

Notes for Southern Mountains Homeless Coalition online/Zoom meeting  
Region 2 in the N.C. Balance of State (BoS) Continuum of Care (CoC) for Homeless  
**December 2, 2021, 9:30 AM** Kristen Martin at Thrive hosting

**Persons on the call:** Regional co-leads: Kristen Martin, Emily Lowery.

Kristen Martin, Tracey Gruver, Rachelle Dugan and Nickie Kilgore (Thrive); Emily Lowery (The Haven of Transylvania County); Suzanne Misur-Porter (United Way of Rutherford County); Makala Perez, Danita Simpson, Trisha Ecklund and Kennett Melgar (Blue Ridge Health); Jennifer Drum (NC Works, Rutherford-Polk); Howard Anderson (Charles George VA outreach); Catherine Beaver (Henderson Dept. of Social Services); Alyce Knaflich (Aura Homes); Brenda Ploss (NC Works Veterans Careers); Sarah Lancaster (Vaya Health); Chris Berg; Tiffany Mcswain; Beth Branagan (Transylvania County Schools); Trina Rushing (Henderson Library); Sarah Kowalak (Henderson United Way); Micky Robinson (Isaac Homes); Jessica Ownbey and Matt Gruebmeier (Henderson Schools); Gabrielle Kalis (Safelight); Robert Caldwell (Child Development & Early Education). *See also the **appended Chat**.*

**Kristen Martin** facilitated. Please see the agenda for a ground rules statement.

**Minutes** of November 4 online meeting were approved by common consent.

**Regional leadership positions for 2022: Nominations and voting.**

Here are the roles to consider and the currently named officers:

**Regional lead:** This involves attending monthly Steering Committee online meetings (~1.5 hour), and disseminating information from Balance of State (**1 hour/month est.**). Kristen Martin.

**Regional alternate,** Emily Lowery (with Kristen and Emily serving as co-leads).

**Coordinated Entry** lead, Kristen Martin.

**Secretary,** Chris Berg, with web assistance from Thrive.

**Project Review:** This involves scoring of grant applications from other regions in BoS. There are two cycles, ESG and Continuum of Care. The work is likely in late summer and fall. Alyce Knaflich (incoming) lead. Sarah Kowalak and Jessica Ownbey offered to assist Alyce, as there may be ten or more applications to score.

**Racial Equity** lead, Kennett Melgar.

**Emergency Solutions Grant** funding lead. This involves ranking projects in our Region. Suzanne Porter.

**CYHAC** (Children and Youth Homeless Assistance Coalition), Beth Branagan, Matt Gruebmeier and Michael Absher.

Kristen moved approval of these nominees, Alyce Knaflich second. Approved without objections.

We follow the BoS rule limiting agencies to having employees serve in two lead roles, at most. Trisha Ecklund will understudy the Regional Lead and Alternate Lead, per Chat.

**Back@Home Outreach:** Trisha Ecklund said work continues to streamline handling of cases in the counties with less homeless-support presence. There has been work with housing voucher provision, case conferencing, vaccination clinics, volunteer days in Rutherford and Polk counties to prep for a PIT count, and adjusting front desk work to support the Coordinated Entry system.

A Link to a form was posted in Chat, for use by agencies that do not do intakes to Coordinated Entry but can use it refer an individual/family/case to CE. Trisha asked that she receive these referrals at Blue Ridge Health.

Beth Branagan will put this form process on the agenda for the next CYHAC meeting, as useful for schools to reach out to parents (perhaps using SRO staff).

**Resource Fair:** Kristen noted that the restructuring of Point-In-Time outreach to a yearlong process, eliminated the occasion for an annual Resource Fair outreach to homeless people. Henderson and Transylvania have both offered such events, and it's possible Rutherford as well (though Suzanne is not here to confirm). Polk is not known to have ever done a Fair or similar outreach event. We talked about a shift from midwinter events to spring, so that arrangements could be made to get families linked to summer resources such as camps or youth programs. One similar "Party in the Park" at Mills River Park was mentioned, including its support by a Methodist church.

