

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
May 5, 2022, 9:30 AM Kristen Martin at Thrive hosting

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

Kristen Martin, Nickie Kilgore, Kristin Dunn, Rachelle Dugan and Josh Shelton (Thrive); Emily Lowery (The Haven of Transylvania County); Makala Perez, Kennet Melgar and Trisha Ecklund (Blue Ridge Health); Trina Rushing (Henderson Library); Suzanne Porter (Rutherford United Way); Beth Branagan (Transylvania Schools); Amber Story (Partners Behavioral Health M); Jessica Ownbey (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); Jennifer Drum (NC Works, Rutherford-Polk); Jason Schulz (Affordable Homeownership Foundation); Chris Berg. See also the **appended Chat**.

Kristen Martin facilitated, with BoS Steering reported by **Emily Lowery**. Please see the agenda for a ground rules statement.

Minutes of April 7 online meeting were approved by common consent.

BoS Steering Committee May meeting: Emily said an upcoming Continuum of Care 2022 competition was discussed. BoS staff has arranged to be the overall submitter. BoS requires an intent to apply form (a smartsheet) for new projects, available now and due shortly after the NOFO release. The NOFO is expected to come out in July or August. These can be obtained from the NCCEH site or from Emily or Kristen. A webinar recorded March 3rd for new applicants has been posted at YouTube, with a link at the BoS May presentation posted at NCCEH.org. Renewal projects will submit a Grant Inventory Worksheet. Funding priorities have also been updated, see a link in the BoS May presentation. The Scorecard for these grants is being updated by a subcommittee of BoS Steering. New scorecards assembled by CoC staff will be reviewed by Steering Committee on June 7th.

Coordinated Entry (CE) evaluation: A survey is to be offered at least annually to all placed or considered for any homeless housing or shelter program. This recently got underway. There is a version for served persons, but also one for projects. The served-or-referred survey is to be offered to all parties contacted or served between April 1 thru May 31. It will cover effectiveness and quality of all related services from the view of households and of providers. Families and residents accessing PSH – Permanent Supportive Housing, are surveyed by CoC if served in the last year. Also, a survey is to be offered to any sheltered or street-outreach clients (for whom a VI-SPDAT intake exists) contacted between May 17 and 31. Rapid Re-Housing clients must be surveyed within a 30 day window before or after they are housed. These three surveys are all at ncceh.org, as online or also as local/download copies that can be printed and offered to these families and clients and also be responded to by project providers. Responses can be anonymous (paper returned in sealed envelopes, or electronically). The CE survey results will be compiled at BoS and reported to state ESG office, along with any resulting proposals to change CE.

Use of **Emergency Housing Vouchers** was a concern as only 10% of those available are being used. The source of vouchers nearest us is Isothermal Planning and Development Commission, so they are not very applicable to our cases. These are for households that are stabilizing and need rental assistance but would need less case services, or for those with extended periods of homelessness (but without documentable disabilities or chronic-homeless status) on the by-name list, needing longer-term support. Kristen said vouchers are at Foothills Regional for Polk and Rutherford situations. There is a portal but there is trouble in completing the process, as new requirements seem to have been added. NCCEH staff is trying to help. A voucher supply to tribal agencies is also now being made available across the BoS. Thrive's Kristin Dunn is combing the By-name list, and its housing case managers are trying to obtain vouchers for [Back@Home](#) cases that look unready to

discharge but will exit soon due to funds expiring or spent out. Housed cases submitted to the portal are approved by NCCEH and forwarded to Indian Affairs, and CE list cases at the portal are approved by Kristen Martin and also sent to Indian Affairs. Our list is so large that Thrive is submitting all cases that appear to be eligible. Related transportation, assistance with viewing potential units, filling out rental applications, are all covered.

PIT and HIC counts from January 26th were released. BoS recorded 2,491 homeless: 786 were adults with children, 1699 adult individuals-only, and six children-only households. Just over half the count was from HMIS records, 28% was from their Counting-Us app, and 21% by phone surveys. Our Region 2 had 113 sheltered and 108 unsheltered. No county detail was offered. Four of our homeless were veterans.

