mentioned that many people come in after curfew, and wondered if the study is missing this group? Tom mentioned he'd go through and look at the data. Donna stated that they had discussion beforehand to be as sure as they could be that there was a good representation, keeping aware that the time frame and when you take it does make a difference, but to ensure that at face value they were as representative as possible. Leah stated that some consumers know that it is more beneficial to say they were from a certain location or are at the shelter for certain reasons, and know when to say what. Tom stated that they asked a lot of questions, such as where were you born, where did you live from age 1-5, do you have relatives in Portland, and so on to be as accurate as possible. They looked at connections to community and where people considered home. There was a very exhausting list of questions to gather accurate information.

Dee asked what the information is going to be used for. Tom mentioned that the next step would be for a small group to gather and review the data, determine if there are their action steps and where to go from there such as possible further steps for analysis and deeper migration patterns. Amy mentioned that many people hear that people are flooding into Maine for its homeless services, however what the study discloses is that this is not accurate, and that contrary to popular belief homeless individuals come to Maine for the same reasons as everyone else does. Tom responded by stating yes, though a small number do come to Portland for its resources, most state that they have connections to the city. Amy

stated that we track homeless individuals in this way by migration down into location categories, calling attention to it each month in ESAC stats. She stated that we do not do this for other groups of people, such as veterans and the disabled, and asked why we must continue to perpetuate the popular stereotype. Leah stated that Portland shelters are mainly supported by tax payers and this data is tracked in order to determine which towns are not taking responsibility for their own citizens. Leah stated that with PROP that's what they do, work with towns to prevent people from other towns from coming to Portland for shelter and services that they should be receiving in their own communities. Amanda stated that it's important to ask the right questions when attempting to gather data regarding residency. She stated that if you dig into the information further you'll find that there are underlying reasons why individuals come to Portland that they don't necessarily disclose at first. Alex stated that it's hard to take the sample group and overlay it with the whole population. Tom mentioned that they had thought a lot about that, stating that if you ask people where they're from their answers may depend on their frame of references and the situation itself. However, they tried to dig down through to get to the root answers. Mark stated that they had attempted to gather some soft statistical data at Preble Street, but it never was very successful, thus that is why Tom got involved with the study. Tom mentioned that he believes it's real, solid research, different from anything you hear, from police, the community and the State, as the data did not represent the stereotype. For this reason, he believes another meeting would be beneficial to discuss why the research says this and shelter intake forms may not, and so on. Tom stated that the statistics suggest there is a 90% accuracy rate for the entire population due to the care in taking the sample, based on data. If the study were to be conducted again the data would be within 5% of the sample data. Jon mentioned that this study was done in part to answer the questions everyone has regarding this issue. He stated that the problem right now is that all you will hear on the issue is how people are coming to Portland for services and that people are frustrated that there are so many transients coming to the City from out of town and from other states. Jon stated that at this point in time it's important to challenge this notion, that we owe it to consumers and ourselves to find a different, more accurate message to convey, and the data from the study supports this.

Jeff asked if they had considered doing a similar study including homeless families. Tom mentioned that it's a good idea, that the study did not include data from the Family Shelter, but it would be good data to obtain. Doug stated that what Amy stated is important, but it's also important to continue to collect data regarding last known residency for shelter intakes in order to continue to create relationships with other towns and communities. Cindy stated that beyond the study it is important to look at migration across the state. With HPRP, providers will be sharing data as they move around within the state, and if providers starting sharing data they will better be able to see this movement throughout the State. Mark mentioned that they hadn't touched on the national or big picture regarding this issue. He stated that every shelter in every city has this same issue and feels that they are unique; every city struggles with this and it would be interesting to put it into context. Amy asked what the follow up to this will look like. Tom reiterated the need for another meeting to look at the data. Bob mentioned that he would set up the meeting and notify people when this is occurs.