We discussed organizing Fairs county-by-county, with dates spaced to allow agencies to staff county fairs in a rotation. Emily Lowery and Beth Branagan will look at organizing a **Transylvania** fair committee. Sarah Kowalak thinks UW staff will be available to help in **Henderson**, with help also from Catherine Beaver at DSS, Trina Rushing, Matt Gruebmeier and Alyce. Kennet Melgar and Suzanne will look at **Rutherford**. Matt Gruebmeier will reach out to contacts in **Polk**. Thrive will track these efforts. We'll look for a report next month, please send your ideas (maybe gift cards for families?) on to these organizers.

**Back@Home Thrive Updates:** Rachele Dugan [who had to step away] is pursuing landlords, including using incentives to willing unit providers, and has encountered both extremes, from fabulous partners to abusive or exploitative people. Kristen recounted a lease with a clause making the tenant responsible for plumbing problems, which led to a \$2000 plus water bill due to leaks under the dwelling, so pretty clearly an entrapment situation. Fortunately the city was willing to compromise on the bill in this case. Sarah Lancaster asked if the Better Business Bureau was notified, but Kristen said that accountability will have to wait on getting the supported tenant successfully relocated and safe from retaliation.

**Racial Equity:** Kennett had no update as he was unable to attend that meeting.

**CYHAC:** Beth said they met this past month. The next meeting is January 21<sup>st</sup>, at 9 AM via Zoom. Trisha and Matt will talk about the resources available using the Coordinated Entry form mentioned above.

**Coordinated Entry (CE):** Rachele continues to call all on our list (as far as possible). Some listed people have been able to find housing solutions, which diverts them from the list, and we're pleased and grateful for that. Kristen went over a fine-tuning CE feature, 'dynamic prioritization', which means that if two clients have similar need scores, but one client is able to resolve issues/ act promptly/be proactive, then that client gets served (housed) earlier. This feature was approved by NCCEH about a year ago.

#### **Veterans:**

Alyce said Aura Homes had served 27 women vets in various ways this year. It's not this region, but she's concerned at hearing Transformation Village has issues, so that rather than serving 100 they may be limited to 50. Aura is seeking American Rescue Plan funds to purchase a 4-bedrm 4-bath dwelling close to the VA in Buncombe. They are also making progress on their Hendersonville site. She plans to get us information on a capital campaign in January or February.

Chariden Lewis had no recent contact with Transformation Village staff, but will try to follow up. She is pleased that the SSVF (Support Services for Veteran Families) shallow-subsidy program is now boosted to 50% support for rents, and is up and running. Her case experience makes her optimistic that 'graduates' will get opportunities for better living conditions.

Howard Anderson is filling in for Adam Jahnke, who has left the VA. Howard is a VA outreach social worker with programs for mental health, SSVF, VASH vouchers, and is liaison to Grant-Per-Diem emergency shelter providers.

Jennifer Drum is active in veteran employment placement in seven counties, including Rutherford and Polk. She will try to help any vet in the area related to employment/training. [Note also Brenda Ploss' Chat comments.]

**Lived Experience Advisory Council:** Alyce reported on this new Balance of State body. Members are sought with 'all levels' of experienced homelessness. (Rachelle serves on this body). There will be a meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30; Laurel at NCCEH will send out invitations. This is a state initiative – Alyce asked that it be added to the Regional agenda in January.

**Grandparents who raise kids Listening Session:** Beth Branagan will send Kristen email info to forward. Jamie Gilmore is organizing sessions to learn from unconventional kid care givers, including one tonight in Brevard, at Bethel A Baptist church at 5:45. The sessions will offer meals to attenders, with child care and transportation, and a number of \$25 gift cards. More sessions in Henderson are scheduled, including Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> at the Family Resource Center, and Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> at the Hendersonville YMCA. More information: email Jamie, [jamie@creatingafamily.org](mailto:jamie@creatingafamily.org), 828-862-8200.

