

MEETING MINUTES
SOUTHERN NEVADA REGIONAL PLANNING COALITION
COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS
July 12, 2012

In attendance:

Barbara Geach, Chair, City of Henderson
Tim Burch, Clark County
Stephen Harsin, City of Las Vegas
Kathy Somers, City of North Las Vegas
Annie Wilson, alternate, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Gina Gavin, Nevada Homeless Alliance
Paula Zier, Clark County School District

Absent:

Jodie Gerson, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services
Gordon Absher, MGM Resorts International
Mark Smasal, Veterans Administration
Unknown Representative, City of Boulder City

Agenda Item 1. Call to order, notice of agenda compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law.

The meeting of the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition Committee on Homelessness was called to order by Barbara Geach, Chair, City of Henderson, at 2:03 pm on Thursday, July 12, 2012, in the Clark County Commission Chambers, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89155. The agenda for the July 12, 2012, meeting was duly posted in compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law requirements.

Agenda Item 2. Public Comment.

No public comment at this time.

Agenda Item 3. Approval of the Agenda for June 14, 2012; for possible action.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda for the July 12, 2012, meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item 4. Approval of the Minutes from the May 10, 2012, meeting; for possible action.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item 5: Receive an update from the Regional Initiatives Office; for possible action.

Tyrone Thompson, Regional Initiatives Coordinator, provided the update. Mr. Thompson stated that the Cooling Stations were opened this week due to excessive heat warnings. Temperatures over 111 degrees for the week were considered to be extreme heat conditions. The three Cooling Stations that are open throughout the summer are Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, and The Shade Tree. Mr. Thompson stated that neighborhood Cooling Stations need to be publicized more in the future in order to maximize the utilization. Neighborhood Cooling Stations are open in community centers and faith-based organizations. He commended the O.U.T.R.E.A.C.H. team on getting the word out to the homeless individuals on the street.

Mr. Thompson mentioned that he is in the midst of solidifying faith-based organizations commitment to opening the Compassion Stations. He also stated that many faith-based organizations have regular feeding days, so Mr. Thompson is working closely with the interested organizations to coordinate their feeding times with the opening of the Compassion Stations, if they choose to do so. Compassion Stations offer water and snacks to the public. If anyone is interested in opening a Compassion Station within their organization, contact Tyrone Thompson at 702-455- 5626 or email tyt@clarkcountynv.gov. He also stated that flash flood warnings were in effect for July 12 and 13, 2012. O.U.T.R.E.A.C.H. team has been going into the tunnels to inform the homeless individuals of the flash flood warnings. Services were offered to get individuals into temporary shelter.

Mr. Thompson stated that Mainstream Programs Basic Training is held every fourth Wednesday of the month at the Clark County Government Center in the Organizational Developmental Center, room 3, from 1pm-5pm. These training programs are offered to the community, mainly to the professional and grassroots case managers, faith-based organizations and the general public where they can learn about the community resources. The next training is offered on July 25, 2012. Topic of the month is Senior Services and Healthcare Services.

Agenda Item 6: Receive an update on the Committee on Homelessness strategic plan; for possible action.

Tyrone Thompson gave the update on the Committee on Homelessness strategic planning goals and activities progress report for July. Ten key goals were established from the strategic planning session from December, 2011. Most of the milestones are being met at a steady pace. Mr. Thompson stated that the next milestone will take place in August when the bylaws will be ratified by the Technical Working Group in conjunction with the Committee on Homelessness. Next week is the National Alliance to End Homelessness conference in Washington, DC. A few delegates from Nevada will be attending the conference in hopes of aligning our efforts with the Federal Plan to End Homelessness. Mr. Thompson stated that they will be meeting with all of the representatives, Congress and the Senate to inform the elected officials of the on going projects and the challenges in our community, as well as the resources that are needed to move forward. Mr. Thompson thanked the Nevada Captain, Michele Fuller-Hallauer for coordinating the trip. The fourth goal on the strategic plan is to conduct a gaps analysis. CoH members will receive a report on the progress of the gaps analysis as early as August, 2012. He stated that the public awareness needs to improve in hopes of informing the public of what is going on in the community and the ways in which the public can take part. Mr. Thompson stated that they are working closely with experts in the community with outreach PR, such as the Moonridge Group and technical assistance advisors, HomeBase. A meeting with the PR experts will take place to strategize the best action plan for public awareness and fund raising.

