

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
April 7, 2022, 9:30 AM Kristen Martin at Thrive hosting

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

Kristen Martin, Nickie Kilgore, Kayla Asquith, and Josh Shelton (Thrive); Emily Lowery (The Haven of Transylvania County); Makala Perez and Trisha Ecklund (Blue Ridge Health); Captain Sherrie Stokes (Salvation Army); Trina Rushing (Henderson Library); Amber Story (Partners Behavioral Health M); Jessica Ownbey and Matt Gruebmeier (Henderson Schools); Alyce Knaflich (Aura Homes); Catherine Beaver (Henderson Dept. of Social Services); Michael Absher (Only Hope WNC); Ellis Pinder (Veterans shelter adviser); Cheriden Lewis (Veterans Services of the Carolinas); Jessica Joyner (Vaya Health/Housing Support, Transylvania); Brian Alexander (NC Coalition to End Homelessness, NCCEH); Emily Edmunds (Hendersonville Rescue Mission); Monica Mathes; Jason Schulz (Affordable Homeownership Foundation); Robert Hooper (WNC Source); Brian Huskey (City of Asheville); Chris Berg. See also the **appended Chat**.

Kristen Martin facilitated the opening, and was relieved by **Emily Lowery**. Please see the agenda for a ground rules statement.

Minutes of March 3 online meeting were approved by common consent.

BoS Steering Committee April meeting: Kristen said Continuum of Care 2021 awards in BoS were announced, including two new projects. One will provide \$180,284 for Rapid Re-housing in our region. Thrive will administer it, picking up where COVID relief funds will leave off. Thrive's Permanent Supportive Housing grant was renewed also.

BoS is now preparing to apply for 2022 Continuum projects. They are circulating a required 'Notice of intent to apply' needed from any fund-seekers for new projects.

BoS' Funding and Performance subcommittee offered some changes, such as looking at pandemic effects when considering reallocation from low-spending projects- looking at patterns over several years rather than one year.

Kristen Dunn has volunteered for BoS **Scorecard subcommittee** duty; Alyce Knaflich offered to also serve there.

Vaccine distribution: Regional details will follow, but for BoS 22.9% of all HMIS cases are known to have gotten COVID vaccination, vs. 63% for the general public.

System performance: Average shelter stay is 59 days; if sheltered ► transitional housing, average stay was 76 days; waiting time prior to entry, average 317 days – with total homeless time average 318 days. Factors aggravating this are the tight housing market and stock characteristics, also problems in accessing ID documents, according to Kristen. These intervals need to be shortened!

Coordinated entry is entering an evaluation period. Provider surveys are going out to CE participants; recipients/tenants in RRH or PSH programs this past year are also being surveyed separately. There is an online response path, so respondents will not need to channel feedback through the agencies serving them. Our region is also offering in-person help on these surveys from CE workers not involved in the respondents' services.

Unsheltered access coordinator: Kristen nominated Trisha Ecklund to continue on this job, Chris Berg seconded. This was approved by common consent.

Emily Lowery took over from Kristen as facilitator.

Back@Home outreach program: Trisha said that an Emergency Shelter setup for hotel vouchers was pre-purchased with [Back@Home](#) funds, covering about 500 overnight stays, cost ~\$45,000. The purchase setup is

with a partner hotel in Henderson County, but funds are also reserved for stays at hotels in the other counties. Anyone who has positive experience and contacts with hotels in these other areas please let Trisha know, she will follow up. Blue Ridge Health will also provide transportation in support of emergency placements.

Supplies: Anyone aware of likely supply needs please let Trisha know, she will place orders, and they hope to pre-position most items for more timely access. Since there is already biweekly case conferencing underway on Wednesdays, she hopes to combine supply and outreach discussions with that meeting.

Coordination: Makala Perez is working with Mark Stierwalt of the Hendersonville Police toward getting a response protocol when **homeless camps** are observed and complaints made. This mostly deals with camping along the Oklawaha Greenway. A 48-hour window with notice (by a laminated card) to campers and to Blue Ridge team outreach workers (or Thrive as backup) will precede action to remove a camp or arrest campers. The context is some NIMBY reaction to stories from Asheville. City representatives include Rich Olsen at the PD, Environmental Services, Public Safety and Public Works. Trisha will distribute the final protocol to the region when it's complete and signed. Brian Alexander asked about involving the Parks and Recreation workforce. Makala confirmed that they had originated this dialog. Alyce and Trisha also intend to involve the Fire Marshal as a potential reporting source for abandoned-structure related camps, and Trisha will contact EMS as well.

