

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 6, 2022, 9:30 AM Thrive hosting

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

Kristen Martin, Tracey Gruver, Nickie Kilgore, Tracey Gruver, Rachelle Dugan, Kenny Sylver and Josh Shelton (Thrive); **Emily Lowery** (The Haven of Transylvania County); **Kennet Melgar, Danita Simpson and Trisha Ecklund** (Blue Ridge Health); **John Thomson** (Out of the Ashes Ministries); **Ellis Pinder** (NC Works Veterans Services); **Alyce Knaflich** (Aura Homes); **Amber Story** (Partners Behavioral Health); **Michael Absher and Kim Fletcher** (Only Hope WNC); **Catherine Beaver** (Henderson County DSS); **Jessica Joyner** (Vaya Health/Housing Support, Transylvania); **Jenny Simmons, (NCCEH); Whitney Rosenblatt (Family Preservation Services/Healthy Transitions); Amanda VanDuyne (Polk County Schools); Chariden Lewis (ABCCM veterans programs); Chris Berg.** See also the **appended Chat**.

Kristen Martin facilitated. She went over our ground rules statement; please see our Agenda.

Minutes of September 1 online meeting were approved by common consent.

BoS Steering Committee met four times since Sept. 1:

In early September, a special meeting to discuss and approve Continuum of Care project rankings from the Project Review subcommittee (which Alyce Knaflich discussed at our Sept. 1 meeting) – these were sorted into Tiers 1 and 2, based on scores. These were all submitted to HUD grant process.

On Sept. 13, a regular meeting to consider Emergency Solutions Grant project allocations for 33 renewal and 13 new projects. Among these were a \$119,000 request from Thrive, that was approved at about \$54,000; The Haven of Transylvania County's project request (\$55,000) approved at ~ \$43,000; and two from Blue Ridge Community Health, for HMIS (Homeless Management Information Systems) and Outreach, with no HMIS funding and ~\$28,000 approved of \$70,000 requested for Outreach. Alyce asked about the reductions but Brian Alexander did not have an answer. The NC State ESG office may have more information.

An annual Coordinated Entry (CE) evaluation was gone over, based on surveys of provider agencies, clients recently served, and other homeless people contacted. Our region was noted as able to use Prevention and Diversion actions to direct 39% of client-applicants to resources not managed by Coordinated Entry, leaving 61% to seek housing through CE resources. The VI-SPDAT appeared 17% fully accurate and 73% partially accurate (half or better). All BoS regions now use case conferencing, using Zoom. Figures for Permanent Housing (PSH) cases indicate 72% of cases served were fully eligible, but 12% appeared ineligible.

On Sept. 20, a special meeting to consider and approve rankings for the Special CoC NOFO project applications, with categories of Unsheltered-persons set-aside, Rural set-aside, and Planning. A NC HHS agency/component is applying to centralize landlord recruitment, and financing, for all Special CoC projects throughout the BoS. A model is Social-Serve, a Mecklenburg County agency that develops housing cooperatives. This is a challenging project model. Based on [Back@Home](#) experience, Thrive believes this model will take over Rent Reasonableness determinations from Thrive staff, but House Inspections (which Thrive does routinely) may not change to implement this model. Thrive tries to keep available 'local source' funds to help case placements, they are so useful when desired units have no property manager/realtor/ability to use third-party payments or vouchers. These prospective units have barriers needing work to be useful as program housing.

On Tuesday, Oct. 4, an overview of NCORR (North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency) rehousing activities. Minutes and presented slides may be up now on www.ncceh.org or will be soon.

Election of 2023 Regional Committee Leadership: Some of our positions have been filled with ad-hoc volunteers in this region, such as Racial Equity BoS Subcommittee, Lived Experience Subcommittee, or Child and Youth work group. Note: Our PIT Count Lead (Trisha Ecklund) is not part of this election process, as her position lasts through May 2023.

These positions will need to be filled for Calendar 2023: Regional Lead; Regional Alternate; Coordinated Entry Lead; Webmaster; CYHAC= Children and Youth Homeless Action Committee lead; Project Evaluation Lead; and Veterans Subcommittee lead. Please contact Kristen Martin or Emily Lowery if you have an interest in taking on any of these positions.

Emergency Housing Voucher program: It's difficult to lease. Of 634 vouchers, 116 leases have been signed, or 18%, despite 852 clients having been issued a voucher to hunt for a leaseable home. The Isothermal Housing Authority serves two regions; the Partners program covers 31 counties; and there is not a good way to report activities of WCCA, now rechristened WNC Source. NCORR is slated to help unify this.

It's good to develop partnerships with PHAs, Public Housing Authorities, they add stability to housing assistance. One tool is getting PHA preferences, or waivers, to give first or early consideration to unsheltered persons. Preferences/waivers are local PHA agency policy decisions. Thrive uses these as a caseload support, and we hope to add Blue Ridge Health outreach clients to become eligible for PHA preferences.

Racial Equity (RE): Kennet Melgar said the group met to go over questions for scorecards of the three recent funding competitions, covering about \$2.5 million in resources. They approved ten questions touching equity issues, for all the program types available. They believe providers will need to keep their benchmarks for RE in mind, assuredly to stay competitive for any further funding competitions (note the recent fund reductions as a likely outcome of insensitivity to RE henceforward). Programs that might want to extend or expand current programs also need RE sensitivity. The RE 'core team' expects nationally coordinated activity in the coming year, also with some financial impacts.

The final 2022 Racial Equity Dialog is scheduled for October 18th, about "Housing Solutions for the Future".

