

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  
October 1, 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 (NC Works), Michael Absher (Only Hope WNC), Trisha Ecklund and Kenett Melgar, Blue Ridge Health; Amanda VanDuyne (Polk County Schools), Jessica Rice (ABCCM Vet Services of the Carolinas SSVF), Trina Rushing (Henderson County Library), Alyce Knafllich (Aura Homes-Women Vets), Dawn Roberts and Robert Caldwell (DCDEE Subsidy Services), Sarah Kowalak (United Way Henderson County), Matthew Gruebmeier (Henderson Public Schools), Beth Branagan and Shelly Miller (Transylvania Schools), Chris Berg, Amanda Stancil?. See also the Chat.

**Minutes** of September 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. Kristen thanked Sarah Kowalak for facilitating the Sept. 22 called meeting on funding; minutes for that meeting are available from Sarah.

A mandatory **Back@Home** webinar on now occupies Kristen's colleagues at Thrive.

Kristen gave several funding updates:

**ESG-CV**, under the CARES Act, funds Blue Ridge Health Outreach. Thrive has Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) awards from this source.

**Continuum of Care** funds support Thrive's Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program. Parties in Congress are said to agree that additional money will be provided to renewing grants, but they dispute whether any new applications would be funded.

Annual Emergency Solutions Grant (**ESG**) funds have been applied for by The Haven (for emergency shelter and a small RRH program), and by Thrive for RRH. Current renewals, made a high priority by the regional meeting Sept. 22, have been forwarded to NCCEH for comments. These have not been received back. Other agencies expressed interest but did not submit full applications. **Alyce** said that she acted as a project reviewer; that team meets at 1 PM today to find a consensus and make recommendations to the NCCEH Steering Committee. That Balance of State Steering Committee will meet October 6. Expected final submissions would be made to NC DHHS by about October 13.

The **COVID Relief Fund**, a short-term 'quick contracting' program for sheltering and providing stable housing as a public health measure, does not have completed contracts for regional applicants The Haven, Thrive and Blue Ridge Health. **Emily** said The Haven got an award letter, but no contract yet. **Back@Home** contracts are also not yet in place. Therefore, local providers are funding activities but can't yet be reimbursed. **Trisha** said Blue Ridge Health has added two clinical staff per this program, enabling them to send two staffers to Seventh Avenue for intake assistance at the Rescue Mission; it will also pay transportation costs, such as bus passes, and outreach supply kits. They expect to pay for hotel vouchers also once a FEMA allocation for that is used up. These activities need to be fully expended by Dec. 30 or balances will be recaptured (except Back@Home). Kristen gave the Thrive budget: \$66,000 overall, with \$41,000 for goods for RRH clients, \$3200 for landlord incentives to give clients housing priority, \$1800 for transportation, and \$20,000 for rent payments.

An email from Megan Powell at Henderson County last week, forwarded by Kristen, said the County will hold a public hearing on **CDBG** to address emergency needs. The county and other local governments can apply for up to \$900,000. The hearing will allow in-person and virtual comment. **Michael** said public comment may also be submitted to the County Commission by no later than 48 hours before the scheduled hearing time, Monday, **October 5, 5:30 PM**.

**Kristen** recommended our coalition favor this proposal to apply for more Community Development Block Grant (**CDBG**), as individuals. She asked Emily to approach the Transylvania County leadership to consider an application. Our other counties would also be eligible, so those in the coalition associated with or resident in those counties could urge their leaders to take this offer up.

**2021 Regional Coalition leads:** Kristen said in November the coalition routinely chooses leaders for the coming year. Positions to consider: Regional lead, regional alternate, Coordinated Entry lead, PIT and HIC (housing inventory count) lead, funding process lead, project review committee representative, and webmaster. If you feel any inclination to take on a position from this list, please email Emily or Kristen. Alyce said she had gotten quite familiar with the project review committee work and is willing to stand for 2021. Kristen will send out some short summaries of the duties of the various positions.

**Trisha Ecklund** reported on BRCHS progress, including signing of an HMIS agreement, allowing her to begin entry of people's information onto HMIS as appropriate. She's gotten locations of some known camps from Stephanie Gilliam and asks if you know of a location to please email Trisha. They are ordering some packs for outreach; have educated - presented facts and recommendations on avoiding COVID to folks seeking services; and helped the Rescue Mission. She introduced **Kennet Melgar**, who has been at BRCHS for 17 years, lately running their FEMA Shelter work, so is accustomed to work with homeless persons.

**Thrive** is implementing Back@Home. They have done ten intakes and are looking for suitable rental units. They want to give landlords incentives to hasten the lease-ups. They will continue to process small numbers of intakes at any one time, as they have seen the bad effect on clients' morale to get encouraged and then have to wait and wait. Trisha asked about landlords' information packets. Kristen said their experience is that is not a good leadoff to negotiating for leases, that it is much better to get case managers to talk it out and answer questions. Alyce said to consider checking with an 'Asheville Thrive' effort to recruit new landlords outside of impacted areas. To her question about recruiter payments, Kristen said the funds have to be released in conjunction with signed leases – they could run \$200-\$300 -one landlord said he'd apply that to pet deposit to simplify that issue, others could put in repairs, etc., as well as permitted double deposits.