**The next regional Coalition meeting will be Thursday, January 6, at 9:30 AM, via Zoom.**

- With respect, Chris Berg

## Chat messages:

09:31:17 From Makala to Everyone: Makala Perez and Danita Simpson, BRH

09:31:27 From Chariden Lewis to Everyone: Chariden Lewis, ABCCM Veterans Services of the Carolinas

09:31:30 From Jessica Ownbey to Everyone: Jessica Ownbey, HCPS

09:31:32 From Matt Gruebmeier to Everyone: Matt Gruebmeier, HCPS

09:31:34 From Tracey Gruver to Everyone: Tracey Gruver, Thrive

09:31:43 From Howard Anderson to Everyone: Howard Anderson, Homeless Outreach SW at the Asheville VA Medical Center.

09:31:46 From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: United way, Sarah Kowalak

09:31:47 From Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com to Everyone: Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com Veterans Career Advisor covering Henderson and Transylvania Counties in our Region. Coverage in Buncombe and Madison Counties also. I assist veterans, their spouses and caregivers mitigate barriers to employment and training + connect them to veteran community and resources.

09:31:55 From Jennifer Drum to Everyone: Jennifer Drum-serving veterans in Rutherford/Polk counties looking for employment

09:32:36 From Gabrielle Kalis, she/her/hers to Everyone: Gabrielle Kalis, Safelight

09:33:46 From Micky Robinson to Everyone: Micky Robinson, Isaac Homes Youth Shelter

09:34:28 From Alyce to Everyone: Alyce 😊 Knaflich Aura Home Women Vets 828-771-6979  
aurahome.alyce@gmail.com

09:35:16 From Robert Caldwell to Everyone: Robert Caldwell - Division of Child Development and Early Education

09:36:03 From Alyce to Everyone: Project Review-Alyce

09:38:14 From bbranaga to Everyone: Beth Branagan, Transylvania County Schools

09:39:48 From Jessica Ownbey to Everyone: I would be willing to participate in a 3-person team.

09:47:20 From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: I can do the understudy

09:48:08 From bbranaga to Everyone: Michael is fine with Matt joining us as a 3 person team.

09:50:54 From Makala to Everyone: i

09:55:15 From Matt Gruebmeier to Everyone: Can we post the form here, too?

09:55:29 From Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com to Everyone:

FYI: CAREER WORKSHOPS THAT GET RESULTS

NCWorks Career Center offers the following job search workshops to assist with career guidance & development (hybrid: in person in Asheville or online).

DECEMBER 2021

12/7 Tue 2:00 Interviewing for Success

12/14 Tue 10:00 Write a Winning Resume – Part 1 and 12/15 Wed 10:00 Write a Winning Resume – Part 2

For more info. or to sign up for a workshop:

Call: (828) 251-6200 | Email: NCWorks.1700@nccommerce.com

From Matt Gruebmeier to Everyone 10:00 AM love love love the lockbox connection

From Matt Gruebmeier to Everyone 10:04 AM @Kenett: do you know Josh Kennedy from Polk?

From Catherine Beaver to Everyone 10:04 AM DSS will participate

From Kenett Melgar-BRH to Everyone 10:05 AM @Matt: We have spoke a few times

From Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com to Everyone 10:05 AM Brenda - NCWorks in Henderson & or Transylvania

From Chariden Lewis to Everyone 10:06 AM we'll definitely participate too. Our regional coordinator is in Polk and has some local connections if that's helpful.

From Matt Gruebmeier to Everyone 10:06 AM :) Kenett

From Tiffany Mcswain to Everyone 10:11 AM Different from VISPD?

From Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com to Everyone 10:19 AM No other updates. Something to think about/ ask employers: when employers say they a VETERAN FRIENDLY what do they mean?

From Howard Anderson to Everyone 10:19 AM Howard Anderson, 828-708-9603. Howard.Anderson@va.gov

From Gabrielle Kalis, she/her/hers to Everyone 10:20 AM sorry, have to go. thank you for all y'all do!

From Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com to Everyone 10:24 AM Happy Holidays Y'all! Stay safe and Be well.

From Tiffany Mcswain to Everyone 10:25 AM Can I get information for that