Coordinated Entry (CE) regional committee voted to change discharge requirements: Those with no contact to Blue Ridge Health, Thrive, or The Haven of Transylvania, over 90 days, will be dropped from the unsheltered by-name list. Trisha Ecklund said that Blue Ridge applied for 'new' (recaptured) state funds. At this point there are no resources for hotel vouchers, supplies or HMIS staff for CE support in the three 'outlying counties', but if that changes with a recapture, CE activities will continue through September 2023.

Lived Expertise advisory group: Alyce reported our Region is very well represented, with about half of the Balance of State participants! The group talked about the Special CoC NOFO, and created a signed letter, reporting to Steering Committee that the group needs to have a role in funding discussions, representation on other subcommittees or presence at those meetings. They plan a BoS wide meeting next Friday at noon (Laurel McNamee of NCCEH staffs these). Brief arrangements were made to provide a Thrive computer for Jamie to participate, and Eric in Transylvania plans to 'help' at The Haven.

Veteran Updates: The Veterans Service representatives plan to organize a separate Coordinated Entry meeting for Veterans on Third Wednesdays at 9 AM. Participants would come from Blue Ridge Health, Aura Homes (Alyce), Thrive (Kristen), ABCCM (? Cheriden), ? Madison.

Alyce requested help for a vet at Transformation Village, having trouble accessing food and clothing because of working full time and going to school. She eats at her place of work, but cannot meet the meal schedule at Transformation. To Katie Miller at VA, or Cheriden, can you address this problem?

Cheriden Lewis reported a newly awarded suicide prevention grant for outreach, and to connect those previously in case management to clinicians. There is no associated therapy, but connections thru VA may work.

Child and Youth Homeless Action Committee, CYHAC: Michael Absher reported an email from Beth Branagan, that a kickoff session will be October 13 from 8:30 to noon at Blue Ridge Community College. There is a link to this event in Chat. The goal will be to better connect the homeless response system to early childhood resources. It will be a pilot project, Emily Lowery and Child and Family Resource Center have connected with shelters to get background.

Michael also said that Only Hope WNC has gotten two grants, a Healthy Transitions to relocate youth that might have to be placed in high-cost hotels etc. into more standard housing; and to set up a 'housing lease forum' – he will have details on that in the next couple of months. He also announced the Only Hope SLEEPOUT for November 4th. Please come join them, they will have coffee and hot dogs at the Henderson Historic Courthouse steps.

Kristen offered some notes from Thrive: All the BoS resources from CoC or ESG for permanent housing are 'over full'. ESG may have openings in the first quarter of 2023. Kenny Sylver is doing intakes for CoC Rapid Re-housing, with about 5 to 7 Safelight sheltered households to be placed soon.

The next regular meeting will be **Thursday, Nov. 3, at 9:30 AM** on Zoom.

- With respect, Chris Berg

Chat messages:

09:28:40 From Tracey Gruver (she/her/hers) to Everyone: Tracey Gruver - Thrive
09:28:53 From Danita Simpson, BRH to Everyone: Danita Simpson - BRH Street Outreach
09:29:41 From John Thomson to Everyone: Good morning! John Thomson, Project Manager for Pat Chamberlain, Exec Director, Out Of The Ashes Ministries. Thank you for the opportunity today.
09:30:04 From Emily Lowery to Everyone: Emily Lowery, The Haven of Transylvania County
09:30:50 From Kenett Melgar | BRH (He/Him) to Everyone: Kenett Melgar Blue Ridge Health
09:31:17 From Kenny to Everyone: Kenny Sylver Thrive
09:31:34 From Rachelle Dugan (she/her) to Everyone: Rachelle Dugan (she/her); Thrive
09:32:03 From Jessica Joyner, Housing Specialist- Vaya Health to Everyone: Jessica Joyner, Vaya Health
09:32:46 From Alyce to Everyone: Alyce Knaflich Aura Home Women Vets 828-771-6979 aurahome.alyce@gmail.com
09:33:13 From Jenny Simmons, NCCEH, she/her/hers to Everyone: Jenny Simmons, North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness, jenny.simmons@ncceh.org, 828-595-3889
09:33:48 From Whitney Rosenblatt (she/her) to Everyone: Whitney Rosenblatt, Family Preservation Services (Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis programs), whitney.rosenblatt@pathways.com, 828 575 6257
09:51:12 From Amber Story (her/she) to Everyone: I'm here!
09:52:22 From Amber Story (her/she) to Everyone: Hold that thought! 31 counties in wnc
09:53:57 From Amber Story (her/she) to Everyone: Specifically for our region- Cleveland, McDowell, Polk and Rutherford
09:57:03 From Kenett Melgar | BRH (He/Him) to Everyone: Racial Equity Dialogue Series-10/18 topic Housing solutions for the future/ Building Towards Better: Racial Equity Innovations in the Balance of State
Register www.ncceh.org/events/1573
10:03:13 From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: yes I will try to do that
10:03:47 From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: sure!
10:06:28 From Alyce to Everyone: Lost sound
10:09:19 From Chariden Lewis (She/her/hers) to Everyone: Alyce if you can send me her name I can look her up. That's something that will need to be discussed between her case manager.
10:09:37 From Amanda VanDuyne to Everyone: Amanda VanDuyne
ahvanduyne@polkschools.org

10:12:08 From Michael Absher to Everyone:

event link - <https://www.eventcreate.com/e/early-childhood-homelessness>

10:14:52 From Catherine Beaver to Everyone: I passed this link on to our Children's Services Program Manager