4.6.23 Notes

Last meeting we reviewed quite a bit of SMAC data. A question came up about how many people were entering our system in 2022 and thinking why that might be. Is it because we have more shelter now and there is more access through those shelters? Interestingly enough, the number from shelter about stayed the same between 2021 and 2022. That is dependent upon data quality, but I believe the comparison to hold pretty true. We saw a jump of people entering directly from the streets. An additional 100 folks entering in couch-hopping situations. That’s about the opposite of what we thought! I’m not sure why but it is.

I would think having people in shelter would make it easier to access people. I’d be curious to hear from Bill about his street outreach and see how far Ally’s reach is making it to people on the streets. He’s probably done a big chunk of that.

Bill was thinking talking through this that he’s also surprised. He thought it would be a shelter as well, especially based on Ally’s experience. But thinking deeper, there has been an uptick of several hundred more people that we’ve been exposed to through outreach or community calls. We have been in contact with many more people who are experiencing outside, unsheltered homelessness.

None of the shelters had availability all the time, so it was likely getting connected with people prior to shelter. Bill can see the urgency in people who have health issues or vulnerabilities that make it so they cannot access shelter. One of the trends is people who are chronic homeless who don’t respond to Housing Support, to benefits, to shelter, but I’d have to think on it a bit longer.

Our main discussion point today is thinking about the main Point of Entry Assessment itself. Does it make sense to scrap the assessment? Could it align differently? Also wanted to talk about Coordinated Entry prioritization and how that’s not working. In what way would we prioritize it instead? There are some questions from Ramsey that we can consider that may be less traumatizing. We are trying to counterbalance the access of Black and Indigenous households in their access to housing.

I don’t think we use the COVID-19 policy and questions anyway, but I’m unsure if we can remove it. Sounds like the wrong document was emailed out with the agenda, but we can look through it now together. Down to Section 4, why do we need to know the race and ethnicity of household members? They would need to know name and gender for bedroom size, but not race and ethnicity. Are you willing to work? Is that necessary or just the income level? Are they on non-cash benefits? People were really feeling like the series of questions about domestic violence were re-traumatizing. Why is it any of our business? We need to know if they’re in an unsafe situation, but q’s like “have you ever” weren’t necessary. It doesn’t change anyone’s eligibility so what is the purpose to ask. We can simply outline the opportunities and ask if someone thinks they would be eligible based on requirements.

Are we looking to share the assessment with Ramsey County? ICA proposed to all the COCs in the state, breaking up shared assessments in HMIS to make administrative requirements easier. Up until now we haven’t changed our assessment, but when Liz checked with Ramsey they had already been changing their assessment. So it was a surprise moment that we can and should be changing it. It wouldn’t change the fact that clients need to seek those separate access points for different COC assessments.

Liz will ask Ramsey to send a copy of theirs that we can take a look at.

Severe mental illness had concerns as it may sound judgmental. I know that HUD requires some of these things, but there’s still a feeling that we’re asking for more information than we actually need. The other piece was saying that a 5 year housing history is just asking too much. We’re not really using the question that asks 16-22 year olds if there’s someone else they could be staying with. The barriers to housing question with dollar amounts could change so rapidly over time so often it’s not up to date and relevant.

Legal questions are tough because sometimes people don’t want to share and don’t realize the purpose of asking legal history.

The question can be changed about wanting an apartment that monitors visitors. The Target populations question doesn’t seem very relevant to housing options as there’s only one specific that this applies to, so it’s not relevant. Then the question for youth who have come out of foster care, there’s really nothing to clarify what that question is asked for.

Last, have you ever been evicted? And if so through what county. That would be nice to ask that eviction piece.

Breakout sessions.

Add MA question? Or is it already listed under a non-cash benefit?

On board for “serious mental illness” because of the value it adds to vouchers or programs that require SMI/SPMI specifically.