The **American Rescue Plan** Act, ARPA, directs another round of funds to come early this summer. Steering Committee asks Coalitions or members to attend local meetings where we can and should advocate for local decision makers to support work benefiting those most marginal to typical social supports, based on our expertise or awareness. Likely eligible expenditures include utility assistance, transportation, nutrition assistance; or via independent agencies, for housing, health, education, family support, early education, or business support.

Amber Story asked us to review these advocacy notes and get our views heard ahead of these decisions. Kristen said the agency directors in Henderson are actively pursuing this. Emily got a link to a County fund allocations list [see **several links in Chat**], and noted that Hendersonville will receive \$4 million. We noted that many of these decision makers get invited to Coalition meetings, but **it's up to us attenders to take initiative.**

Suzanne Porter said Rutherford County put out an RFP to other entities to apply for (about \$13 million?) in ARPA funds, and the County Commission will set up a reviewing committee to assess responses. Broadband expansion is a likely request. Kristen asked us to encourage all to use formal or informal channels to influence these choices to support direct services and social supports.

Coordinated Entry update: The regional CE committee tries (creatively) to house anyone on the by-name list. Currently 539 people in 400 households are listed. Some have pending emergency voucher requests, some are being put up for other grant assistance, and our funded agencies are lining up cases for when the new contracts are signed. Nothing is now pending to help doubled-up households or couch-hoppers—they should try to get on Section 8 or Public Housing lists. Thrive will get the EHV (emergency-voucher) application info out to any agency or advocate, or to anyone in need calling in.

Partners For Impact opportunity in Early Childhood education: This would be similar to Schoolhouse Connection support- technical assistance, communications, a little funding to address barriers, but aimed at the preschool population. They received letters of interest till May 3, but these had to come **from regional leads**- and Kristen did not hear from interested agencies to generate specific interest letters. So she wrote a rather generic letter as she can't take this on. She asks all on this call **if you are interested**, to say so in Chat or email Kristen. This person or group needs to pick a chair, contact interested parties (said to include shelters)- Kristen did prompt the CYHAC committee about this, but didn't get any replies. Kristen will forward any responses to all responders. Beth Branagan said CYHAC should be involved. This could be an item at the upcoming CYHAC meeting- where Kristen had planned to present about Thrive.

Outreach: Tricia Ecklund sent out an email invite to join the outreach committee, but hasn't gotten responses. If you have an interest please put that in Chat. There are bimonthly meetings, currently on Wednesdays from ~12:30 to 2, when Blue Ridge's outreach team meets, but that ought to be adjustable as needed.

[Back@Home](#) outreach funds are committed through June as originally scheduled, but Blue Ridge Health has requested an extension through September to both allow their planned supply of hotel vouchers to be kept

flexible to situations as they crop up, and to allow for any possible further funding to be accessed. Blue Ridge workers are actively coordinating with Hendersonville police and zoning officers to relocate camps as they are found. One such is underway this week. Getting this process to be familiar will help prevent friction or future problems with miscommunication. Blue Ridge has a new community health worker in Haywood County; Trisha and the team are briefing him on this coordinating process so he can make Region 1 people aware of the model. Another new worker assigned to Polk County will attend the Hendersonville Resource Fair tomorrow, to see a model for future Polk activities.

Trisha believes that local **homeless people that tried migrating to Buncombe** are starting to return to ‘home’ communities – a pattern that some were seeing as Asheville exporting the needy. Anyone claiming that is becoming a norm, is invited to check with Trisha, she’s happy to address that. Blue Ridge workers do see some migrants from out of state, whom they try to enable to go back if safe return spaces elsewhere can be identified. Alyce Knaflisch welcomed Trisha’s perspective, it’s needed to counter the *Citizen-Times* front page treatment of the matter. Her observations need to get to police, fire, EMS and Sheriff’s staffers. Trisha heartily agreed that it’s important to correct that message.

