



New Bedford Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN)

www.nbhspn.com/

Outreach Task Force Meeting Minutes September 2, 2015

Introductory Remarks:

The Rev. David Lima began the meeting with introductions and discussion regarding the purpose of the convened group. He noted that this meeting, as well as future meetings and trainings, will allow all participating agencies to share information and build relationships in order to be serve those in need.

Speakers:

Carl Alves, Executive Director of PAACA (Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction) provided information and current priorities for HSPN (Homeless Service Providers Network). These included:

1. Overflow cold weather shelter
2. Membership development
3. Capacity building (fundraising, etc.)

He additionally provided information specific to the work PAACA does in the community and its role in serving those experiencing homelessness.

Jennifer Clarke, Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development with the City of New Bedford, expanded on describing the HSPN's role in bringing everyone to the table in order to create a coordinated and comprehensive approach to ending homelessness and the importance of translating the work of this group into an outreach policy. She additionally noted the importance of the forthcoming coordinated entry system in making the journey for those being served, easier, and the value of considering enrollment in the next CCIT training in Taunton particularly because of the valuable information it offers as to how to remaining safe with difficult populations and how to best engage. Jennifer encouraged everyone to think outside of the box and develop outreach strategies to reach folks wherever they may be including the downtown and recommended tactical and targeted outreach as a way of offering folks meaningful change.

Nancy Lawson, Emergency Services Coordinator with Catholic Social Services, provided an overview of the plans for Coordinated Entry and offered the following training points:

- The start date goal for the CALL (Coordinated Access to Local Links) is set for December 1, 2015.
- Coordinated Entry will allow for a client to contact one number to access services.
- A standardized collection of information will be instituted and a client will receive a score through a vulnerability index. This will indicate where the client will go on a waiting list for housing. The goal of the Continuum is to serve those with the most needs first.
- Agencies working directly with clients can help by gathering information necessary to determine what programs for which they are eligible. This would include demographic information on page 4 and 5 of the intake

Nancy also offered a series of instructional tips and printed resources that folks had requested as a result of the recent encampment outreach. The information and resources she presented included:

- A sheet of typical acronyms used within the continuum was passed out to help everyone understand the language of providers.
- Nancy explained that CSS (Catholic Social Services) currently has 54 shelter beds available and 123 beds in PSH (Permanent Supportive Housing) with 72 of those beds being in New Bedford.
- A resource packet was handed out answering basic questions regarding services including, shelter, birth certificates, picture id's, work eligibility for non-citizens, street sheets, transportation, and veterans services

[Maritza Aquino](#), Customer Service and ADA Coordinator with SRTA, was introduced and explained a number of new opportunities for those with a disability regarding transportation services. Several different services were addressed:

- Door to door service—Demand Response, can be acquired if a person has a disability that does not allow them to access public transportation at typical stops. An application must be completed with a Doctor’s Signature. You do not need a photo ID to use this service. The application can be found online at www.srtabus.com. The regular fare is 3.00 each way with additional costs outside of the fixed route.
- SRTA now has a Boston Hospital Shuttle running for 25.00 round trip. The Shuttle departs from New Bedford on Tuesdays at 8:30am (arriving in Boston at approximately 10:30am) and leaves Boston at 2:00pm arriving in New Bedford at approximately (4:30-5:00pm) The route departs from Fall River on Thursdays with the same times posted.
- A reduced rate can be provided for those who are elderly and disabled but able to ride regular transportation. This rate is 28.00 a month as opposed to the regular rate of 40.00 a month.
- Day and single ride passes can be purchased in advance at the SRTA office to give to clients.
- A “Charlie Card” is also available where clients can put money on a card and swipe the card upon entering the bus. This helps SRTA remain on schedule as it is a faster process

[Carlos Bettencourt](#), Housing Specialist for People Acting in Community Endeavors [PACE], discussed some of the frustrations with working with families and individuals day to day. There are a number of rules that must be followed when working with federal and state dollars and this, at times, such regulations can feel counterproductive to the work.

[Connie Rocha Mimosa](#), Director of Outreach with Seven Hills, explained the outreach program currently run by Seven Hills. Connie agreed with earlier comments as to the need for safety protocols put in place for those working in outreach. Seven Hills currently provides HIV counseling and testing. Also works to decrease overdose and staff are trained to administer NARCAN. Seven Hills works to reach clients through a number of different avenues and is prepared to offer training specific to these issues as these formalized outreach efforts move ahead.

[Jordan Duarte](#), with the City of New Bedford Fresh Start Program, explained the services they currently offer including:

- ID’s issued at office in Brooklawn Senior Center. An advocate can bring someone in who is currently homeless and they will be given an ID if they have necessary documents.
- Provide assistance with elderly persons who are downsizing
- Provide short term storage solutions for someone moving
- The city maintains “Nana’s Attic” which can be utilized to obtain furniture as needed and accepts donations of furniture and household goods to be given to families and individuals in need.

[George Bailey](#), Volunteer with Mobile Loaves and Fishes [MLF], explained how the program started and how it has grown. The local MLF currently engages with seven churches and one synagogue to provide outreach to those in need in the community. MLF has also assisted with the PIT (the HSPN’s Point in Time count) for a number of years and understands how the agencies must work together to provide opportunities for those they serve.

Rev. Lima closed out the meeting and information was available to everyone in the form of brochures and business cards.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Eddings, LBSW
Catholic Social Services