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Concord Coalition to End Homelessness

<http://www.concordhomeless.org>

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To: Concord Plan to End Homelessness Steering Committee members
From: Ellen Groh, CCEH Director
Date: October 15, 2015

Re: Update on Plan to End Homelessness

I. Expanded Resource Center (Goal 1 of Plan)

As of October 12, 2015 the Resource Center hours have been extended to 9 am- 5 pm Monday through Friday (previous hours 9 am- 1pm.) This is a direct result of the \$10,000 received from the City of Concord for increased “shelter diversion” capacity for the winter months (see below.)

We have had staffing changes:

Our main Resource Center caseworker (Jackie Thomson) has been hired as the full-time Housing Stability Specialist for the Housing First Concord program. Jackie already has a trusting relationship with the majority of people on our prioritized list, and she has been involved with designing the program in Concord, so she can hit the ground running. We have hired a part-time Resource Center caseworker, Teresa Lombardi, to fill Jackie’s vacated position. Teresa previously worked for 211, which includes the homeless hotline service, so she is very familiar with area resources and the type of work the Resource Center does. Sue Coviello will continue as our second, part-time Resource Center caseworker. Unfortunately, our Resource Center Manager is leaving due to changes in his family situation, so we will be hiring to fill that position.

II. Housing First (Goal 1 of Plan)

Great news! CCEH has passed the first hurdle in obtaining federal funding for 10 units of rental assistance for our Housing First Concord program, and the funding will hopefully be available in September 2016. This federal funding became available due to the reallocation of funds from two other projects in other parts of NH that have ceased operating and so are not re-applying for funds. CCEH partnered with Cross Roads House shelter in Portsmouth to apply for these funds, and our joint application was selected in the State’s competitive process, so our project will be included in the State’s total application to HUD for federal funding. Because this funding was previously allocated to NH, it is highly likely that they will be allocated to NH again.

This partnership with Cross Roads House is ideal, because they will administer the rental assistance, relieving CCEH of this strain on our administrative capacity. This rental assistance will solidify our Housing First Concord program, since turnover at Concord Housing and Redevelopment is slow, and they have regulations that exclude some of our most vulnerable

potential participants. CCEH will use our previously awarded State Grant in Aid funding and Lincoln Financial Funding to pay for the caseworker position to support individuals in the Housing First Concord program.

III. Cold Weather Response Strategy

As we anticipated, now that the weather has gotten colder, the community's attention is being drawn back to the loss of the Cold Weather Shelters as a resource for the coming winter. With major funding applications completed for the fall, I can turn the majority of my attention to making this transition as smooth as possible.

I received a call from a Concord resident who is asking to appear before the City Council in November to ask why the City is not creating a shelter. I told him CCEH had approached the City to see if they could provide a location, and/or manage, a smaller, 20 bed shelter as part of a multi-pronged response to winter needs, and that the City said they were not in a position to do this. I spent a long time explaining the overall plan and the big picture, as well as the specific efforts we are taking to keep people safe this winter. I let the Mayor know I'd received this call.

Getting the word out:

This summer, Jackie Whatmough distributed a notice to the local Welfare network, and the Bureau of Homeless and Housing Services (BHHS) also distributed a notice to service providers statewide, that there would be no cold weather shelters in Concord this year. *Jackie will send another reminder soon.*

Housing First permanent housing:

The full-time Housing Stability Specialist was hired as of October 1st and has been helping to orient the new Resource Center case manager. She will now be able to begin aggressive efforts to house individuals from our list who have income and who are willing to accept caseworker support. We have seven individuals on the Concord Housing and Redevelopment waiting list (since June) so we hope that an apartment is available for some or all of them by December or January.

McKenna expansion:

My understanding is that there have been some of the inevitable delays of a construction project, but they are still on track to be completed early this winter (maybe January?)

Shelter Diversion:

The plan is for each Resource Center caseworker to work a half-day, with overlapping shifts, during the winter months. This will allow for optimal communication and brainstorming on especially challenging situations. We also plan to initiate weekly (and more frequently as needed) "triage" meetings with the PATH and CAP outreach workers to provide rapid response and coordinated support to urgent needs on an ongoing basis throughout the winter. We will also communicate regularly with City Human Services. The State is hosting a workshop on Coordinated Entry at the end of October, and the role of 211 this winter will be further defined.

Individualized alternatives for vulnerable, long-term Concord homeless individuals:

We will now begin working aggressively with the Community Action Program homeless outreach worker, the PATH mental health outreach worker, and City Human Services to identify
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individualized housing alternatives for the most vulnerable, long-term homeless individuals in the Concord area who have previously relied on the Cold Weather Shelters. I have begun reaching out to local landlords, about both our longer-term Housing First program and the possibility of using funding from the CAP agency to provide apartments or rooming house rooms just for the winter months. Our Housing Stability Specialist could provide some support to these individuals over the winter since she won't have a full caseload of permanently housed individuals yet.

Emergency Protocol:

CCEH will be meeting with staff from Concord Hospital/Emergency Services to talk about their response if/when individuals want to sit in the waiting room to stay warm. Peter Evers has offered to be part of this meeting, which will be very helpful. This is part of CCEH's broader goal of having indoor places identified where people can be directed to go as their last resort to stay warm and safe. Ideally, these are places that are already open all night long and where people would be allowed to just sit without being asked to move on.

IV: Other

Phoenix House, a non-profit provider of substance abuse treatment services, has approached me about locating a facility in Concord. I am connecting them with Peter Evers to see how Phoenix House might fit into efforts that are already underway. At some point, they may want to meet with the Steering Committee for feedback and advice.

Tim Sink and the Chamber of Commerce hosted a forum on Heroin and Homelessness which was well-attended, and highlighted the compassion of the police and correctional facility staff and the need to deal with addiction as a disease more than as a crime.

Don't forget:

CCEH is holding a donor appreciation reception for our biggest supporters, and we would be honored to have you all there. Whether or not you have supported CCEH financially, your time, energy, and commitment on the Steering Committee is greatly appreciated, and you serve as wonderful ambassadors of the Plan to End Homelessness.

Thursday, October 22, 2015
5:30 – 7:30 pm
At the home of Bill & Sue Pribis
20 South Spring Street, Concord, NH 03301
Wine & appetizers will be served

Please RSVP to David Keller at [603-224-7129](tel:603-224-7129) or by email to mike@concordhomeless.org by Sunday, October 18, 2015. Feel free to bring a guest.

Thank you all for all your time and energy!!

Ellen Groh