



**Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness
Council Meeting**

October 27, 2023, 11:07 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Minnesota Housing, Lake Superior Room (and GoTo Webinar for broader audience)

Minutes of Meeting

Land Acknowledgement

1. Welcome and introductions

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan started the meeting at 11:07a.m.

Council Members present: Commissioner Cunningham, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH); Commissioner Gronvall, Minnesota Department of Administration (ADM); Commissioner Ho, Minnesota Housing (MHFA); Commissioner Jacobson, Department of Public Safety; Commissioner Jett, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE); Commissioner Lindsey, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA); Commissioner Marquart, Minnesota Department of Revenue (MDOR); Commissioner Olson, Office of Higher Education (OHE); Commissioner Schnell, Department of Corrections (DOC); Chair Zelle, Metropolitan Council (MetC)

Designees Present: Assistant Commissioner Burton, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT); Director Darielle Dannon, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED); Assistant Commissioner Grumdahl, Department of Human Services (DHS); Assistant Commissioner Hietpas, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT); Assistant Commissioner Minge, Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB);

MICH Staff and Justice Consultants: Cathy ten Broeke, Mary Riegert-Soyring, Elizabeth Dressel and Sue Hite-Kirk, Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness (MICH); Rosalee Abrams Carter, Michael Giovanis, Jeweleen Jackson, Marlana Jasch, Milton Manning, Desmond McCloud, Jacinta Moss and Mason Persons, Justice Consultants

Guests: Leigh Ann Ahmad, St. Paul/Ramsey County Continuum of Care (COC); Patty Beech, Northeast Continuum of Care (CoC); Tammy Moreland and Valerie Whitebird, Minnesota Tribal Collaborative (MTC)

In keeping with the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, guests are welcome. In the interest of time, attendees were not identified in these minutes.

- Lt. Gov. Flanagan acknowledged the incredible amount of work it has taken by all agencies to get to this moment. She expressed thanks to Council members and agency staff for their work to think big and bold in the specific strategies and actions. She also thanked the ten justice consultants who have co-led this process from the beginning and have shown this Council a new way to do this work together, in partnership, centering your voices and expertise. She further thanked partners across the state for their input and expertise along the way, indicating the Council will continue to be partnering as the hard work of implementation begins.
- A video message from Commissioner Harpstead (DHS) was played expressing her enthusiasm for, and her commitment of the plan.
- Commissioner Ho expressed her enthusiasm for this meeting and reviewed the agenda.

1. The Process – Developing the justice plan

Elizabeth Dressel (MICH) provided a high-level intro on contracting with Rainbow Research and the 10 Justice Consultants.

- Michael Giovanis, Justice Consultant, provided a high-level reflection of what it was like to develop the justice definitions with community partners.
 - Consultants initially focused on definitions for health, housing and racial justice
 - Met with communities who expressed the need for accountability and transparency
 - Results were created which guided the strategies and actions
- Desmond McCloud, Justice Consultant, provided a high-level reflection on the work consultants did with agencies to develop the strategies and actions.
 - The work is meant to be transformative
 - This is meant to be a living document subject to change, but in the sense that we move forward, not backwards
 - The intent is to keep the work of the plan in the forefront and continue to measure outcomes

Elizabeth further provided a high-level summary on taking public comment, amount of engagement and interest, website as an interactive tool, and the plan for continued use of this tool to gather input throughout implementation.

2. The Plan – Results and strategies

Mary Riegert-Soyring (MICH) reviewed the bold results to remind Council that the plan is organized by the results.

Cathy ten Broeke (MICH) reviewed the strategies that will drive the results and the measure of progress the Council will track through implementation. She explained that this is what the Council will be committing to, what will be monitored, and that there are specific action items that will drive the work. She further referred to the plan as a living, breathing document that will be continuously adjusted as needed.

Comments:

- Often people assume our homeless relatives do not think about home ownership, which is not true. The plan affirms the work to figure out what the options are to make home ownership a real possibility for our homeless relatives.