Hendersonville Resource Fair: Trina Rushing said tomorrow morning 18 providers will set up in the Hendersonville Salvation Army to offer services, supplies and information for homeless or marginal people. Salvation Army agreed to set up two extra tables in case servers intend to come but didn’t notify Trina or library staff. McDonald’s will bring breakfasts, AlyCat will serve some lunches, and Alyce has gotten Subway to offer some lunch stuff also, so good food should be fully available. Trina regretted not lining up a barber or stylist to do haircuts, she will plan ahead more thoroughly for future events, if others can identify that please do. Otherwise she said the event is ready to go.

The **Transylvania Resource Fair** is planned at the County Library on May 24. 24 provider agencies agreed to table, and that’s all tables that the library will allow. Any further servers will have to share tables! Emily hopes that can be worked out, and she’s grateful to Trina for material shared from Henderson. She hopes **Polk** agencies are taking first steps toward their own resource fair; Kristen thought they might coordinate with an existing Polk outreach effort she’s seen notices about. Suzanne Porter said **Rutherford** United Way agencies are negotiating to use a large parking area at Spindale United Methodist Church for a fair, it is a location with good access to short-term shelter. They hope to put it on Wednesday, May 25th from 11 to 2. Kennet Melgar is getting the word out to health agencies. They would also use Trina’s announcement formats.

Back@Home Housing: Kristin Dunn reports that cases have been set up to spend the remaining housing resources through June 30, the original fund cutoff date. So the current effort is to plan for discharges of Back@Home housing clients to secure housing through other means, whether through Emergency Housing Vouchers, likely self-sufficiency, or otherwise. Kristen Martin did secure a Back@Home program extension, and applications can be forwarded even though funding is not specified (but may appear anyway it seems).

Alyce Knaflisch asked how cases are prioritized in this environment. Kristen Martin said those approved for Rapid Re-housing are already on the priority list, and that priority carries over to other rent support offerings. We also negotiate priorities in light of the \$150,000 plus ‘awarded’ for new Rapid Re-Housing but not confirmed by a signed contract. So, we hope (where possible) to find fill-in-the-rent-gap funding from donations or elsewhere when a case may then be shifted to a newly starting fund contract. Staff is encouraging client budgeting, or looking at job sustainability, and other ways to keep people housed.

Racial Equity: Makala Perez said the group debriefed thoughts about the last dialog series, where a last session looked at how racism could impact those seeking home-ownership.

They discussed the Scorecards and how they fit into enabling equitable housing opportunity. An edited draft of the last Scorecard was approved and has been sent to the new annual Scorecard Committee. There are

two Scorecard types, for New or for Renewing projects. They will look at work of the Scorecard Committee at the next RE meeting on May 18th.

Kristen Martin asked if they looked at a BoS pattern of adding consideration of new or revised project-rating factors as counted ‘points’ for the first year, but for following cycles these become ‘standard’ required items. Makala said ‘points’ were discussed at some length, but the overall Scorecard structure of Threshold/Standard/Minimum Score/Total Score was not critiqued.

Alyce said board diversity is a challenging item, as applicants may be 90% White/10% African-American, or 10% White/90% African-American, with both needing to diversify.

Kristin Dunn (on the Scorecard Committee) welcomed these RE statements and will bring them up.

CYHAC: Beth Branagan said the child and youth group next meets May 20th on Zoom, and Thrive will present. Beth also described serving on a cross-panel webinar between NCCEH and NCHEP (NC Homeless Education Program), and pointing to CYHAC as a positive collaboration model uniting McKinney-Vento work to other homeless support affecting young people.

Michael Absher said a Teen Court has been proposed in Henderson, Polk and Transylvania counties. Negotiations are under way, this would help with juvenile diversions.

Michael and Only Hope WNC are also negotiating with Healthy Transitions, they have diverse tools. We should look forward to dialogs on youth homelessness related issues, and support for youth hotel stays, that could have a big impact in our area.