[[Back@Home](#) housing support – no report]

Resource Fairs: Trina Rushing said the Henderson fair is set for Friday, May 6th, at the Salvation Army, 9 to 12. Kristen sent an email with fliers and cards templates to print and distribute. See the Chat for Trina's info, let her know if you want a table there. Setup would be 8 to 8:30 AM, and break down between noon-12:30. Bags are being made ready to hand out with water, cups, shacks, courtesy of Thrive and Blue Ridge Health; still needed are coffee, juice, and possible MacDonal breakfast sandwiches or box lunches.

Matt Gruebmyer agreed to contact possible hosts/organizers for Polk County. [See Chat also]

Emily said Transylvania will hold a fair on May 24th, 9-12, at the Library's Rogow community conference room. The group has a planning session tomorrow, April 8, 1 PM. Please contact Emily at The Haven of Transylvania County if interested in a table setup. They are planning a visit-each-table door prize system to encourage guest interactions. Setup would be 8 to 8:30 AM, and break down between noon-12:30. Further planning meetings are set for April 22 and May 20.

Alyce announced a Veterans 'Stand-down' resource fair in Asheville, April 29th, 9-3, at Stevens-Lee rec center. Van transportation is available by calling Ralph Reece at ABCCM [828-962-8387]; the VA is a cosponsor.

Racial Equity (RE): Kennet Melgar said the 2022 dialog series is now scheduled. The opening dialog will be next Tuesday, April 12 (www.nceeh.org/events/1545/). Barriers to home buying due to racism, etc., will be covered. Then, a June 21st dialog will cover the impacts of stress and trauma; and an Oct. 18th dialog will cover housing solutions for the future. Other dialog education topics considered included landlord roles in fair housing, equity for shelters and providers, landlord-tenant accountability (dialog). A RE subcommittee (including Tracey Gruver) will comment on work of the BoS scorecard committee (see April Steering report above). Equity review of CoC programs also continues with help from a HUD tech assistance provider, including assessment of the VI-SPDAT prioritization tool.

CYHAC, Children and Youth Homeless Action Coalition: Michael Absher said they next meet Friday, May 20. Thrive will present there.

Lived Expertise advisory council: Alyce said the group meets Friday, April 8 at 11:30. Rachele Dugan (Thrive) and Jamie _____ plan to join as they work on a session for the 'Bring It Home' statewide conference.

Veterans: Alyce Knaflich said that VA now says 10% of Veteran population are women, or 1.8 million nationally. We believe about 86,000 women vets live in North Carolina. Another VA estimate is that 10% are homeless or at risk of homelessness. So it is important in all homeless interviews to ask if women have served this country in the military. There are many programs that would apply for their support. The Aura Homes project for rehabilitation is picking up speed, which is great.

Cheriden Lewis said ABCCM is opening a new Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness, PATH. It is similar to the military/vet oriented HOPE outreach program, but PATH can serve civilians. They have hired new peer-support specialists to staff this, and they should be at the upcoming Resource Fairs. A Haywood vet, Sam, is among these, also Daniel Conway in Asheville.

Brian Huskey on HOME-ARP funding: Brian is now Asheville's admin officer for a 4-county (Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, Madison) consortium, to plan and use \$4.7 million in federal funds via American Rescue Plan funding. This offering complements others, such as Emergency Housing Vouchers. It is targeted as specified in HOME, a HUD program, especially to poverty and poor renters, also to availability and cost of housing stock. In a nutshell, it is a Rental housing unit finance program targeted to those experiencing homelessness, including those at-risk.

The annual HOME grants have narrow eligibility, but this HOME-ARP funding has added possible uses, such as capital investment to create or preserve permanent affordable housing; to upgrade a shelter stock; to provide tenant based rent assistance; provide support services (including prevention and counseling)*; provide non-congregate shelter (which can later be converted to other types of shelter, CoC housing or HOME affordable housing). The Qualifying Populations (to serve) match well those used in HUD CoC, ESG and VASH or SSVF programs.

