Southwestern Regional Homeless Coalition Meeting

February 21, 2013

In attendance: Kristi Case, Smoky Mountain Center; Judith Alvarado, Reach of Clay County; Bart O’Sullivan, Friendship House; Debra Clark, Friendship House; Ashley Freeman, Reach of Macon County; Julia Freeman, Reach of Haywood County; Cheryl Wilkins, Mountain Projects; Seana Skees, New Life Women's Center; Monica Sieffert, Cherokee County Reach; Bebeie McClure, Cherokee County DSS

The meeting was held at the Friendship House homeless shelter in Murphy, NC.

The group discussed the Point in Time count results. The count was conducted on January 30, 2013. In shelters, there were 92 people, 54 adults and 38 children. Unsheltered, there were 7 people, 6 adults and 1 child. There were 65 people in transitional housing, 27 adults and 38 children (mostly through the EBCI program). In Permanent Housing, there were 60 people, 46 adults and 14 children. For additional information, please see the Point in Time count reporting form that accompanies these minutes via email.

The group discussed the last Balance of State Steering committee meeting. We went over the powerpoint presentation from that meeting. Kristi was unable to participate due to a Transitions to Community Living training in Hickory, so Cheryl sat in on the meeting for Kristi. Cheryl reports that the meeting was straightforward, and followed the powerpoint presentation. We discussed the BoS application, that included a Shelter Plus Care renewal grant request for Smoky Mountain Center. We discussed the BoS strategic performance goals. We exceeded HUD's goals, but did not exceed our own goals set.

We discussed the BoS Subcommittees, which are required in order to meet threshold for applications for funding. The Permanent Supportive Housing subcommittee meets in February (2/12/13 at 10:30AM), May, August, and November. The Rapid Re-Housing subcommittee meets in March (3/12/13 at 10:30AM), June, September, and December. The Data Quality subcommittee meets in March (3/26/13 at 10:30AM), May, July, September, and November. In order to sign up for the notifications, go to www.ncceh.org and register for the calls.

We discussed that anyone from this regional committee can participate in the Balance of State calls at any time. Kristi will forward the notifications to the group email, and those that want to participate should do so. They always occur on the first Tuesday of the month, at 10:30AM.

We discussed that regional committees must elect a Regional Lead to submit to the BoS in order to remain an active committee, to remain eligible to apply for funds. Kristi explained that with changes in her job duties, and new initiatives required by the state, she will be unable to continue as the lead for this group for much longer. Kristi requested that someone step up as co-chair, so Kristi can begin to transition the responsibilities. No one stepped forward. It was suggested that possibly Brenda Cormack with New Life Women's Center be contacted. (Kristi contacted Brenda, who has too many other responsibilities right not to step into the co-chair role). The group voted for Kristi to remain the lead temporarily, until other leadership can be determined. Kristi explained that we will need to identify other leadership soon.

The group discussed the ESG programs. The programs have now received their funding, and have begun assisting clients. Some programs have not received their reimbursements yet. The group discussed the lengthy amount of paperwork required to submit a request for reimbursement. The group also discussed that a HUD HQS Inspection is required for someone receiving a deposit or rental assistance, and many of these agencies don't have experience with those inspections. Kristi and Cheryl offered assistance in educating them, as the HUD HQS Inspection is pretty basic.

Kristi educated the group on the Transitions to Community Living project, which stemmed from the Department of Justice Settlement with the State of North Carolina. This is a major reason why Kristi needs to transition leadership of this group, due to the demands of the settlement agreement as we transition people from adult care homes and state hospitals back into our communities.

Cherokee County DSS still has crisis heating assistance money still available, and they encouraged the group to have applicants contact them for assistance.

Kristi updated the group on the Smoky Mountain Center Western Region Shelter Plus Care grants. We currently have 52 individuals and families in the program throughout the 7 county area, and have 8 people on the waitlist.

Reach of Macon County currently has 1 adult and 1 child. They are still providing the New Choices program classes, to help increase self-sufficiency. They have seen an increase in domestic violence protective orders that they help people obtain. They are planning an American Girl Doll fundraiser Tea Party on Mother's Day.

Reach of Haywood County reports they had 6 people in shelter last week, but all have moved out. They are now assisting 1 adult in shelter.

Reach of Clay County reports they had several people move out last week, and they have no one in the shelter currently They work with a local thrift store to provide vouchers for clothing and other items to clients.

Mountain Projects currently has the Section 8 waitlist open in Jackson County and Haywood County. They have slowed down on issuing vouchers, due to guidance from HUD. With looming budget cuts, they are instructed to refrain from issuing as many vouchers.

The Friendship House has 16 people, 10 adults and 6 children currently. They are getting residents into GED classes. They have linked with a local doctor that offers eye care pro bono to residents. They are planning an air show fundraiser in October.

Cherokee County Reach reports they have 2 adults and 1 child in shelter. A resident has gotten a job, and they have successfully moved a family out with the rapid re-housing funds. They had a Valentine's Dinner/Dance fundraiser that was very successful.

New Life Women's Center reports they have 5 adults and 1 child in shelter. They will be utilizing the rapid re-housing for one resident who will be moving into an apartment soon.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 21. 2013 at 11AM at Mountain Projects, located at 2251 Old Balsam Road, Waynesville, NC 28786. If you need additional directions, please contact (828) 452-1447. In keeping with the Third Thursdays schedule (normally 10-12), please mark future meetings on your calendar.