**MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL**

**January 10, 2023**

**9:30-12:30**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:** A complete list of attendees and the agencies they represent is attached.

**Minutes:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing) and Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing)

**Welcome:** Cullen Ryan, in the position of Co-Chair, opened today’s meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance and by introducing Shawn Yardley as the new Chair of the SHC, *Dave M. motioned to approve December’s minutes as written. Donna Y. seconded. December’s minutes were unanimously approved as written*. A moment of silence wasobserved in honor of those who have passed away while experiencing homelessness.

**System Updates:**

* **Opioid Response:** Gordon Smith attended today’s meeting to give an overview of Maine’s monthly overdose report. The Fatal overdoses this year to date (through December 16) where “undomiciled or transient” was indicated equaled 71 individuals, representing 11% of all the fatal overdoses. The largest number of ODs (59%) occurred in Cumberland and Penobscot Counties. 79% of the fatalities exhibited large doses of fentanyl in their systems. The need for supporting frontline worker’s efforts in harm reduction was discussed during which Meredith P. mentioned Amistad offers free trainings. Valuable resources are also available on https://knowyouroptions.me & <https://getmainenaloxone.org> . This month’s update ended with a reminder to look at the <https://mainedrugdata.org> site for additional information.
* **HUB Update:** Tara started today’s update by mentioning the current focuses for the Hub Coordinators has been the unsheltered portion of the Point In Time count and their continuing efforts with the by name data set. Hub Coordinators now have access to HMIS. Those involved coordinated Entry have been very busy with case conferencing and managing the HUB CES prioritized list. All hubs are also dialing in on potential access points for the roll out of Coordinated Entry in 2023. Hub Coordinator for Cumberland County has been hired and will start Jan 30. The State Strategy team meeting taking place on Tuesday 1/24. At the meeting progress and learnings of the first action cycle will be reviewed and the new 6 month milestones necessary to achieve the state’s long term aims will be determined.
* **CES Update:** Erin K. started today’s update with an overview of the pilot feedback. Comments were gathered through a Google survey that was sent out by Hub Coordinators to staff who participated in the pilot, in case conferencing meetings and the Region III Homeless Council meeting. Overall feedback was positive however the following themes occurred on these areas for growth:
  + Need for more housing resources in CE (HCVs, other vouchers, actual units, etc.)
  + System didn’t seem efficient all of the time – several comments about a breakdown in communication through the whole system
  + Request for adding more housing barriers to the assessment
  + A lack of service providers to work with participants post assessment, including for housing navigation
  + Concerns about participants with lower prioritization scores not getting connected with a CoC resource

The pilot will continue in Hubs 5 and 7. The committee will continue to work towards full implementation of state wide CES in 2023.

* **MCoC Board Update:**

1. Kate Easter has been elected to fill Norm Maze’s vacated chair.
2. Encampments and the need for warming centers continue to be growing concerns.
3. Using Call Point is being explored as an option for collecting Turn Away Data
4. The Board approved extending the CES pilot and Hubs 5 and 7.

**Council and Committee Updates:**

* **Regional Updates Region I-** The region’s main concerns are the closing of FEMA hotels and the difficulties navigating resources through GA. Next month the region plans to discuss CES implementation. Cheryl H. shared over 200 people attended the homeless vigil in December. HVJ will be presenting 2 hour sensitivity trainings for criminal justice cadets and are assisting with legislation that addresses food insecurity and decriminalizing homelessness.

**Region II**- The region has not meet since December’s SHC meeting

**Region III-** The region has not meet since December’s SHC meeting

* **Homeless Policy Committee Update:**

**Federal:** Attention was brought to two budget updates:

1. FY 23 Budget – On 12/23 Congress passed and the President signed a final FY 23 Omnibus spending package. Unfortunately, the final FY23 appropriations bill did not include important changes to the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, or the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.
2. FY 23 T-HUD Budget –Congressional leaders announced a final FY 23 omnibus spending bill that includes increased HUD funding. Per NLIHC, the final spending bill provides HUD programs with $61.8 billion, or $8.1 billion more than FY22-enacted levels.

**State:** During an overview of The Maine Homeless Policy Committee Priorities and Strategies for the 131st Legislature, Cullen detailed LD1, LD2 and LD3. A document tracking the status of pertinent bills and a document of Key Committees of Appropriations and Financial Affairs (AFA), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Housing was sent to all council attendees and was posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

* **PWLE:** The committee is creating a service map of resources and are troubled with the lack of warming centers. The committee’s meeting log in information and monthly agenda will be posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

**Housing Updates:**

* **Greg Payne Governor’s Senior Advisor on Housing Policy:** Greg Payne provided an update on how the Governor’s office is responding to the emergency housing needs in Maine. To address the immediate need for warming centers during the winter months and to create long term solutions, Governor Mills and the Maine State Legislature have provided funding to MaineHousing, to address the crisis of unsheltered homelessness in Maine. Two RFPs will be issued:

1. [2023 NOFA for Long-Term Solutions to Assist People Experiencing Homelessness](https://www.mainehousing.org/rfps)
2. [2023 NOFA for Winter Overnight Warming Shelters](https://www.mainehousing.org/rfps)

* **MSHA**

Lauren announced the two RFPs mentioned during Greg Payne’s update will be posted on the MaineHousing website and sent to all contacts on the SHC mailing list on Friday, January 13, 2023. Additionally, an R[FP For Rapid Resolution/Housing Problem Solving Training Consultant](https://www.mainehousing.org/rfps)s will be posted next week on the MaineHousing website, inviting qualified individuals and entities to submit proposals to provide training services in the area of Rapid Resolution and Housing Problem Solving to approximately 200-250 staff from homeless service agencies across Maine’s nine Homeless Service Hubs.

**Service Updates:**

* **Amelia Lyons McKinney Vento Liaison**

Amelia Lyons explained The McKinney-Vento program is not a program only for students who qualify for free lunch. It is an essential backbone to our schools and communities that says any of us can come across hard times, and our schools will be there to support our children if and when that happens. The act defines homelessness as lacking a fixed regular, and adequate**,** nighttime residence. The services available are free meals, transportation to school of origin, immediate enrollment without required documents, school supplies, clothing, hygiene items, access to showers, laundry and referrals for health, mental health, housing and other needs. The slide deck from today’s presentation will be mailed to everyone on the SHC mailing list.

**Strategic Discussion:** The meeting ended with the following comments/concerns being voiced during a strategic conversation on inflow and outflow:

* The system is full and overflowing due to an increase in inflow and a stoppage of outflow
* More low barrier shelters are needed, too many people are turned away who are not sober
* Collaboration is needed with Hub Coordinators, SHC and Regional Meetings to streamline and connect resources and prevent entities working in silos.
* Safety for staff and residents needs to be prioritized.
* People with Lived Experience should be at the center of strategic conversations
* A research and data committee should be formed
* Long time solutions are needed, frontline staff having the conundrum of passing out tents and turning people away is not a solution

**The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023.**