

# ***Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee***

## ***Meeting Minutes December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009***

<b><i>Bob Duranleau</i></b>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<b><i>Doug Gardner</i></b>	City of Portland, Health & Human Service Department
<b><i>Cindy Namer</i></b>	MaineHousing
<b><i>Aaron Geyer</i></b>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division
<b><i>Josh O'Brien</i></b>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Div, Oxford Street Shelter for Men
<b><i>Jon Bradley</i></b>	Preble Street
<b><i>Ginny Dill</i></b>	Shalom House
<b><i>Jeff Tardif</i></b>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept, Social Services Div, Family Shelter
<b><i>Amy Regan</i></b>	Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice
<b><i>Amanda Wells</i></b>	Preble Street
<b><i>Donna Yellen</i></b>	Preble Street
<b><i>Kimberly Curry</i></b>	United Way
<b><i>Heather Treadwell</i></b>	Family Crisis Services
<b><i>Alex Thorn</i></b>	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Health Care for the Homeless
<b><i>Amy Grommes Pulaski</i></b>	City of Portland, Community Development
<b><i>Leah Bruns</i></b>	CCHPP, HPRP, PROP
<b><i>Linda Janson</i></b>	Step Up! Shelter Services
<b><i>Chris Bicknell</i></b>	Preble Street
<b><i>Tom Allan</i></b>	Milestone Foundation
<b><i>Megan Spencer</i></b>	MaineHousing
<b><i>Maureen Clancy</i></b>	Mercy Hospital
<b><i>Sarah Donlin</i></b>	Youth Alternatives Ingraham

### ***I. Introductions***

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

## II. *November Bed Usage Statistics – Bob Duranleau*

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for November 2009:

	<u>November 2008</u>	<u>November 2009</u>
Adolescents	10 Individuals	13 Individuals
Adults	213 Individuals	230 Individuals
Families	<u>76 Individuals (30 Families)</u>	<u>75 Individuals (30 Families)</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>299 Individuals</b>	<b>318 Individuals</b>

### Adolescent Shelter

The total adolescent bed nights for November 2008 were 303 while the total bed nights for November 2009 were 388. These figures indicate an increase of 85 bed nights, or 28% between November 2008 and November 2009. One (1) individual stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Chris stated that it is interesting to note that the Lighthouse Shelter usage is increasing over time, however the reports of first time homelessness is simultaneously dramatically dropping. He mentioned that this could indicate an increase in chronic homelessness among teens as opposed to first time homelessness, which is a very scary notion.

### Adult Shelters

Adult Shelter bed nights usage increased by 8% in November 2009 compared to November 2008. Total bed night usage during November 2008 was 6381 while it was 6902 during November 2009, a difference of 521 bed nights.

During the month of November, there were 111 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, 52 individuals stated they had never been homeless before in November.

Oxford Street Shelter for Men Support Services team placed 34 individuals into permanent housing, with five (5) individuals returning to the shelter within 90 days of housing placement.

Preble Street Women's Shelter served a total of 113 women during the month of November, including 33 new intakes. Based on self-reporting, 12 of these 26 intakes stated that they were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

The Shelter placed 9 individuals into housing, with 2 women returning.

### Family Shelters

There was a total of 2236 bed nights used for all Family Shelters in November 2009 as compared to 2265 bed nights in November 2008. This represents a decrease of 1% in Family Shelter bed usage between November 2008 and November 2009.

The Family Shelter placed 19 families for a total of 62 individuals into housing in November.

The Family Shelter received 31 new families (intakes) for a total of 108 individuals in November. Based on self-reporting 20 families for a total of 78 individuals stated they had never been homeless before in November, of these 12 families for a total of 46 individuals were refugees.

Bob stated that a new section covering First Time Homelessness has been added to the ESAC Monthly Shelter Stats, at the request of the group. This report indicates that individuals self-reporting first time

homelessness has been increasing over the past six (6) months. For the month of November 143 individuals, or 55% of all new intakes, reported experiencing homelessness for the first time. It was requested by the group that the Family Shelter's unduplicated clients be added to next month's ESAC stats.

