

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
November 5, 2020, 9:30 AM Kristen Martin (Thrive) hosting

Persons attending: Kristen Martin and Emily Lowery (Regional co-leads), Alyce Knafllich (Aura Homes), Suzanne Porter (Rutherford United Way), Brenda Ploss and Jennifer Drum (NC Works), Katie Kohler (DSS), Trisha Ecklund (Blue Ridge Health), Teena Willis (Teena Willis Partners), Jessica Owenby and Matthew Gruebmeier (Henderson County Schools), Amanda VanDuyne (Polk County Schools), Zakit Levine, Stephanie Gilliam, Carrington Cosby and Nickie Kilgore (Thrive), Emily Shock (Free Clinics), Jessica Rice (ABCCM Vet Services of the Carolinas SSVF), Sarah Kowalak (United Way Henderson County), Beth Branagan and Shelly Miller (Transylvania Schools), Jennifer Kerr, Lauren Wilkie, Chris Berg. See also the Chat.

Minutes of October 3 meeting: Kristen asked for any corrections or comments on those minutes of the Coalition, as distributed. None were offered, so the distributed version was adopted by common consent.

BoS Steering Committee: October meeting: ESG 2021 allocation (not-CARES Act) has a revised funding process (thanks to those helping **Sarah** in this region). 34 renewals and six new applicants competed. Renewals were checked by NCCEH staff only. New apps were also checked by two review committee volunteers. Regional fair-share funding assignments (largely based on PIT counts) were also reviewed. In our Region 2, Thrive is awarded \$62,372 (rapid-rehousing), and The Haven of Transylvania County, \$56,500 (emergency shelter and \$1500 HMIS, no rehousing this time). Steering Committee agreed to target Rehousing to agencies in larger funding blocs for this cycle. **Alyce** said our regional funding meeting happened before full details of the new grant standards were circulated, causing confusion, but at least our group did make recommendations. Kristen sympathized, but time pressure arose from the overall program reworking, and that compounded the usual short-turnaround required. This is too often the case – it's November and we don't know about CoC funding yet!

Social Security and NCCEH are working to resolve situations where SSA wants ID documents mailed in to check accounts, but mail delivery to homeless is often tricky and uncertain, so clients fear their doc may go missing. NCCEH's work on this is ongoing: Lisa Wallace (Charlotte SSA), and NC DMV commissioner Tori Jessup are involved. **Trisha** said BRCHS supported some SSA card requests for Rescue Mission clients, with demographic info sent on medical-letterhead to Henderson's SSA office – those were accepted.

November meeting: HMIS is getting a new entry dashboard.

- Funding and Performance subcommittee set 2021 goals: To increase bed coverage in HMIS. For example, NC (BoS areas) seem to have more Permanent Supportive housing beds and emergency-shelter beds, than Transitional housing beds. The beds – vs – need details are at pages 17-20: <https://www.ncceh.org/media/files/page/fb1eddbc/bos-sc-slides-3-november-2020-final.pdf> Kristen feels the concern stems from COVID: It's easier to add to shelter beds than to find or create affordable housing.

BoS Steering Committee wants to add at-large members from state agencies (Public Safety, Commerce, Military & Veteran Affairs, Education, NC Housing Finance agency), some additions have been made, but others would help.

Alyce said Henderson County is applying for Community Development money (\$900K) which can go to increasing available beds. Kristen said the County app is solely for rent and utility assistance. If our area shelters join NCCEH and HMIS that would increase 'official' bed count. As only The Haven

is currently reporting HMIS beds, the others get added as ‘unofficial’. If shelters join and become ‘official’ they can seek public funds to increase beds. Please talk up these opportunities!

Regional Leadership positions for 2021: Kristen is delighted to see 3-4 from our list volunteering to help! As there is not a nominating committee for the region, we’ll need to get selection underway at this meeting.

Needs are:

- Regional Lead, and Alternate
- Webmaster
- Coordinated Entry Lead
- PIT Count Lead(s)

Volunteers are:

Emily Lowery and **Kristen Martin** as co-leads
Sarah McDaniel (Henderson County)
Kristin Martin (because Thrive is getting a CE grant)
Trisha Ecklund (BRCHS) and **Sherry Stokes** (Salvation Army)
[Emily will be a mentor for this year, & will step back afterward]

- Funding Process Lead

Suzanne Porter

(duties reduced this year, no ESG regional grant assembly or scoring subcommittee management; likely some middle level of time demand going forward – NCCEH is working on related bylaws)

(Kristen thanks United Way vols Sarah McDaniel and Suzanne Porter for current and past work)

- Project Review Committee

Alyce Knaflich

- Secretary

Chris Berg

Motion proposed by Kristen, to adopt above leadership positions as a slate. **Sarah Kowalak** second.