Kristen will alert our list to progress on these.

Lived expertise: Alyce said May 10th and 11th will bring the state Bringing It Home conference. On Tuesday the 10th the Lived Expertise Council will present a workshop. HUD facilitator Matesa Dorley does a good job on making diversity and lived-experience valuable perspectives for work across the states. Please register as the conference will have a lot of lived experience value to see. Emily needed help registering, and Trisha offered to supply useful contacts for that.

Veterans: Alyce Knaflisch said last Friday's Stand-down saw 13 women vets and about 140 male vets attend in Buncombe. Aura Homes hopes to report more work soon on its building and firming plans to house women vets.

Cheriden Lewis said Veterans Service of the Carolinas will be at the Henderson Resource Fair tomorrow, including their new peer-support specialist Dino Conway.

Jennifer Drum offers a variety of help to vets in Rutherford County, or job-seeking there. Please see her info in Chat.

The next regional Coalition meeting will be Thursday, June 2, at 9:30 AM, via Zoom. Kristen hopes to have new housing funding to talk about, and (we hope) several resource fairs to review.

- With respect, Chris Berg

Chat messages:

- Makala Perez; BRHS14:33 Danita Simpson, BRH
 - Beth Branagan14:35 Beth Branagan Transylvania County Schools
 - Catherine Beaver14:35 Catherine Beaver - Henderson CO DSS
 - Trina Rushing14:38 Trina Rushing, Hend Co Public Library

- Nickie kilgore14:47 Nickie Kilgore Thrive
- Emily Lowery15:05 Emily Lowery, The Haven of Transylvania County
- Rachelle Dugan (she/her)15:09 Rachelle Dugan – Thrive
- Michael Absher15:21 Michael Absher Only Hope Wnc
- Chariden Lewis- Veterans Services of the Carolinas16:10 Chariden Lewis, Veterans Services of the Carolinas
- Amber Story (her/she)16:16 Amber Story; Partners
- Jason Schulz16:23 Jason Schulz, Affordable Homeownership Foundation
- Jessica Ownbey16:25 Jessica Ownbey, Henderson County Public Schools
- Trisha Ecklund16:25 Trisha Ecklund Blue Ridge Health
- Ellis Pinder17:42 Ellis Pinder, NCWorks
- Jessica Joyner, Housing Specialist- Vaya Health21:00 Jessica Joyner, Vaya Health
- Kristin Dunn, Thrive23:42 Kristin Dunn, Thrive
- Jennifer Drum24:09 Jennifer Drum-NCWorks/Veterans
- Rachelle Dugan (she/her)32:28

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JIsSSVBqWKKh8IeUx8kq22aTFMuRunPkCAmQo-NfFT4/edit#gid=1514417890>

- Rachelle Dugan (she/her)32:41

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t2DEGcUKa57amVrBSFohjx5mD_hUUJ8exvi4zhKbm9I/edit#gid=1585888715

- Rachelle Dugan (she/her)32:53 <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Housing-Investments-Factsheet.pdf>
- Rachelle Dugan (she/her)33:07 https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/ARPA_State-Local-Housing.pdf
- Rachelle Dugan (she/her)33:20 https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/ARPA_Coronavirus-State-and-Local-Fiscal-Recovery-Funds.pdf
-  Emily Lowery35:37 <https://ncbudget.org/arp/>

-  Rachelle Dugan (she/her) 35:38 Those are the links that I caught from the Steering Committee Meeting that speak on how much each county was awarded and examples on what other counties and states are using their funding on.
-  Emily Lowery 38:47 <https://www.ncceh.org/datacenter/pitdata/>
-  Kristen Martin (she/her); Thrive 01:06:17 <https://nchousing.org/bringing-it-home-2022/>
-  Jennifer Drum 01:09:59 Any Polk or Rutherford County homeless veterans that are looking for work, please send them my way! I can assist with resumes, job referrals, interview techniques, etc. Jennifer.drum@nccommerce.com