3. Implementation Overview

Cathy expressed tremendous gratitude for all the work over the last year and a half by everyone! Success of the justice plan is relative to all the partners across the state, people on the ground, Tribal Collaboratives, Continuum of Care representatives and the quality of these relationships. The plan's success, more importantly, will be in our ability to continue to listen to those closest to the issue of homelessness.

Cathy reviewed the overall measures of progress and the connection to the One MN Housing Stability Goals. Each result has a measure of progress, which will be reviewed at Council meetings throughout implementation.

Comments:

- Will there be a separation from a black perspective in terms of African Americans as decedents from those enslaved in terms of statistics but also how we move forward?
- The implementation team will need to think about what data is collected. It is understood that decedents of those that were enslaved are disproportionately experiencing homelessness, and sadly for the first time we are seeing new immigrant families who are experiencing homelessness.
- Be more intentional about the language we are using in our documents as it relates to American Indians.
- American Indian is the term the federal government uses and is the way the data is collected.

Cathy also reviewed the structure of implementation, which is the initial frame the Council has already committed to:

- Center people with lived experience of homelessness as well as community. Implementation consultants are central to the implementation work at all steps (and helping us engage with many more people with lived experience around the state) and will be working closely with agency staff and the Council. Working

with broader community will result in many more opportunities to engage with people closest to the issue.

- Agency action leads will oversee specific action parts of the plan and will keep us on track for how strategies and action steps are progressing.
- Action leads collectively will review Results 1-5 across action items and review progression towards effective strategies.
- Senior leaders and newly formed equity team will lead in solving problems as we are doing the work and will think about ways to adjust and improve plan if we are not getting results.
- The Council will ultimately be accountable for achieving the results of the plan.

Mary reviewed the main roles in more detail and asked the Council to start thinking about the right staff on their teams who will support the implementation of this plan. The implementation consultants will also support their teams.

Mary led a discussion to gather initial thoughts on engagement: ***How can we as state agencies work most effectively with Tribal government, local governments, providers, communities most impacted on the implementation of this plan?***

Comments:

- policy development
- outreach
- boots on the ground
- state agencies partnering with local and county lived experience advisory groups that already exist as allies and informers of this work
- keep helping regions, providers, Tribes and counties coordinate the resources on the ground; have never seen organizations struggling as much as they are right now
- keep traveling and doing the outreach
- keep working with organizations one on one
- make grant funding processes and resources as easy as we can for the folks on the ground
- use empowerment strategies when working with Tribes; ask them for their definition of a successful collaboration; follow up on promises with action and keep lines of communication open
- make grant processes accessible to small non-profits
- state agencies and other government entities need to involve those with lived experience of homeless as paid mentees
- be inclusive and intentional with those that are experiencing homelessness and disabilities or other health related issues

4. Council Commitment

Lt. Gov. Flanagan stated that we are collaboratively doing something never done before and, therefore, it is our burden and opportunity to see that this work continues into the future. She highlighted that the plan was intentionally created to identify the highest, most transformational actions toward justice.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan asked the council member the following commitment question: ***Do you believe if we do the highest priority actions we have named in this plan, we will see the number of Minnesotans facing homelessness go down and a reduction in the disproportionate impact of housing instability on Native and Black and Brown Minnesotans?***

- Commissioner Conningham (MDH) – Yes
- Commissioner Jett (MDE) – Yes
- Commissioner Marquart (MDOR) – Yes
- Commissioner Lindsey (MDVA) – Yes
- Commissioner Schnell (DOC) – Yes
- Chair Zelle (MetC) – Yes
- Commissioner Jacobson (DPS) – Yes
- Commissioner Olson (OHE) – Yes
- Director Dannen (DEED) – Yes
- Commissioner Campbell (MMB) – Yes
- Commissioner Gronvall (ADM) – Yes
- Assistant Commissioner Hietpas (MnDOT) – Yes
- Assistant Commissioner Grumdahl (DHS) – Yes
- Commissioner Ho (Minnesota Housing) – Yes

There was resounding acknowledgement of the adoption of the plan with additional comments as follows:

- Acknowledge the call to be more transformative and accountable; cannot achieve health outcomes without addressing housing instability
- Always trying to remove barriers for access and opportunity so that quality education is achievable for everyone
- We *think* we know what access means to people with lived experience of homeless, but we cannot know unless we actually ask
- We do not know entirely how to work with children experiencing homeless, but we have come far; it is a new day with advocacy of the council
- Commitment to intersectionality as well as nurturing and building relationship with state agencies, counties and cities so that transitional policies and systems are elevated to transformation and not just administration
- The best answers are usually found closest to the problem

- Partner with CoCs, local governments, Tribal communities and non-profits to reach those most impacted as identified in the implementation plan
- Outreach listening sessions to address gaps in access to services
- The importance and challenge of this commitment is literally in front of us and we are charged to serve this population; core to the success of people with lived experience is housing stability; the plan demonstrates collaboration, wisdom, substance and hope
- The plan represents a call to action for collaboration of boots on the ground along with tangible action steps for using resources that make a difference
- Opportunity in upcoming legislative session to make a difference regarding source of income discrimination which needs to be a top priority for the Council
- Collaborative work with non-profits and other jurisdictions and use best practices; use data to find gaps; keep lived experience front and center and let people with lived experience tell us what works best; support staff doing the work; do the work with humanity every day, with every person we interact with, every staff member, and every person in a homeless encampment to help bring about success to implement this plan
- Campus tours include seeing students living in cars as well as children staying in cars while relatives are taking classes; opportunity to be involved in small and large ways to include investments and resources for parents that are students
- Work force component in the plan provides an amazing opportunity to drive programs pivoted significantly towards serving people facing homelessness
- When MMB was asked to join this Council colleagues asked “What does MMB have to do with homelessness?” The response is clearly that the agency oversees state employee resources to run state government and money that comes from state government, MMB has everything to do with homelessness. The plan is thoughtful, comprehensive and inclusive of the people with lived experience of homelessness who matter most to help move the needle
- New contracts team to work with public/private vendors to discuss how to pay consultants, provide financial resources to those unbanked; and to weigh concerns about non-profits and how get financial resources to those who need it; also expanding equity within grants
- Priority to keep those living outside on agency right of ways safe and treated with respect; commitment includes following through within the agency as well as collaboratively with other agencies, Tribal Nations, and communities across the state; appreciate the plan’s flexibility to move and adjust as needed
- The plan is at core with the DHS strategic plan; committed to reducing disparity and achieving equity as a central way to manifest an anti-racist agency; for justice to be done, justice must be something that we do
- There is \$2.6 billion in the budgets across the council agencies to do the housing stability work of the plan

5. Closing Remarks - Consultant Reflection and Vision Statement

Lt. Gov. Flanagan acknowledged the incredible work of the Justice Consultants who put so much of themselves into this work, helped build this process with us, and showed the Council it is possible to center the expertise of people experiencing homelessness to co-design and develop our work in state government.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan reminded everyone that there is a lot more to do to. Truly centering people with lived expertise is about engaging meaningfully and authentically with people closest to the issue all across the state. She expressed her commitment to lift up the importance of that in all of the Council's work.

On behalf of all the Justice Consultants, Rosalee Abrams Carter and Milton Manning shared lasting reflections:

- Consultants have become a very close group and it has been a privilege to work together
- Rainbow Research was instrumental in bringing the Consultants together
- Truly an amazing experience working to create change for ending homelessness in Minnesota
- Consultants have felt heard by the Council and the agencies they worked with
- Commitment for some of the consultants took much more time than the monthly hours planned
- All agencies should have some capacity to financially support consultants in their work for such things as public transportation
- Consultants would have benefitted from some of the agency trainings
- Bring the justice consultants back in some capacity
- Hopeful the work done together will create the change that needs to happen and open doors for our unsheltered relatives
- Will carry all that has been learned from this experience into other work going forward. Grateful for the experience...Thank You!

Mason Persons, Marlena Jasch and Jacinta Moss, Justice Consultants, read the Vision Statement to close the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at: 1:10pm

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