No discussion. Motion passes.

Blue Ridge Health Back@Home funding: **Trisha Ecklund** said this Street Outreach grant allowed supplies to be stocked. A footprint-map is being maintained, that will simplify PIT count process. BRCHS is helping Hendersonville Rescue Mission maintain some overnight-stay accommodations by getting COVID tests done as part of their cold-weather Code Grace process; “more to come”, but that is the plan. A number of people have been assessed for homelessness needs with VI-SPDAT. Sleeping bags have been distributed due to colder weather. Patients report some moving around under police pressure. BRCHS is renewing contacts with Zoning Department, to try to anticipate or forestall these forced moves. Outreach focus per grant is on Henderson for Sept- January 2021, Polk County will be the next target, gearing up for VI-SPDAT assessments and verifying encampment spots. Trisha will send the grant timeline to Kristen for distribution around the group, in support of the whole region.

Thrive Back@Home funding: Kristen said they’ve signed several leases to place households the last two weeks, and continue to seek for affordable/suitable units – please let Thrive know of prospects in any of our four counties. Some names have been removed from the by-name list, as they obtained housing (pre-COVID), but a number of high-priority cases remain in need, so search for suitable units continues. Some of this is landlord negotiations – there are possible incentives for them built into the grant. Community partners have helped with leads and with household supplies. **Carrington** said two Henderson families are now housed, and intakes were taken from Rutherford and Transylvania also. A privately-funded leasing is also coming this week, and another under ‘regular ESG’ is coming.

Racial Equity subcommittee: **Stephanie Gilliam** said the dialog series concluded with an October session on voting. The C4 consultant training will be held Nov. 10 and 17th, for Steering committee and R.E. subcommittee members. Stephanie will report these, but the R.E. group won’t meet in December. They will try to determine 2021 activities (dialogs?) next.

Children & Youth Homeless Action: Beth Branagan said no October meeting was scheduled. They will Zoom-meet at 10 AM, November 20. She will send out links for that soon. No discussion topic has been picked given the demands of school programming etc.

Coordinated Entry update: Kristen reported lots of calls come in, but eligibility checks and the placements made have steadied or reduced the by-name list a bit. This week the count of 437 individuals is down slightly.

The Back@Home referral system is not functioning yet: 2-1-1 is not able to make referrals. Thrive does not yet have a Back@Home funding contract. BRCHS, likewise. Thrive hired a case-manager for this work in August. The program does have mandatory report deadlines. Following the specifics is hard given all this. Deadlines and processes have repeatedly changed for both local providers. 2-1-1 is flooded with both Needs reported, and CARES Act programming to implement. Their priorities are driven by the deadlines they've been facing. They need to support NC HOPE grant activities - eviction prevention, rent and utility assistance -, which is also new. Our *currently anticipated* process is that an agency spots a Back@Home possible case (or a 2-1-1 referral); it's labeled as a Back@Home process case; it get cleared by NC-Cares-360; it gets an ROI from HMIS. So: Our Coordinated Entry committee is advised of all prospect cases for this support – these prospects get intakes, they get housed; then, when **2-1-1** Back@Home process is up and running, these cases get inputted with all data into the newly-accessible system. Then, agencies will start calling by-name listed households to confirm consent to share information; 2-1-1 will verify they are suitable for Back@Home funding; NC-360 will be consulted; then begin to house these people. 'It is all about verifying eligibility and enrolling people in the correct way'.

The rules come from HUD, DHHS, and governmental financing bodies. Various subprograms have varied processes. Example: CRF grants (rapid re-housing, household products, transportation) – funds expire 12/31, and the requisition process was sent out yesterday. Back@Home comes through DHHS, but ESG writes most of the rules and policies; the NC Finance agency does the requisitions.