Cindy stated that the HMIS report containing stats from January to September reporting on unduplicated elders (55 and older) in shelters is complete. The City of Portland Family Shelter had 5, Oxford Street Shelter for Men had 138, Milestone Foundation had 60, and the Preble Street Women's Shelter had 57 unduplicated elders in the time period reported on. After the first of the year Doug will get the final numbers out. Cindy stated that the mid-coast, Bath/Brunswick region had a very significant increase of elders in shelters.

### ***III. Homelessness Prevention & rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) Updates –***

Josh stated that December is the first month that HPRP staff has been able to deliver financial assistance through the MaineHousing sub-grant. In the past month seventeen (17) individuals and four (4) families have been housed by HPRP, accounting for over 2300 bed nights at Oxford Street alone. Josh stated that based on this, moving forward the impact should be very impressive. Since the program began, with the first screenings taking place at the Fall Homeless Outreach Housing Opportunities and Resources Fair on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 160 households have been screened for the program, 91 households have been enrolled, 48 of these have been enrolled as diversion and prevention, and 43 have been enrolled in the engagement and stabilization program. Since October 16<sup>th</sup>, 23 individuals and 12 families have been housed, representing over 3100 bed nights at Oxford Street alone. The process of granting financial assistance to individuals, as part of the engagement and stabilization program, has just started within the past ten (10) days. HPRP staff will begin granting security deposits to qualifying Cumberland County residents on January 4<sup>th</sup>. Josh added that people must still meet Portland HPRP qualifying requirements in order to be eligible for the security deposits. HPRP staff has been very open in offering screenings, with open hours every morning and evening. Josh mentioned that staff will be screening today and tomorrow and then taking a two (2) week break for taking new screenings in order to ensure accurate data entry for reporting. There is a lot of data that must be reported on accurately, thus staff will spend the next two short weeks working on data entry and accuracy to be ready to report to MaineHousing and HUD. Bob added that HUD has very clear reporting requirements; data requirements are very detailed and very challenging, but Bob stated HPRP staff is doing a great job. Leah reported on the Cumberland County HPRP and stated that PROP is in the same process with pulling together raw data. She stated that for the rest of this week staff will be entering more data, and will try another dry run on Monday. The next two weeks are crucial for completing all of the data requirements. Cindy reported on the State's HPRP program. She stated that all sub grantees and counties have their staff hired and in place; however some have just started work in the past few weeks. Cindy stated that MaineHousing is looking at data collection, getting the bugs out, and making changes where necessary. She stated that it is imperative to be vigilant in looking at data and getting it as close to perfect as possible for submission; then there is a ten (10) day window after submission where data can be adjusted before final submission to HUD. The most difficult aspect in data reporting is lining up clients and services with the money spent, as HUD requires that everything matches, thus we have to get it as close to perfect as we can to ensure we do not lose funds. Cindy commented that Portland's HPRP program already has 43 people enrolled in the stabilization and engagement program, mentioned that it is close to the projected maximum caseload, estimated at 60-80 people. Josh stated that they have done some reorganizing of staff in order to accomplish this. Staff has focused a certain element on diversion, and set the goal to work with the correct stabilization group, creating linkages for follow-up, which allows for a large team to work on engagement and stabilization. Josh stated that currently seven (7) staff members are handling the 43 person caseload, and that right now it's manageable. The question of what happens if sub-grantees do not spend enough money was asked, and whether or not it will be reallocated if this is the case.

Cindy commented that it is possible that other programs throughout the country will not spend the money, or spend the required 60% within the first two (2) years, and that this will be reallocated. She mentioned that this is another reason why precise data collection is imperative. If money is reallocated it is the hope that accurate and precise data collection will put us at the forefront for these reallocated funds. It was asked about reallocation of funds within the State if it is not spent. Cindy stated that it was built into all of the contracts that if money is not spent it can be reallocated. MaineHousing will be looking at money spent every quarter and reallocating money based upon how quickly it is spent.

