

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness Meeting Notes 12.14.23

Attendees:

- Blaine Nickeson
- Kim Callius
- Bianca Fisher
- Diana Frick
- Deb DeBoutez
- Tyler Richardson
- Cheri Witt-Brown
- Ernest Cienfuegos-Baca
- Dawn Paepke
- Ashley Weesner
- Juliana Kitten
- Sam Tsemberis
- Jamie Ulrich
- Tami Grant
- Michael Matthews
- Tom Norton
- Melanie Woolman
- Matthew Hortt
- Jeff Carlson
- Kyle Holman
- Adam Turk
- John Gates
- Mary Roberts
- Steve Keller
- Neal Jandreau
- Mark Gonzales
- Mary Young
- Emma Carroll

Online:

- Kelli Pryor- Continuum of Care
- Ken Moore- Amazon Business
- Kristin Toombs- DOLA Office of Supportive Housing
- Jim Mathy- Milwaukee County

Notes:

Milwaukee Trip

- Mayor Gates
 - Milwaukee has done amazing things doing Housing First
 - Asked Milwaukee reps if when they got people housed if people flooded in from Chicago and they said no
 - County commissioners won't financially support this venture- this is the problem
 - He will continue to have discussion with them
- Chief Turk
 - Went with preconceived notions but an open mind
 - Asked What is the alternative to using Housing First? Doing nothing? That's not working now so why not try
- Kyle from Weld Trust
 - They have lots of collaboration
 - Public works dept at Milwaukee had people who worked on maintenance of under bridges and they are the ones who help homeless people there- you never know who could be a collaborator
 - Long term commitment is important
 - Compassion was a huge value there
 - They used lots of ARPA dollars to help

- They seemed to lean on this but this is not sustainable so they are still trying to figure out how to move forward with this
- Ernest from United Way
 - They changed perception of community about homelessness
 - They had a huge outreach team that businesses could call, community members could call and help them get connected to resources and not hope for a more short term handout
 - Didn't see a single homeless person while they were downtown
- Cheri from Habitat from Humanity
 - Peer to peer engagement with the business community was very insightful and impressive
 - Invested in 120 homeownership units were great as prevention
 - Legal support and how they had more advocates helping navigate the legal system for the homeless population
 - It's important to look at new revenue sources for Greeley to make our program more sustainable (Prop 123)
 - Tyler from Richmark
 - Impressed with the collaboration in Milwaukee and utilized each other's resources to solve problems
 - Without the county that's a huge problem- that's a gap we need to fix
 - Interested in how to help individuals in their mental health for Greeley
 - Asked for data on cost benefits of Housing First versus other models and they said they would provide that
 - Deb Deboutez- Councilmember
 - People weren't territorial with their resources
 - They took a problem and were completely committed to the Housing First model but became really good at solving that one problem
 - Bianca from DDA
 - Not just collaboration but also it all flowed really well and organizations didn't fall out of that cycle of the process
 - Community prosecutor was a great idea that was very effective
 - The question was asked- do people choose homelessness?
 - People will say yes if there are no alternatives and just going to a shelter is not a great alternative
 - People won't say no to housing
 - Street angels were somewhat harmful which was a present day challenge they're working through
 - Kimberly Collins from NRBH
 - Underestimated the mental health struggles when people go into congregate care setting
 - Milwaukee said these are our people and how do we help our people
 - New understanding of how important it is to keep pushing the services when someone is housed