Sarah Kowalak added the NC HOPE program is thru Dept. of Public Safety, at \$117M; intakes funnel through 2-1-1. These calls per standard are about one-minute long; but we're told average calls are 30 minutes, with some lasting up to 2 hours. We advise that any family known to be below 80% area median income, if they have rent and/or utilities unpaid and have internet access, they should go online to www.nc211.org. That path is so much a better way to get help. Applying online gets them a download letter to print and take to landlords right away, as opposed to 2-3 weeks going through a 2-1-1 referral partner (Legal Aid is the partner in this area). By rule the landlord can't evict if they have that letter. It's on the www.nc211.org site (see Chat).

Kristen says this situation- resources through short-term programs- is too demanding for some service agencies to use. Paperwork paths – such as upload of phone pictures of docs – can be challenges to use effectively. Steering committee serving-agency members expressed frustrations: Call centers get this not-always-gentle feedback.

Veteran updates: Alyce: Any VA Home Loan that has payment problems, contact the VA: www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/loan-types or call 800-827-1000 .

Brenda Ploss says most NC WORKS offices are now staffed. Social Security offices are still closed, but going to www.ssa.gov and entering a Zip Code gives callers a usable number to get info. We are getting calls from mostly rural areas, and these connections seem to be working. I hope that means vets are accessing prospects, getting jobs, getting housing and feeling safer.

Other items: PIT: Alyce asked about pre-planning. NCCEH just requested names of regional leads (Kristen will forward ours ASAP). NCCEH will start a PIT list. Kristen will forward any PIT items of

general interest to the whole list. No specific PIT count date has been received – late January is expected.

Alyce is delighted that housing is being created in CA by 3-D printers, for about \$100K.

J.P. Morgan Chase is offering \$30Bn nationally in refinancing and housing assistance to Black and Latino Americans as a racial-equity initiative. Let's refer people to try this out.

Kristen reinforced the new Thrive location (218 W. Allen, Suite B) is being made public. It is much better laid out for distancing interviews than the previous cramped quarters.

Next meeting: by Zoom, **December 3, 2020, 9:30 A.M.**

-Chris Berg

CHAT recorded:

From Suzanne to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Suzanne Porter, United Way of Rutherford County

From Kristen Martin to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Kristen Martin, Thrive

From bbranaga to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Beth Branagan- Transylvania County Schools

From Zakit Levine, Thrive to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Zakit Levine Thrive

From Alyce Knaflich to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Alyce Knaflich Aura Home Women Vets

From Jennifer Drum to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Jennifer Drum-NCWorks Veteran Services

From Shelly M to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Shelly Miller- Transylvania County Schools

From IT4765 to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Katie Kohler DSS

From Teena Willis to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Teena Willis Partners

From Jessica Ownbey to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Jessica Ownbey - Henderson County Public Schools

From Emily Shock to Everyone: 09:33 AM

Emily Shock, The Free Clinics

From nickie kilgore to Everyone: 09:33 AM

Nickie Kilgore Thrive

From Stephanie Gilliam to Everyone: 09:33 AM

Stephanie Gilliam Thrive

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 09:34 AM

Trisha Ecklund Blue Ridge Health

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 09:34 AM

Sarah Kowalak United Way of Henderson County

From Stephanie Gilliam to Everyone: 09:39 AM

Carrington cosby thrive

From Kristen Martin to Everyone: 09:46 AM

<https://www.ncceh.org/bos/steeringcommittee/>

From Suzanne to Everyone: 09:53 AM

I will do it if there are no other volunteers.

From Me to Everyone: 09:53 AM

Chris is OK wiith secretary

From Suzanne to Everyone: 09:55 AM

No- I'm fine either way!

And thank you, Sarah for picking up when I had a family health issue that took me out of the loop.

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 09:57 AM

I Agree

From Jennifer Kerr to Everyone: 09:57 AM

I agree

From Emily Shock to Everyone: 09:57 AM

agree

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 10:14 AM

had to step away real fast

okay I'm back

From bbranaga to Everyone: 10:18 AM

Sarah- if someone applied for NC HOPE by phone and is waiting on a response- is there a way for them to get a letter?

From Alyce Knaflich to Everyone: 10:19 AM

va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/loan-types or 800-827-1000

From Lauren Wilkie to Everyone: 10:19 AM

Apologies, we have construction/moving happening so I am going to hop off

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 10:21 AM

Beth - that form is called the Tenant Declaration Form and it is available at nc211.org and the tenant can print and sign without any agency processing anything.

From bbranaga to Everyone: 10:22 AM

Thank you Sarah!

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 10:23 AM

<http://nc211.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Tenant-Declaration-Form.pdf>

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 10:28 AM

Be Well and Stay Safe