III. August Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for February 2009:

	<u>August 2008</u>	<u>August 2009</u>
Adolescents	8 Individuals	11 Individuals
Adults	225 Individuals	249 Individuals
Families	<u>71 Individuals (28 Families)</u>	<u>75 Individuals (30 Families)</u>
Total	296 Individuals	335 Individuals

Adolescent Shelter

The total adolescent bed nights for August 2008 were 297 while the total bed nights for August 2009 were 367. These figures indicate an increase of 70 bed nights, or 19% between August 2008 and August 2009. Four (4) individuals stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Adult Shelters

Adult Shelter bed nights usage increased by 11% in August 2009 compared to August 2008. Total bed night usage during August 2008 was 6960 while it was 7718 during August 2009, a difference of 758 bed nights.

During the month of August, there were 107 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, 51 individuals stated they had never been homeless before in August.

Oxford Street Shelter for Men Support Services team placed 48 individuals into permanent housing, with 0 of those individuals returning to the shelter within 90 days of housing placement.

Preble Street Women's Shelter served a total of 122 women during the month of August, including 32 new intakes. Based on self-reporting, 15 of these 32 intakes stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

The Shelter placed 5 individuals into housing, with 2 women returning.

Family Shelters

There was a total of 2323 bed nights used for all Family Shelters in August 2009 as compared to 2210 bed nights in July August. This represents an increase of 5% in Family Shelter bed usage between August 2008 and August 2009.

The Family Shelter placed 21 families for a total of 68 individuals into housing in August.

The Family Shelter received 28 new families (intakes) for a total of 96 individuals in August. Based on self-reporting 13 families for a total of 50 individuals stated they had never been homeless before in August, of these 4 families for a total of 14 individuals were refugees.

Bob mentioned that the numbers are very high for the Month of August, especially at the adult shelters, reaching a record high over the past six (6) months. Cliff mentioned out-of-state numbers are very high. Jon mentioned this is looking at intakes not the total population at the shelters, and if you look at the shelter's population as a whole it is consistent with what Tom reported in the migration data study. He stated that looking at intakes is very different than the population as a whole in shelters. Doug mentioned that there is a challenge in public conversation with this data, as other information available demonstrates different data than that which was found in the study, thus creating a very fine line and difficult conversation. Alex stated that the why is much more important. Bob mentioned that we do keep information regarding reasons people relocated to send to the state on a monthly basis. Josh stated that they've heard the message over the past year that it is imperative to keep very accurate information, thus they have been attempting to gather data by a means that will reflect the situation as accurately as possible. Jon mentioned that the people who arrive on one particular day do not represent the shelter as a whole. He stated that it is also important to look at subgroups, the chronically homeless and so on. Amy stated that her concern with the conversation regarding this topic is that it could drive a wedge between "us" and "them". Bob mentioned that there was a need to discuss this topic further at a later date.

Nancy presented the 2-1-1 info. In Cumberland County there were 309 total calls for shelter from July 2009 – August 2009 (out of a total call volume of 3,181), which represents an increase of 2 calls from

last year. In all counties there were 866 total calls for shelter from July 2009 – August 2009 (out of a total call volume of 10,202), representing an increase on 14 calls from last year.

IV. *City of Portland Homelessness Prevention & rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) Update* – Angela mentioned that the HPRP program opening is rapidly approaching. She stated that it will be up and running around mid October. The program will be working with the current homeless population in Portland, as well as people at risk of being homeless, working closely with the Oxford Street Shelter for Men, Preble Street, the Family Shelter and the Women’s Shelter. She mentioned that the program will also be working on outreach prevention. The City of Portland’s Program is a collaboration between Preble Street and the Oxford Street Shelter for Men. Angela stated that she and Jennie Soares have been hired as Senior Human Services Counselors, and will be heading the team located in the 194 Lancaster Street Corridor, which has been transformed into shared office spaces. The HPRP project will be participating in the October 16th Homeless Outreach Event, as well as having an open house.