#### **IV. *CDBG Consolidated Plan – Amy Pulaski***

Amy provided copies of the HUD Five Year Housing & Community Development Consolidated Plan (2010-2015). She stated that we have to report to HUD yearly, and then every five (5) years we report to HUD our goals for next five (5) years. This focuses on Homeless, Non-homeless Special Needs, Housing, Community Development, and Grant Management. The different Entitlement Funding sources are: CDBG (Community Development Block Grant), HOME (HOME Investment Partnership), LEAD (Lead Hazard Control Grant), ESG (Emergency Shelter Grants), and HPWA (Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS). This year there was the American Recovery and Re-Investment Act which provided stimulus money, HPRP (Homeless Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing) and CDBG-R (Community Development Block Grant- Recovery), which we'll also be reporting on; however, these stimulus packages may not be in our future projections for the next five (5) years as it's unknown what will happen at the end of these grant terms. Amy reviewed the past entitlement amounts for the past five (5) years for each of the aforementioned grants. Amy mentioned that for the past ten (10) years the City of Portland has received the HOME grant exclusively. However, this year the City of Portland will be partnered with Cumberland County, thus we will be looking at County housing needs as well at the City's. The two categories focused in the plan are: Homeless Categories, and Non-Homeless Special Needs Categories. Non-Homeless Special Needs addresses: frail elderly, elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental), persons living with HIV/AIDS, persons with addiction. Amy stated that she uses resources and reports available that address the needs for these populations. She mentioned that if anyone in the group had any additional resources that she would be like to include them as well. Cindy stated that MaineHousing's website has all of the data and reports in the Homeless section, including the report on Rural Homelessness, that addresses some of the barriers that people that live in more rural areas in Cumberland County experience. Bob added that there is a lot of information for areas outside of Portland in the first year's report for the Cumberland County CDBG Project. Jon added that there are reports on homeless women and a few reports on homeless youth that also might be helpful. Donna highlighted the importance of the persons with addictions in the homeless category. It was also stated that the Behavioral Health Report could be very helpful. Jon asked if approaching other providers that may not be in this meeting would be helpful, such as Serenity House. Also, that the new elderly statistics that Cindy reported on could be of good use. Cindy stated that after January 15<sup>th</sup> MaineHousing will have the full year of data regarding elder statistics in shelters. Doug mentioned that it would be helpful to separate the age groups into small sub-categories, as it would help to make a more clear distinction between "elderly" and "frail elderly." Cindy mentioned that they would report data based on 55-65, 66-75, and 75+ as the break down for elderly age groups. Amy went on to report on the funding allocated or spent for program years 2005-2006 to 2009/2010 in the Homeless, Non-Homeless Special Needs, and Housing categories. Funds used for Homeless services over the past five years were: ESG, CDBG, HOME and HPRP funds. Emergency Assistance originally referred to 774-HELP, a program first run by Ingraham, which then was taken over by the City of Portland in 2007 as the Emergency After-Hours GA Program. Cindy asked about the shelters category under CDBG. Amy stated that this was used for shelter staffing and the operational budget. Amy added that the CDBG Committee got together and reevaluated needs, and decided to set aside an additional 10% for basic needs. Amy stated that some of the feedback she would like to get is addressing the current needs and how we're currently spending the money,

whether there are other areas/issues that we should be focusing on. Cindy stated that from listening to Josh and how productive HPRP has been with stabilization in only two (2) months and reducing shelter bed nights, that it is essential to figure out how to keep the momentum and progress going two (2) to three (3) years from now to prevent people from walking in the door at the shelter to begin with, reducing first time homelessness. The group addressed Asylees as a group that isn't getting services through other areas because of their status. Bob added this group is growing in both Portland and Lewiston without services to aid them. Jeff stated that the Family Shelter is seeing a large increase in clients with B1/B2 visas (people who are not able to get asylum status so instead come into the country on a visiting VISA). He stated that people with B1/B2 Visas are not eligible for TANF, with their only really source of aid lying in General Assistance. Alex added that Healthcare for the Homeless has a large group of Secondary Migrant Refugee able-bodied singles, that don't qualify for MaineCare or for a lot of other programs, which extremely limits their options for aid. Donna mentioned that people in shelters also fall into the same category, without access or eligibility for State and Federal resources, only being able to access GA. She suggested possibly addressing this issue in general, regardless of refugee status. Jon added that a different population that would be good to explore is the homeless substance abusers and people with mental illnesses that are in the community, as there is definitely an urgent need to develop strategies to target these populations. Doug reiterated the need to address substance abuse, mental illness, and chronic homelessness in the plan as it effects a large population. He added that there is a lot of energy and need around this issue, which is also being expressed from other areas in the community, including the police department, hospitals, and shelters. Amy stated that she will review the comments and read more thoroughly through resources and come back for the January ESAC meeting to ask for further guidance and suggestions. Donna asked about the logistics of the Five Year Plan process. Amy stated that first she looks to the data and resources available, looking at the categories and the data, and then presents the data to the community. Part of the process is the public process, where she asks professionals and the public to evaluate where the needs and priorities are, which is why she came to ESAC to discuss the homeless category. After public comment, the plan is presented to the City councilors for approval; once approved the complete Five Year Plan must be submitted by May 15, 2010 to HUD. Amy stated that she is trying to get as much information in January as possible to leave more time for public comment. She mentioned that applications for this year's funding have been submitted and are being reviewed by the committee now, with the City Council making decisions in March.