*see definition at 24 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations; section) 578.53(e)

Brian is now working on a detailed, required Allocation Plan, including needs assessment, gaps analysis, current CoC/PIT/HIC data, 'characteristics of housing associated with instability and increased risk of homelessness'; culminating in a list of prioritized needs.

Brian did offer a related online survey last month, but did not get good Henderson or Transylvania participation. It can be reopened if our participants desire. He also offers HUD's fact sheets for each eligible use.

Q and A: Alyce would like a cross-county discussion and will talk with Brian separately. Brian noted interest he's seen in interagency and interjurisdictional collaborations. He would be happy to present more detailed parts of this opportunity to those interested, please call him. He assured Trisha the funds will be allocated per the need data, not by jurisdiction size. To date he is hearing the primary need is more housing units, closely followed by supportive services. He will reopen the survey in the next day or so, with Kristen giving us notice. There will be an open public participation segment later, but for now he wants input from service providers. He will be looking at McKinney-Vento programs information soon as suggested here.

Status of latest PIT count: Brian Alexander said NCCEH has collected all the data and is now aggregating these for reporting. They need to submit the material on April 29, so are trying to check consistency and resolve uncertainties. It pulls from 300+ providers and unsheltered reports across 79 counties. They hope to provide an overview to the May Steering Committee meeting, and later in May post on the web with detail for regions and counties.

Robert Hooper, new director at WNC Source, [formerly WCCA, Western Carolina Community Action], succeeding Sheryl Fortune, introduced himself.

The next regional Coalition meeting will be Thursday, May 5, at 9:30 AM, via Zoom.

- With respect, Chris Berg

Chat messages:

00:05:52 Emily Lowery: Emily Lowery, The Haven of Transylvania County

00:06:15 Kristen Martin (she/her); Thrive: Kristen Martin, Thrive

00:06:46 Jason Schulz: Good Morning. Jason Schulz, Affordable Homeownership Foundation

00:07:05 Trisha Ecklund: Trisha Ecklund Blue Ridge Health

00:07:24 Trina Rushing: Trina Rushing, Henderson County Public Library
trushing@hendersoncountync.gov

00:11:40 Ellis Pinder: Ellis Pinder, Veterans Career Advisor

00:14:18 Jessica Joyner: Jessica Joyner, Housing Specialist with Vaya

00:19:08 Amber Story (her/she): <https://www.ncceh.org/bos/steeringcommittee/>

00:29:31 Brian Alexander (he/him/his): This is a great collaboration. Good work to get this started.

00:34:10 Monica Mathes: I could help someone else with Polk County. I couldn't head it, but would be happy to help

00:34:24 Monica Mathes: Monica Mathes 919-418-8026

00:34:37 kmelgar: same here, kmelgar@brchs.com

00:34:45 brianhuskey: Brian Huskey

00:36:58 Josh Shelton: I don't think so

00:37:25 kmelgar: <https://www.ncceh.org/events/1545/>

00:58:47 Jessica Ownbey: Have you considered looking at data from schools around the number of students identified eligible for services under McKinney-Vento?

01:05:10 Jessica Ownbey: Jessica Ownbey, HCPS

01:05:16 Jason Schulz: Jason@ahf.today

01:05:32 kmelgar: Kenett Melgar, Blue Ridge Health

01:05:35 Amber Story (her/she): Amber Story; Partners

01:05:38 Catherine Beaver: Catherine Beaver - Henderson County DSS

01:05:42 Nickie kilgore: Nickie Kilgore nkilgore@thrive4health.org

01:06:05 brianhuskey: Brian Huskey, HOME-ARP Program Manger, City of Asheville, bhuskey@ashevillenc.gov, (828) 793-0247

01:06:19 Robert Hooper: Robert Hooper - WNCSource -rhooper@wncsource.org

01:06:31 Ellis Pinder: Ellis Pinder, Veterans Career Advisor(NCWorks): ellis.pinder@nccommerce.com

01:07:06 Hendersonville Rescue Mission: Emily Edmunds, Women's Ministry Coordinator, Hendsenonville Rescue Mission