Mr. Thompson stated that goals nine and ten are ongoing steps in the strategic plan. Performance Measurement Working Group has been doing great work as a result of the technical assistance from HomeBase. He said they are continuing to working with the CDBG, HOPWA and home fund partners to dissect and closely analyze the Emergency Solutions Grant. Mr. Thompson mentioned many of the milestones have already been met and the strategic plan is progressing at a steady pace.

Tim Burch requested the delegation going to Washington, DC to reintroduce a letter that was signed to Secretary Donovan more than a year ago to reconsider the funding formula that drives funds to the community. Mr. Thompson stated that the funding formula is very sophisticated; however there is a very large funding gap.

Agenda Item 7: Receive an update on the community action plan and technical assistance for HEARTH Act implementation from HomeBase; for possible action.

Cynthia Nagendra and Danielle Wildkress gave the update. Ms. Nagendra gave history behind HomeBase. She stated that HomeBase is a public policy firm whose focus is ending homelessness. They are based in San Francisco, California. HomeBase is the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded technical assistance firm appointed to Southern Nevada. Ms. Nagendra stated that she and Ms. Wildkress will give an update on HEARTH and Performance Measurement. HomeBase has been working very closely with the community for well over a year, providing CoC Check-up and technical assistance on the key components like performance measurement to prepare for the implementation of the HEARTH Act. The community is setting implementation and performance measurement goals, especially with Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HomeBase will be working with community partners to do system mapping.

Ms. Nagendra stated that the CoC regulations may be coming out within the next two weeks and HomeBase will be back in November to give training on the CoC regulations. She stated that the final definition on homeless was released in January, 2012. TA was provided to the HUD and non-HUD funded providers on all of the parts of the homeless definition. She stated that they expect the HMIS regulations to be coming out in a month. HUD TA will not be provided during the blackout period when the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is released by HUD. Ms. Nagendra stated that it is a competitive process and they cannot provide TA as it may be misconstrued as advantaging the community.

Ms. Wildkress stated that they have been working with the performance measurement work group to develop a plan around HMIS to move towards a data driven system. HomeBase has conceptualized data into three components: coverage, quality, and depth. The work group created a work plan on how to address each component of the data. Outreach coverage plan was set up to focus and capture everyone who touches someone that is experience homeless, specifically the Emergency Shelters (ES) , Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Safe Haven and other agencies as well. Quality refers to whether or not the data being inputted into the system matches reality. The Clarity system that is currently in place in the community eliminates the issue of missing data. However, the system does not eliminate issues surrounding fact-based reporting of the data by case managers. Ms. Wildkress stated that quality data reporting will require training at the staff and program director level. Homeless definition training that took place in July, 2012 is a step towards quality data reporting. HomeBase will continue to address the quality data component in future trainings.

The depth of data refers to the collection of relevant data elements that can be used to extract reports on the performance metrics that are set. Ms. Wildkress stated that a large gap was identified in the Emergency Shelters, where they have not been collecting the depth of data. The work group formulated a goal that 50 percent of the ES will be collecting the full program specific data elements within HMIS and by July 2013 100 percent ES will be on board. Ms. Wildkress stated that it is important to note that ES serves as the first point of contact for a homeless individual with the homeless system. Keeping records of such data is part of a systems change, where emergency shelter is a gateway for people to be rapidly rehoused that HEARTH requires focus on that part of the system.

Ms. Wildkress mentioned that Bitfocus developed a HMIS track sheet to identify the agencies that are currently using the system, those that need to use it in the future, and the quality of data collection by each agency. The track sheet will be distributed to the Technical Working Group, Evaluation Working Group, and the Agency Directors meeting on a monthly basis.

