

Task Force on Shelter Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 18, 2022; 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Meeting held via Zoom

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Stacy Sjogren welcomed everyone and took roll call for the meeting.

Members Present: **Andrea Simonett**, Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS); **Ariana Daniel**, Servants of Shelter-International Falls; **July Vang**, public member; **Kate Erickson**, Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC); **Laura Birnbaum**, St. Louis County; **Lauren Ryan**, Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS); **Mary Manning**, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH); **Mary Riegert**, Minnesota Tribal Collaborative; **Melea Blanchard**, Catholic Charities; **Nancy Bokelmann**, City of Mankato; **Paul Williams**, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA); **Reed Olson**, Nameless Coalition-Bemidji; **Rinal Ray**, People Serving People-Minneapolis; **Ron Elwood**, Legal Services Advocacy Project; **Sam Juneau**, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT); **Sherry Shannon**, public member; **Tamara Stark**, Tubman; **Tyra Thomas**, Street Voices of Change

Guests Present: Kristina Krull, Stacy Sjogren and Mongkol Teng (MMB); Cathy ten Broeke, Eric Grumdahl and Sue Hite-Kirk, Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness (MICH)

Note: Guests attending via YouTube livestream or on the phone were not identified

Agenda Review

2. Small order of business

- **Approval of Minutes:**
 - No edits requested; approved by consensus
- **Welcome new members:**
 - **Amy Midthus**, member of the public
 - **John Bradley**, Freedom from the Streets
 - **Melea Blanchard**, Catholic Charities
- **Legislative updates on request for extension**
 - Champions in House and Senate have managed to get that extension language in the respective omnibus bills
 - Reed will not be able to continue with the Task Force at the same level beyond August 2022
 - Other members with concerns for continuing beyond August should reach out to Kristina
- **Election of new vice-chair**
 - Volunteer: Nancy Bokelmann
 - Roll call vote to approve Nancy as new vice-chair; Ayes = 15; Nays = 0; Abstain = 0
 - Congratulations Nancy in her new role as vice-chair

3. Reviewing draft standards

- **Standard: Length of stay**
 - What type of crisis is being referred to? Could involve many crises issues with no time limit, thus language “until the crisis is involved”.

- Crisis situation as expressed may need to spell out more positive intent
- Sometimes there is disadvantage if an individual goes off the wait list and then if need to get back on, they are at the bottom of the list
- Can language include inability to find affordable housing
- Best practice is that shelter is provided until whatever the crisis(es) is has been revolved
- Definition of “program” refers very generally to the many different facilities and their programs
- Poll: mostly perfect/pretty close; a few wanting changes/uncomfortable
- Email Kristina if further comments need to be submitted
- **Standard: Accessibility**
 - Surprising that basics of access remain inaccessible
 - Continuum of Cares (CoCs) are working on racial equity; perhaps the task force can work with CoCs on this.
 - Poll: mostly perfect/pretty close; a couple wanting changes/uncomfortable
 - Email Kristina if further comments need to be submitted
- **Standard: Grievance**
 - Status of grievance – how long it will take and what is the process
 - Will add in that individual should be able to find out status
 - Poll: all it’s perfect/pretty close
 - Email Kristina if further comments need to be submitted
- **Standard: Resident privacy**
 - No information to review at this time; the workgroup will provide an outline on this topic at the May meeting

Trans standard update

Discussion/Comments

- Volunteers who would be willing to attend one to two meetings with community members to talk about this:
 - Laura Birnbaum, Andrea Simonett, Ariana Daniels
- Community group members that we could invite to that conversation:
 - Minneapolis referral from Andrea
 - Email Kristina with other suggestions for community group members

4. Existing oversight in Minnesota

Member packet included several handouts that Kristina reviewed during this discussion.

Discussion/Comments

- What to do differently in this process?
 - Process looks great and makes sense
 - Feasibility to include state and facility costs
- Volunteers to have a meeting with Kristina to talk about oversight options:
 - Ron Elwood, Sherry Shannon, Mary Riegert
- Additions to “dream state” from the December meeting:
 - Make people feel comfortable as they initially approach a shelter
 - Residents shouldn’t have to pay to stay in shelter
- What was something interesting you heard or something that surprised you about Minnesota’s oversight?

- Shelters receiving oversight, what does that actually look like? How is oversight executed and how often? Kristina showed details in a later document.
- What is the role of counties in oversight? If you have thoughts that Kristina should look into, please email her.
- There are different types of shelter setting across the state e.g. churches. How do we look at their oversight vs. shelter oversight from the state?
- If state and federal governments provide money, why is money taken from individuals to stay at shelter? Could be reflective of county policies that are in place. Hennepin County has had some changes; their practice is to eliminate that for all shelters in the county. Sometimes a contribution is a county requirement and sometimes it is a shelter requirement.
- Not really one statute more encompassing than others in Minnesota; however, statutes for youth shelters are comprehensive.
- Wondering with state oversight, how so much can still go wrong.
- Best practices from DHS for grantees tend to be higher level and not necessarily what shelters have to adopt; wondering if based on this, more structure can be provided to shelters. Because there are so many different types of shelters across the states, by grantee these details are put into each contract for oversight.
- DHS has guiding principles that they follow, and approach facilities with respect and transparency with the intent to be in partnership with facilities.
- What does this mean for the task force's conversations about examining the need for, and feasibility and cost of, state oversight?
 - Email Kristina with your thoughts about this.

5. **Close Out and Next Steps:** The minutes from today will be posted on the website in a couple weeks. The Zoom chat file will be saved appropriately to the files. Kristina will email out the homework and deadlines to all members.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 16, 2022; 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.