The Preble Street staff will be available during the day with the oxford Street staff available during the evening, with program hours from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM, thus maximizing the volume of consumers the program can work with. There will be an established referral process, open hours as well as a hotline. Information regarding this will be sent out in the near future, once the program is closer to being operational. Jennie and Angela are both getting their team ready so that they’ll be ready to begin once they are able to start program operations and begin taking clients. In conjunction with MaineHousing, they have created an assessment tool for screening clients to ensure that they qualify for HPRP. Donna thanked everyone involved who helped design the intake forms. She mentioned that there was a lot of detail required, as mandated by HUD, but thanks to everyone’s hard work and effort the end result was great intakes forms, hopefully allowing for an easier process working with consumers. Jennie mentioned that it should be an easy process; however the data collection and tracking program will be very detailed to adhere to HUD standards. Also, staff will be making referrals for other area services for consumers who may not qualify for HPRP. The team will begin cross-training on Monday, September 21st, to be knowledgeable in all service areas. A crucial aspect of the program is that, while enrolled, clients will maintain their homeless status. Assistance from the program will last up to eighteen (18) months, though rental assistance will vary.

Dee stated that HPRP seems more for people who are experiencing poverty not for the chronically homeless. Angela agreed, and commented that the program will hopefully free up space in the shelters, thus providing the opportunity for shelter staff to work with the chronic population. Heather inquired what would happen in the long-term, after the eighteen (18) months of the program conclude. Jon mentioned there have been many conversations regarding this issue. He stated that this is a problem that cities and towns are facing nation-wide and that we have to hope that this is an issue that the government is at least thinking about. Everyone expressed the desire to have Sheldon Wheeler from DHHS come to the next ESAC meeting. Donna stated that the underlying hope is that HPRP will be a catalyst for system change, doing things in a different way so that after-the-fact we can figure out how to use those finite resource in a different, more productive way. Doug mentioned that HPRP is providing eighteen (18) months of resources that didn’t exist before and that it is a great opportunity. Bob stated that the HPRP team is having a whole day of training regarding data collection on Wednesday, September 30th. They will be doing a lot of work with service point, and hopefully by mid-October everyone will be up and running.

Bob stated that MaineHousing is contracting security deposits through the City of Portland as a part of the state’s HPRP. MaineHousing is very clear that consumers must meet strict HUD HPRP criteria. Though the City has yet to learn the extent these regulations, consumers must meet HPRP eligibility requirements and must also be tracked in HMIS/Service Point. Bob added that the HPRP security deposit program is still in its infancy stage, currently without a contract. There will be education available once it is finalized to inform people of the process. Cindy stated that the money isn’t there yet. She mentioned that contracts should be out very soon. Overall there is \$270,000 available over a two-year period and that all shelters in Cumberland County can access the security deposit funds through the Portland HPRP.

V. ***TABOR (Taxpayer Bill of Rights) Presentation – Lizzy Reinholt***

Lizzie stated that TABOR implies a one-size fits all equation, which in turn stutters our ability for us to grow as a state and fund resources and vital services that we all rely on. She stated that the referendum comes at a bad time, because due to the economy people are looking for ways to save money, and may think that TABOR will aid them in this manner. Proponents of TABOR state that the measure lets the people decide. However, Lizzie stated that this election there could be a very large amount of referendums put out to voters and the details of TABOR could go overlooked. TABOR strips ability and local control at a lot of levels as it mandates a one-size fits all formula. If passed this would tie the hand of local officials to make decisions constituents desire. TABOR would base taxes on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the percent of population growth. CPI refers to the average grocery basket of products, such as milk, gas, and other items and necessities that are bought on a regular basis. Thus, this would have nothing to do what the City and State purchases, such as healthcare, road construction and other higher priced endeavors. Additionally, the population in Maine isn't growing significantly, and the population is aging which comes with additional costs, which TABOR doesn't take into account of.