HomeBase is also working on scoring tools for the Continuum of Care (CoC) process. Performance measurements have been set to use the scoring tool is being used in funding decisions. The scoring tool rewards high performers, those that serve hard to serve resistant populations, and those that spend all of the money that is allotted to them by HUD.

Ms. Wildkress stated that HomeBase is also working with the Evaluation Working Group (EWG) to develop a tool that aids in implementation and performance measurements to think strategically about the new CoC projects.

HomeBase recommends that the EWG set a threshold for projects, where under performing projects will be put on the table of partial or whole reallocation of their money to other projects. She mentioned that communities that use the reallocation process get better outcomes from the local projects.

HomeBase will also be helping the community develop an audit tool, especially with the United Funding Agency (UFA). HEARTH is about professionalizing the way homelessness is addressed and this is the focus of HomeBase's work.

Ms. Wildkress requested feedback on the performance of HomeBase in the Southern Nevada Community.

She commended Michele Fuller-Hallauer, Tyrone Thompson, EWG, and HMIS members for their contribution.

Agenda Item 8. Receive a presentation from St. Jude's Ranch on the Crossings Project; for possible action.

Christina Vela, Regional Director of St. Jude's Ranch for Children, gave the presentation. St. Jude's Ranch for Children has been providing quality services to children, youth and families in Southern Nevada for over 40 years. They continue to be committed to providing a continuum of services to those most in need of the community. The Crossings is a supportive housing program in Las Vegas, an expansion from Boulder City.

Ms. Vela thanked the partners that made the project possible, including U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition, Continuum of Care, Clark County and the Committee on Homelessness. She stated that they have been working within the priorities of the Help Hope Home plan to end homelessness in Southern Nevada.

The developer was Building Hope Nevada and the construction was completed May 2012.

Ms. Vela stated that the Crossings serves 18-25 year olds who are homeless, young people in need of supportive housing who are willing to receive intensive case management, achieve self-sufficiency, to work towards their goals, and who understand that Crossings will support their efforts.

Overall goals of the program for the residents is to achieve residential stability, increase their skill level and income, obtain greater sense of self-determination, graduate the program and exit to permanent housing within the community.

Ms. Vela stated that the physical space for the Crossings program has 15 efficiency (studio style) apartments (one person per unit). The expected stay is from 9-13 months with maximum stay of 24 months. The community clubhouse is created to encourage and foster health relationships and a sense of community with the residents.

She stated that each resident will enter into a case management agreement that will include an individualized self-sufficiency plan created to focus on independent skill development. The Crossings will partner with many community services to meet the needs of the residents.

Ms. Vela gave further information on the program. Residents will be required to sign a lease, pay rent (if/when they have income), create a monthly budget, demonstrate that they are being productive in the community to include obtaining employment and furthering their education, participate in life skills training, and follow program expectations and guidelines. The rent will be placed in an account called Success Back Program. The residents will receive 100 percent of their rent upon exiting the program to assist them to transition back into the community. The Success Back Program was created to teach the residents health budget managing skills.

Ms. Vela stated that the Crossings began accepting referrals July 2, 2012 from community partners. Over 30 interviews have been conducted to fill 15 beds. To date, they have 5 residents living at Crossing; 3 males and 2 females.

Intended program outcomes for young adults are increased access to safe secure housing, improved health and wellness of residents due to case management and being linked to services within the community, improved access to educational services and remedial support to earn a degree or vocational skills, improved independent living skills that will better enable clients to become self-sufficient, improved job skills (getting a job and keep a job) and readiness due to increased access to training and supports, increased income and earnings, increased successful transitions to permanent, stable housing, increased ability to advocate for themselves and access mainstream services, increased confidence and problem solving skills.

Ms. Veal stated that Crossings is always accepting donations to include personal hygiene, house wares, gently used clothing and dry foods, they are always in need of volunteers, and support from community programs that will assist their residents with jobs, skills and meeting their overall needs.

Juanita Johnson is the case manager. For intakes, contact Ms. Johnson at 702-375-6624 or via email at jjohnson@stjudesranch.org. Christina Vela, the Regional Program director can be reached at 702-294-7010 or at cvela@stjudesranch.org.