**V. *Annual Homeless Point in Time Survey***

Bob mentioned that the annual Point in Time Survey is approaching. He thanked MaineHousing for making the process very easy. The Point in Time Survey will take place on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Bob stated he will email a draft survey to all the providers. He stated that the survey for sheltered individuals is completely electronic this year. Cindy added that every shelter this year is paperless because data quality has improved substantially. Bob stated that last year four (4) new questions were added regarding reasons for homelessness. However, very few people responded to these questions last year and there is a proposal to remove these questions this year. Bob asked the group if they wish to have these questions on the Point in Time survey this year. Amanda stated that they added this information to HMIS so the information is already available. Bob stated he will send an email to all of the participating shelters, and any comments can be sent to Scott Tibbitts directly. Bob mentioned that the training will be very brief this year, as the process is getting easier. There will be some paper component for the PIT, for the unsheltered portion. Oxford Street Shelter for Men and Preble Street staff agreed to conduct the unsheltered survey outreach team once again this year! Cindy mentioned that in time AHAR data will look at quarterly reports on this so that a better scope of unsheltered data is taken into perspective. She added that we got an award for superb AHAR data reporting.

**VI. Annual Homeless Persons Memorial Vigil – Donna Yellen**

Donna mentioned that the annual Homeless Persons Memorial Vigil is this coming Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. She stated that it is always a really nice event. A procession up Preble Street, which will be closed off by Police, to Monument Square will begin at 4:00 PM, followed by a gathering at Monument Square at 4:30 PM. Donna asked that if anyone has first names from people in the community who may not already be on the list to forward the information on to her for Monday.

**VII. Maine Housing Emergency Winter Response Plan – City of Portland**

Bob stated that the City received \$16,000 through Maine Housing's Emergency Winter Response Plan, for temporary hotel stays for times when shelters are full. The City of Portland will be administering the plan for participating shelters (Preble Street Women's Shelter, MAPS/Step Up! Shelter Services, Family Crisis Shelter, Family Shelter, Oxford Street Shelter for Men). He added that there is a meeting immediately following the ESAC meeting regarding the plan. Jeff added that they have created paperwork for the plan, however it is minimal. He stated that he has lined up one hotel willing to work with the City in this plan, and are also able to provide transportation for clients. Jeff mentioned that the hotel offered a great deal where we will be able to use the entire seven (7) days allowed without going over the \$500 cap, at \$59.95 per night plus tax. Jeff is waiting to hear back from another hotel, in order to have an alternative hotel to use.

**VIII. Other Business –**

Amy stated HVJ had a hugely successful press event last week, and thanked everyone for the forwarding of information related to the event. She stated that the event started out of a city council candidate forum at a shelter, when a councilor stated he couldn't do anything for clients at the shelter. Consumers were outraged and HVJ collected a large amount of letters from them speaking out against the councilor's remarks. HVJ selected 50 letters, gift-wrapped them and sent invitations to State Senators, Congressmen and women, the Governor, the State's HUD representative, as well as the President. Amy stated that the turnout was fantastic, and that everyone invited made an appearance, with the exception of Congressman Michaud and President Obama, and accepted the gift-wrapped letters. Individuals from each HVJ chapter in Maine spoke about the homeless experience in the different parts of Maine. Amy stated that Maine Public Radio had coverage of the event, and overall it was a success.

***NEXT MEETING:***

***Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 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.*