Lizzie stated that Colorado is the only state every to pass TABOR. Colorado went from being ranked 35th in the country to investing schools to 49th after TABOR was imposed. Thus, it is harder for graduating kids in Colorado to get accepted into higher level colleges. Other disadvantages for instating TABOR in Colorado ensued: salaries plummeted to be the lowest in the country; Colorado invested the least in Public Health, had highest percentage of low-income, disadvantage kids not going to college, and had the highest rate of uninsured low-income children. Lizzie added that post-TABOR Colorado had so little money that schools stopped requiring vaccination for children in schools. Heather asked Lizzie how she predicted the referendum will play out in the end. Lizzie stated that the people have voted it down twice in the past; however there are tighter margins currently. Alongside, there are disadvantages this time around, as the country is in the middle of a recession and people want money in their pockets, not realizing TABOR could be devastating, cause fees to increase, and in the end it won't help the financial situation. Maine is a test state, trying to push it in more in 2012. A lot of money for the campaign for TABOR. Doug asked is there a sense how TABOR 2 plays with the excise tax referendum. Lizzie stated that when it comes to persuadable voters it is important to keep campaigns separate. In Maine people do not like taxes; however the two issues do not help each other. Doug asked if the constituency groups are the same for the two referendums. Lizzie stated that generally the constituencies are the same, but it's hard to gauge. There is a group that wants to vote yes on both, however there is not a strong group of people voting no on both measures. He asked how successful they have been getting non-profit agencies on board. Lizzie replied that they've been doing well with getting non-profits on board; Region 1, Statewide Homeless Council, and at least 60-70 non-profit organizations have endorsed their campaign against the measures. Additionally, Lizzie stated that there is information available on the website about TABOR, up-coming events, and ways to work together to educate constituents and consumers. Dee stated that she has fears because people are buying into the TABOR hype and that educating us is one thing, but people at the polls voting is another. Lizzie stated they're aware of this, as well as the fact that the issue with question 1 on the ballot will bring out many young voters, with many not know what TABOR and the excise tax reform mean. She stated that they have partnered with the League of Young Voters and organized call-nights. They have a very sophisticated call system, which is set to automatically dial numbers in Portland, Auburn and Bangor. Lizzie stated that this is how they're reaching out to voters that they may not reach on another level. In addition, they have flooded weekly newspapers, have weekly press conferences scheduled in hopes of raising the hype up against TABOR, and there are a series of four televised debates on the issue, which have yet to be scheduled. She added that board resolutions are available on their website www.maineandobetter.org to take to your board to have them take a stand against TABOR. Mark mentioned that Preble Street has taken a stand against the measures, and Dee stated that HVJ has as well. Jon proposed a motion for ESAC to take a stand against TABOR. Votes were taken and motion passed. Lizzie stated that she would forward the necessary documentation to Bob for ESAC.

VI. Other Business –

Bob mentioned that the CoC process will be starting in the very near future and that he will schedule a Priority Committee Meeting as well as a CoC meeting. Bob will send out information regarding these meeting in the coming week.

Doug mentioned that with the current high numbers there may be a need in the near future to have a conversation regarding emergency shelter overflow. Bob agreed and will schedule a meeting with shelter providers in the next one to two weeks to present back to ESAC.

Cullen mentioned that the Statewide Homeless Council is taking action by supporting SEVRA (the Section 8 Voucher Reform Act). Throughout the first six (6) months in 2009 the number of people served has increased by 8.5% (or 400 people), with bed nights increasing as well. Amidst a significant increase in homeless people in shelters the State is facing a freeze on Section 8, BRAP and RAC vouchers. It was mentioned that Westbrook Housing was at the Mainstream Resources presentation yesterday and stated that they are just now granting vouchers from people on the 2006 waitlist. Cullen stated that there will be 502 additional vouchers in Maine alone if SEVRA passes. A vote was called for ESAC to support the reform. With everyone in agreement the motion passed to send a letter supporting SEVRA.

Dee mentioned that the Center for Community WELLness participates with a community planning group that works very closely with the CDC around HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C prevention. She stated that they will be conducting surveys and asked everyone to hang flyers in order to stimulate participation.

Elizabeth mentioned that construction started at 2 Park Ave earlier this month. There is an apartment available to be used as a transition space during construction. She stated that she wanted to let everyone be aware of this so that if anyone is connected to any of the families living there, struggling with the conditions, they can contact Susannah, as they are trying to be as supportive of the families as possible.

VII. Homeless Outreach Event Update – Doug Gardner

ESAC members who are a part of the planning sub-committee stayed to participate in the Homeless Outreach Event planning meeting. Minutes were taken, and available upon request. Please contact Vickey Schroth at VLS@portlandmaine.gov to request of these minutes.

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, October 19th, 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.