**Racial Equity:** Stephanie Gilliam reports by email that the NCCEH committee is in a brainstorming mode. Two dialogs have been held on Zoom, the second featuring Judge Cabbage on Racism in legal processes; a third is set for October 20, 'Racism in voting', at noon. Training will be offered by C4, a consultant, on November 10 and 17. [See <https://www.ncceh.org/events/2020/10/> and links]

**CYHAC** (Child-Youth workgroup): **Beth Branagan** said the September meeting was held as scheduled. The invited speaker, Page Lemel, was replaced by Jamie Laughter of Get Set Transylvania, who spoke about their early childhood initiatives work over several years. The next virtual meeting will be November 20, 10 AM. No speaker has been named.

**Coordinated Entry (CE):** Kristen summarized the wait list, 216 households, composed of 455 people – 278 adults and 165 children. There have been some discharges, so the list is smaller! Listed households have in some cases gotten work and are paying rent on their own without assistance, others have been placed with Section 8 subsidy or through a Housing Authority. No functional changes to CE are currently underway, as the expected use of 2-1-1 is not now being implemented. Currently housing placements are made through The Haven and Thrive; call these providers to check on updated availability.

**Veterans: Jessica Rice** continues to work with SSVF, but there are not new funds. She is very appreciative of VA staff assistance in getting documents that have led to some placements in housing.

Alyce offered no updates for Aura Homes.

**Brenda Ploss** continues to work away from NC Works office buildings. She's provided some updates in Chat (below). She said woman veterans are doing more follow-up for jobs and training. The State-organized job and career fairs went well, as has employer training.

The September 'virtual Stand-Down' was not well publicized. Alyce said she was not aware of invitations to providers. A Macon County event has been cancelled. Brenda said down-state stand-down events done as walk throughs outside have gone well. She suggested that a guide sheet or pamphlet be put together as a how-to or to solicit provider participation. Kristen agreed on the idea and asked Brenda to undertake a starting model for the Coalition.

**PIT Outreach:** We need to look over each county's past volunteer pool and fill in to create a lot of participation. Henderson has done fairly well with some 30 plus volunteers. Transylvania has an established pool to contact, and Suzanne Porter has coordinated Rutherford in the past – but it would be good to contact any possible new volunteers there and elsewhere. Polk has only had two people, so we think assistance there would be quite useful in making our count realistic.

**COVID-19 Updates:** Trisha said the one Rescue Mission visitor testing positive was able to be isolated, and the followups over two weeks have not identified more infections.

Only Hope WNC: Michael Absher has schedules of the drive-through food distributions that are planned (phone 693-5499), and also about 20,000 masks. He's working with a couple of churches to get them distributed; one is making tie-dye masks for younger people to have an alternative to plain white. The Only Hope SLEEPOUT fund-raiser/consciousness builder will be overnight November 6 at the Historic Courthouse, 6 PM.

Despite the state going to Phase 3, the regional meetings will continue as virtual to the end of the year. Our next meeting will be Thursday, Nov. 5, at 9:30 AM.

With respect, Chris Berg, regional secretary

Chat for this meeting:

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 09:49 AM

Hello All. Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com; 919.710.3748; NCWorks Career Centers in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison & Transylvania.

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 10:01 AM

State of N.C. Career Expo on 9/29/2020: 3121 Registrants. 376 Veterans & Veteran Eligible Spouses & Caregivers visitors to NCWorks Veterans Booth.

FYI: VA's new website landing page makes it easier for Veterans and family members to access VA benefits and services information. The website, [www.va.gov/getstarted](http://www.va.gov/getstarted) provides two newly updated booklets on info about VA benefits & services + how to apply for them.

From Suzanne to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Suzanne Porter, United Way of Rutherford County

From Michael Absher to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Michael Absher, Only Hope Wnc

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Trisha Ecklund- Blue Ridge Health

From Me to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Kristen Martin- Thrive

From VanDuyne's iPad to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Amanda VanDuyne, Polk County Schools

From Kenett Melgar to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Kenett Melgar- Blue Ridge Health

From Jessica Rice to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Jessica Rice Assistant Director of Housing ABCCM Veterans Services of the Carolinas SSVF

From Trina Rushing to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Trina Rushing - Henderson County Library

From Alyce Knaflich to Everyone: 10:03 AM

Alyce Knaflich Aura Home Women Vets

From dhroberts to Everyone: 10:04 AM

Dawn Roberts - DCDEE/Subsidy

From Shelly Miller to Everyone: 10:04 AM

Shelly Miller- Transylvania County Schools

From rccaldwell1 to Everyone: 10:04 AM

Robert Caldwell - DCDEE Subsidy Services

From Sarah to Everyone: 10:05 AM

Sarah Kowalak, United Way Henderson County

From bbranaga to Everyone: 10:05 AM

Beth Branagan- Transylvania County Schools

From Matthew Gruebmeyer to Everyone: 10:14 AM

Hi, Kristen! Thanks for letting me join late.

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 10:15 AM

good info michael on masks

Kristen Martin MSW, LCSW