

Region V Systems
Promoting Comprehensive Partnerships in Behavioral Health

HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 17, 2006
1645 'N' Street, Suite A
Lincoln, NE
10:00 a.m.

Present: Jean Chicoine, HHS-NHAP; Seanna Collins, Lincoln Housing Authority (LHA); Julie Hendricks, NE Housing Developers; Carol Murphy, Crete Housing Authority; Sam Ridge, CMHC/Independent Living; Keri Wayne, Lutheran Family Services; James Wells, Consumer, Jay White, CTP/The Heather; John Turner and Marti Rabe, Region V

1. Welcome / Introductions / Minutes

- Introductions were made.
- Turner shared that he had received a certificate of recognition at the Homeless Coalition's Recognition Event this morning, held at the Matt Talbott Kitchen. This event was held in observance of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week.

2. Specific Case Discussion

- There were no specific case discussions.

3. LB40A Proposal

- It was announced that CenterPointe has received verification that their application for HUD 811 funds and will be able to proceed with construction of a ten-plex here in Lincoln.
- Turner explained that he had spoken with Faith Medina of Crown Pointe Management and also Becky Hanna. Crown Pointe continues to remain interested in the LB40A project, and is working to answer questions raised by this group during their review. Areas of concern include lack of a commitment from a non-profit to partner in the project, HUD funds require a minimum of five units, and the time frame is unrealistic.
- Lutheran Family Services and Blue Valley Mental Health have been contacted about applying as the non-profit organization. Other non-profits, such as Blue Valley Community Action, could be considered.
- Hendricks raised the question of why a for-profit entity would want to be involved in this type of project. She suggested that Hanna would be the appropriate choice to partner with, as she was very knowledgeable about this type of project.
- Turner indicated that he will continue to work with Crown Pointe to see if it is possible for them to provide a new proposal by the January meeting. At that time a decision will be made regarding whether or not to continue pursuing the Crown Pointe proposal.
- Crete was mentioned as another possible location for a housing unit of this type.
- Hendricks noted that HUD has the capacity to develop projects which fit the model being sought: sustainable, small, and allowing for choice. Her suggestion was to actively seek information regarding HUD and actively pursue these types of grants. Hendricks agreed to do some investigation about this need.
- Chicoine commented that she had received a call from the Department of Aging. HUD housing can be used for the elderly as well. She noted that they are seeing more elderly homeless persons

4. RentWise

- Funding options for RentWise training packets were discussed. The Department of Economic Development may help with funding, and Chicoine plans to contact printers looking for a lower fee for printing client packets. Turner commented that he is anxious to begin offering regular trainings. Ridge continues to offer Mid-Town as a venue for training. The goal is to build an infrastructure across the state for referrals to RentWise.

5. Utilization

- Turner distributed copies of the data through November 10. Turner commented that the process of collecting data is becoming simpler, and it has allowed the fiscal department to know how many vouchers to bill for each month.
- 70 clients have received funding.
- Data collection over the year has allowed Turner to determine the average expenditure per client. Approximately 21 clients are in the program who have no income, and 38 clients will bridge to Section 8 prior to spending their \$5,000. At this time Turner's intention is to not bring any more clients into the program who have no income unless they are priority 1.
- Clients who bridge quickly without utilizing their \$5,000 voucher allow those funds to be re-allocated for another consumer.
- The average rental payment determined through the data collection is approximately \$328, which is close to LHA rates for a single unit.
- Turner discussed a new process where RAP is helping consumers be responsible to pay off vacate-owings which allows them to become eligible for Section 8.
- SSI and SSDI were discussed. The comment was made that no one should be without income for very long, and reasons why that might be happening were discussed. Turner noted that he evaluates SSI eligibility status on the application form. If clients can access SSI or SSDI, it will be possible to bridge them more quickly to Section 8.
- The status of immigrants was discussed. A large number of immigrants are losing SSI benefits due to the fact that they have not been able to obtain citizenship, and they have been in the country for seven years. These citizenship applications are being held up by a huge backlog of FBI background checks. Turner commented that he does not currently check the citizenship status of applicants for the RAP program.

6. Other Business (Agency Sharing)

- Chicoine commented that Yvette Perret will be returning to Nebraska for two trainings on accessing SSI and SSDI. These two-day conferences will be held March 27 & 28 in North Platte, and March 29 and 30 in Lincoln. These trainings are designed to help caseworkers access these funds more quickly than the typical 18 months/two prior denials scenario.
- Chicoine commented that there was a display at the state capitol relating to hunger and homelessness issues and invited everyone to stop by.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held at Region V Systems on Friday, January 19, 10:00 a.m. The Steering Committee continues to meet on the third Friday of the month.