Southwestern Regional Homeless Coalition Meeting

March 21, 2013

In attendance: Kristi Case, Smoky Mountain Center; Judith Alvarado, Reach of Clay County; Bart O’Sullivan, Friendship House; Debra Clark, Friendship House; Buffy Queen, Reach of Haywood County; Andrew Romines, Mountain Projects; Seana Skees, New Life Women's Center; Monica Sieffert, Cherokee County Reach; Lynne DeLuca, Smoky Mountain Center

The meeting was held at Mountain Projects in Waynesville, NC.

The group discussed the need for a new leader of this group to step forward. Bart volunteered. He requested assistance to work together during the transition, but will begin participating in the Balance of State conference calls. We took a vote, all were in favor of Bart’s leadership.

The group discussed the last Balance of State Steering committee meeting. We went over the powerpoint presentation from that meeting. We need to notify the Balance of State about the new Regional Lead. We discussed the AHAR report, and how the data from CHIN is used to report to Congress. The Balance of State will begin planning for the new HEARTH requirements, including specific governance structure, and coordinated assessment.

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 the information received from HUD with regards to the sequestration, and that programs should expect a 5% cut in next year’s funding.

We discussed some funding opportunities, including the Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing program, and the Mary Kay Foundation’s Shelter Grant program.

We discussed how to increase affordable housing. The discussion about seeking CDBG funding, and targeting local government officials to participate in this group so they know the need for affordable housing to help end homelessness. Some discussion about rehabbing properties can be made difficult with asbestos and lead paint abatement issues. Should we target real estate professionals and landlords to join this group?

We discussed the need for HQS inspections for Rapid Re-Housing funds, and that people who aren’t as familiar with these inspections need to team up with their local Section 8 office to “tag along” to learn the basics. We need to make sure those who operate these programs are following the homeless criteria, as required for use of those funds (Rapid Re-Housing vs. Prevention…..no Prevention awarded, only RRH).

We discussed the recent closure of Mary’s House, which was a halfway house program for women associated with Christian Love Ministries, a residential substance abuse treatment program. They closed very suddenly, with no prior notice to residents or community providers.

We discussed that there has been some interest from Macon County folks in trying to start a shelter. They continue to be invited to these meetings, but have not yet attended. We hope they will, to learn from others who currently run shelters.

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. There is some expected movement soon, due to people providing notice of moving out of the area.

Reach of Haywood County has 4 women and 1 child currently.

Reach of Clay County has 1 woman currently. They are using their RRH funds, and have been getting referrals from people who don’t qualify for those funds.

Mountain Projects currently has the Section 8 waitlist open in Jackson County and Haywood County. They are not currently issuing any new vouchers. They have ESG/RRH slots open, and will assist those who can become self-sustaining quickly.

The Friendship House has 11 adults and 7 children currently.

Cherokee County Reach has 2 adults and 1 child. They report using some of their RRH funds.

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 Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at 11AM at the Friendship House in Murphy. It is located at 73 Blumenthal Street, 3 doors up from the public library. We typically meet on the third Thursdays, but due to many scheduling conflicts, we have moved April’s meeting.