Barbara Geach congratulated St. Jude's on the program.

Tim Burch asked for the approximate intake process timeframe.

Ms. Vela responded saying that the intake process can be as quick as a day.

Ms. Geach stated she was very pleased with of the Crossings opening. She also said that the environment that was created felt very comfortable and relaxed. She asked Ms. Vela to speak about the house warming gift that each resident is given.

Ms. Vela stated that each resident is given a started kit that includes basic necessities like towels, cookware, cookbook, daily planner and much more. Ms. Vela said they conducted a focus group at the detention center to get input from the young men residing there. The space at Crossings was intentionally created to reflect the interests of young adults that fosters a dignified place to live.

Item 9. Receive an update from the Nevada Homeless Alliance and a presentation from Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth; for possible action.

Stacy Sutton from the Nevada Homeless Alliance gave the update. Project Homeless Connect has been scheduled for December 6th at Cashman Center. Volunteer registration will be opened in August, 2012 in partnership with United Way of Southern Nevada. Registration will be available at www.volunteercentersn.org. July Provider meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2012 from 8:30 am- 9:30 am at the Center, 953 East Sahara # B-31. All providers and individuals interested in assisting in homeless efforts are welcome to attend.

Arash Ghafoori, Executive Director of Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY) gave the presentation. He spoke about the overview of the organization and its purpose. NPHY is a homeless service provide that offers a full continuum of services developed exclusively for homeless teenagers. NPHY offers six distinct programs for homeless youth; these six programs' services are grouped into the following categories: Outreach and Advocacy, Safe Place and Mobile Crisis Intervention, Family Reunification Services, Short-term Immediate Intervention, Long-term Housing and Supportive Services, and After-Care Services for Youth Transitioning to Self-Sufficiency.

Mr. Ghafoori stated that NPHY conducts aggressive outreach to prevent youth homelessness, provide life sustaining information to youth living on the streets, educate the public about teen homelessness and advocate on behalf of homeless youth at the local and state levels. Mr. Ghafoori mentioned that NPHY outreach team provided life sustaining information to 1,351 youth on the streets of Southern Nevada and over 24,000 informational cards were passed out to youth at schools at community events. Outreach can

be broken down into preventative, intervention, advocacy and educational outreach. Preventative outreach refers to outreach members going into schools to provide information on the services available to the youth. Intervention outreach refers to reaching out to the youth on streets to provide them with life sustaining supplies and share information on services available to them.

Mr. Ghafoori spoke about their Safe Place and Mobile Crisis Intervention programs that serve as an entry point to NPHY and other agencies programs. Services are available around the clock to any youth in crisis at more than a hundred locations within the Southern Nevada through partnership with Terrible Herbst gas stations and RTC buses. Youth can be picked up and routed to the best fit services. In 2011, crisis intervention services were provided to 207 youth.

Upon intake, family reunification program, Operation Go Home attempts to reunify youth with their families. In the last fiscal year, NPHY paid for bus or plane tickets for 15 youth in order to reunite them with responsible supportive relatives.

The William Fry Drop-In Center provides immediate needs assistance, respite care and supportive services to homeless youth, while serving as a gateway for NPHY and other service providers programs in the community. In 2010-2011, NPHY was able to provide immediate needs, respite care and supportive services to 318 unduplicated youth over the course of 5040 visits in order to meet both their basic needs, as well as to provide transition out of homelessness.

NPHY offers an offsite Emergency Shelter. 65 youth utilized the ES in 2010-2011 fiscal year.

The Independent Living Program (ILP) is a 16 bed transitional living program for homeless youth that provides housing and wrap around services in a safe, secure and independent environment to reach self-sufficiency. The youth are provided six months of after care services upon exit from the program. In the last fiscal year, NPHY provided 6187 beds nights to 33 youth through the ILP.

Mr. Ghafoori briefly spoke about the program overview and improvements. He stated that the Drop-In Center has seen a 31 percent increase in the number of intakes in the fourth quarter (77 new clients) in comparison to the third quarter (59 clients).