- Juliana Kitten
 - Unrelentless dedication and commitment and collaboration
 - We are all responsible when working toward success
- Question
 - What is the availability of housing stock when we get people into housing and moving forward- affordable housing inventory- we have to think about the bigger picture of housing stock
 - Juliana
 - They master leased several units to get people off the street quickly and provide low barrier housing
 - They have housing authority under their purview
 - They utilized the vouchers with master leasing
 - They are working with folks who have a range of needs and one of the ways you can use that is for rapid rehousing- this is for people with more moderate needs
 - Deb: that question wasn't asked but something that we should discuss with Milwaukee reps
 - Sam: the program is not transitional, it's permanent housing. It's focused on people who are chronically homeless. There are enough units to rent on the market now to support these chronic homeless population. For people with moderate needs you would be looking at other options other than low income housing. We need a prevention strategy or else the cycle continues
 - Jim: vacancy rate in Milwaukee is lowest in the country. Master leasing has been a strategy to help and landlord engagement coordinator who's job is to find vacant units and build landlord relationships.
- Question: ARPA funds have been utilized so far, what are plans when these run out
 - Jim: Committed \$6million to housing development construction
 - Master leasing dollars, flexible rental assistance- this is sustained because everyone going in a master lease unit is given a voucher
 - If a client is in a neighborhood they like, they can take over master leasing unit and then the county master leases another unit
- Question: Kelly Pryor: what is the relationship Milwaukee county has with their CoC
 - Jim: They work very closely with CoC and have reps on the board, county receives 30-35% of CoC funding for rental and housing assistance and payments
- Question: how much is Milwaukee spending to support master leasing, per person cost?
 - Jim will get that number to us

Actions Since Last Meeting

- Steering Committee
 - City has started a steering committee meeting 2x per month and find a way to make sure everyone at the City is working together well and the second meeting of the month, external partners will be invited
 - Goal: holding everyone accountable with action items
- Cold Weather Shelter

- Open 24/7 now
- Outreach team
 - 3 beginning members start beginning of January
- Foundations Team
 - 51 people housed currently
 - Important that we have vouchers and are following Housing First- this has led to fewer people in the shelter- Sam: this example will become more frequent (ER visits, mental health care)
 - Ernest: people in our program are giving back and helping in the shelter
 - Jim: important to capture data on the cold weather shelters- great way to look at data through HMIS to see who is coming to warming shelter who aren't unsheltered or what their demographics are- good way to see where our system is doing well or where there are holes
 - Kelli: PIT count is not reflective of the entire context of homelessness- if we have a reduction goal, we need a more targeted strategy of how we are tracking metrics- follow up meeting about how the CoC can help using HMIS to use data strategically (maybe dashboard to monitor data in real time) *Action item*

2 goals for Mayor's Task Force to meet in 4 years

- Reduce total homelessness by 70% in 4 years: total in April 462, total as of today 559
 - How can we collect data we can trust so we know if what we're doing is making a difference
- Reduce # of people becoming homeless by 90%
 - Data is important- we need to have a budget that fits our needs, need to know if people are staying housed
 - A challenge is that many organizations are not using HMIS
 - Do we have the capacity to work with those organizations to collect that data and enter it into HMIS and work more effectively in the future
 - This meeting is being held
 - Weld County Dept of Human Services (all programs are grant funded- Child and Adult protection programs, SNAP, Medicaid, etc.)
 - They have other programs that allow them to pool resources and provide more wraparound services
 - Homeless Prevention Program (\$2.4 million since 2020)
 - Federal grant that helps people who are close to being evicted
 - Hired and have 4 case managers since April 2023
 - 218 referrals, working with 92 households, 41 are actively renting but facing eviction, 37 are actively homeless
 - When those federal grants end, they will propose to the board that there may be an opportunity to use county general fund dollars but they are always actively looking for more funding
 - United Way
 - The coordination that is happening is good now but can always be improved

- If there is a household that already is working with someone, they will be much more comfortable about opening up about what will make them successful by going there so it's important to remember that people need to have the choice to go where they feel most comfortable
 - County, United Way, and City work closely together
- We need to know where people are coming from- how did people get to the resources, what's their story

Recommendations of new invitations to Task Force: Guadalupe, Greeley Family House, Frontier House

Action items:

- A group and CoC/Homeward Alliance (HMIS lead) need to meet to hone in on specific goals related to data
- Map for next meeting of entry points and how to be more strategic with our plans moving forward
- Identifying the different responses needed for different populations and where we prioritize
- Understand each organization that does something about homelessness, what their definition of homelessness, and what they are doing to help- need to coordinate on getting on the same page
- Determine what resources from UNC are available to bring to this problem- specific to data and metrics
- Jim: their main strategy is to eliminate main encampment and tell people how they did it with the Housing First approach- figuring out
- Set up next meeting in 2 months on a Thursday