NPHY was able to lower the cost per client for the ILP. The program has been full or near full for the last six months with clients exiting successfully to permanent living environments. Currently in the process of applying for federal money in conjunction with the County and local providers to expand the ILP beds from 16 to 20. NPHY offers sliding scale rental assistance to youth living in independent housing as part of their aftercare services. NPHY is in the process of securing a vocational case manager and to launch a curriculum-based life skills program as it relates to educational and employment opportunities.

Emergency Shelter is a four bed facility that is open all the time and also allows for coverage any time the Drop-In Center is closed. In conjunction with another service provider, NPHY applied for a grant that focus exclusively on case management for youth while they are in emergency shelter.

NPHY was recently acquired an AmeriCorps VISTA that will be working to expand outreach efforts working at the Village of Hope. NPHY is working with Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to create a collaborative information sheet.

Mr. Ghafoori stated that recent organizational improvements have taken place at NPHY. They overhauled the standard operating procedures to improve communications, transparency, appropriate oversight, and checks and balances on all levels, switched the auditors to ensure effective and balanced outside review of financials, instituted policies and procedures to ensure judiciousness and transparency with every donated dollar and improved data collection for all programs. NPHY is achieving more efficient expenditures per client. Organizational budget was trimmed by 16 percent without eliminated any services while meeting the needs of higher volumes of clients.

Mr. Ghafoori stated that NPHY is positioning to be effective homeless youth services provider in Southern Nevada for many years to come.

Mr. Ghafoori can be reached at 702-883-8585 or arash@nphy.org. More information is available on www.nphy.org

A youth that is transitioned out of ILP gave a testimonial. The video was presented to the committee. Stephen Harsin asked about the age range of the youth that NPHY serves and on average, how many youth access the services offered through NPHY.

Mr. Ghafoori stated NPHY serves youth ages 12-19 but will serve youth up to 21. NPHY will partner with St. Jude's Crossings. He continued saying that the number vary depending on the program.

Barbara Geach asked what attributed to the increase in the number of intakes.

Mr. Ghafoori stated it is due to the heavy outreach and collaborative efforts with the community.

Kathy Somers asked if NPHY enters data into HMIS and how long can an individual be in the ILP.

Mr. Ghafoori stated that NPHY does enter data in to HMIS and they are working closely to improve the quality of the data being inputted. Youth can stay up to 2 years or less in the ILP.

Ms. Geach asked if a youth that exited a program successfully can reenter the program at a later time, and what is the average length of stay of the clients.

Mr. Ghafoori said it depends on the program, the funding stream, and the circumstances. Youth are able to access other programs such as the Drop-In Center and receive respite care at anytime. Mr. Ghafoori did not have the exact length of stay. He offered to provide that information via email.

Agenda Item 10. Receive an update from each committee member regarding relevant activities within their respective organizations relating to homelessness—the SNRPC Committee on Homelessness members may speak on any item under this section of the agenda. Members may comment on matters including, without limitation, future agenda items, upcoming meeting dates, and meeting procedures. Comments made cannot be acted upon or discussed at this meeting, but may be placed on a future agenda for consideration by the SNRPC Committee on Homelessness.

No updates were given by the committee members.

Agenda Item 13: Public Comment

Phillip Hollon, Catholic Charities (CC), stated that they have been serving 160-170 clients on any given day at the summer day shelter. He commended the Regional Initiatives Office and local county offices on communicating to coordinate supplies for those clients. CC is looking for toiletry items such as shampoo, soap, deodorant, and toothpaste. Over 400 items are passed out to the clients that utilize the both the summer day and night shelter. Mr. Hollon will be attending the National Alliance to End Homelessness conference in Washington, DC. He commended Michele Fuller-Hallauer for working coordinating the trip. Mr. Hollon thanked the Regional Initiatives Office, HomeBase, and Rob Herdzick for their efforts to drive the community into a data driven system. He stated that CC currently has 100 percent data quality. Catholic Charities will be sponsoring Back to School Fair for children ages 5 to 18 for kindergarten to 12th grade. Event will take place on August 18, 2012 from 9am-11am. Interested households must register at Catholic Charities.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:18 pm.