SMAC CES Committee Agenda

January 7th, 2021

9:00-10:30

1. **Introductions – (via chat)** 5 minutes

Attendance: Matt L., Tasha C., Sheena (The Link), Mica (Hope4Youth), Alyssa P., Jen R., Bill C., Rebekah S., Kristen B., Jennifer M., Hope I., Mark M., Diane P., Doreen F., Peter G., Pat M., Madeline K., Jennifer C., Natalie E., Abby (SMAC), Mary (Beacon-FMF), Kelly L (Center City), Linda B., Rachel B., Suzie M., Teri L., Miel S., Heather D., Dan L.-S., Liz M., and Michele R.

1. **Chronic Youth and Families update** 10 minutes

The number of families entering homelessness was less than the number of families exiting homelessness within our system during the month of December, which was a drastic improvement over November

Youth singles also exited homelessness at a higher rate than those who entered our system in December

The number of households that have met the definition for Chronic Homelessness stayed relatively consistent between November/December, but many of these households now have open referrals and/or are active within the Case Consultation process

The average number of days that households who have met the definition of chronic homelessness are on the PL is trending downward. This seems to be consistent across populations, especially now that the switchover in Youth prioritization has occurred.

1. **2020 Work Plan Review**  10 minutes

(Reviewed the information contained in ‘*Action Plan 2020 12.28.20 Update*’, which was incl. with agenda)

Finished Procedures Manual – Ensures that operations will continue in the event that Liz/Alyssa are no longer working in their current role(s) and/or are unavailable for whatever reason

Priority Pool Prioritization – Culturally specific targeting within the way that we prioritize households for housing program openings within SMAC CE was initiated/completed via the recommendation to prioritize youth in the priority pool

Acknowledgement that Centralized Access will improve the ability to deliver some of these action steps that are not yet completed

Step 1 CE Assessment is currently with ICA (HMIS System Administrator). We anticipate that it’s likely to be in HMIS by the end of January. As promised previously, there will be training and correspondence specific to this soon

HUD Data Standard Implementation – Transition from the old PL to the new one. In order to complete this task, a team of folks went through every record of the households active on the PL to ensure that their assessments were up to date & consistent with our PL standards. Consideration made towards their homeless status & recency of connectivity with components of our homeless response system. These activities better ensure that our data is in a place where we can glean real information from it.

Assessor Training – Previously, assessor training was done jointly with the Hennepin & Ramsey CoCs. Both continuums respectively decided to do their own trainings, so we came back to the drawing board to determine how best to update ours. With the introduction of social distancing practices & other COVID related realities, it made more sense to adjust to delivering these trainings into an online format. After a ton of work done to get these recorded & finalized, they are now included on the SMAC site

Director’s Council was established! Still working on the passage of bylaws (*Gov. Board vote still needed*)

Housing Stabilization Services (HSS) – Held meetings with a variety of stakeholders at different levels to determine how this will look across SMAC. Connected with DHS staff to discuss concerns & needs, created workflow development & meetings with access points to start thinking this through further and the role that they’ll take on.

Reviewed shelter data through a racial equity lens and sought to address inequitable shelter exits through the way that we implemented priority list standards

Prevention alignment discussions continue – CHAP processes pursued to demonstrate possibilities of joint prevention work

Case Consultation revamp – once PL was cleaned up, this allowed this process to more intentionally focus on needs & wants of those currently active on PL. Using this more to fill openings rather than to do list maintenance

CES Committee revamp – work done to collect feedback to better understand the intent of this meeting and how to ensure that CE specific info was more readily accessible to those working within the system

Veteran’s Declaration – Huge accomplishment

Still need to do:

* Better Integration w/ Homeless Liasions
* Continue Coordination/Integration w/ Segregated Settings
* Mainstream Benefit Integration

Action Step: Post *‘Action Plan 2020 12.28.20 Update’* (or similar formatted document outlining accomplishments) on SMAC website to ensure that it’s easily accessible to demonstrate work.

1. **RMC Update** 10 minutes

Regional Metro Committee (RMC) – Committee comprised of County staff, many of whom are in planning roles across the 7-county metro. Meets regularly to discuss homelessness-dedicated services, support and how to better provide & coordinate services across county boundaries.

Henn. County developed Tenant Resource Center – Site based location that folks can go to access prevention resources. Spawned from efforts in Henn. Cty. to more intentionally integrate FHPAP with EA/EGA. The intent was to make this more of a one-stop shop as opposed to having those seeking prevention resources run to multiple sites. COVID demonstrated to Henn. Cty & to others the impact of this model, so they wanted to adjust to offer these services in a virtual format as well. Partnerships have been worked on with UW211.

It’s been identified that while there are philanthropic partners interested in funding a resource center model like this, at least in terms of startup capital & service funding for the first year of operations, they would be much more apt to do so if the services extended beyond a singular community. Across the 3 Metro CoCs, this is being considered as a way to potentially align prevention resources together to collaborate on delivering services in a more person-centered way. Since the infrastructure is built or at least in development (website), could SMAC/Ramsey also be participatory in this?

Recognizing that most SMAC prevention resources are funded via FHPAP, approaching the RMC with this idea seemed like a good way to connect with FHPAP grantees to consider doing this work jointly. Presented the idea of including our resources (or at least information/referral-specific) into this tenant resource model pool, which would allow for users across the metro to have one place to call and then be able to get updated referral info from there regardless of their community of residence.

Please be mindful that the Centralized Access plans that we’ve engaged in discussions around would have the potential to be more all-encompassing than this and could be further developed from participating in this venture. This is a baby step towards delivering collaborative approach services.

**Concerns/thoughts:**

* Requires additional discussions with Henn. Cty providers that have utilized/referred folks to the Tenant Resource Center. There are some potential discrepancies between the way in which County staff are promoting & excited about these services and the experiences of direct service staff in accessing them.
* Mn Housing protocal for FHPAP – Mn Hsg. requires metro counties to be own grantees, with completed needs assessments, which in turn guides the response to RFP/identification of providers. Asking Mn Hsg. whether it would be allowable to divert funding to these purposes if our respective needs assessments don’t identify this as a need/desire of the community… Would it also be an eligible activity?
* Confusion about where the funding will come from to deliver these services. Not entirely sure that FHPAP will be the identified funding stream to do these activities. How will ongoing funding be received? (Could be eligible FHPAP expense, County Levy, ongoing funding by something like CoC funding grant, etc.).
* Reminder that integration with 211 will look differently than CHAP.

Timeline: Still undefined. Expecting it to be implemented/available later in 2021

Likely have at least 6 months before resolve is needed. More immediately though, we need to ensure that this is included or at least discussed in respective FHPAP planning, which will take place more imminently.

Early conversations will center around what do we want to see stood up and how far do we want these services to go? How do we prioritize funding/energy towards Centralized Access and this venture? FHPAP can only be stretched so thin, so focusing funding will be necessary & helpful.

Several volunteers have already signed up for Centralized Access subcommittee – first meeting on the 21st of January at 3:30pm.

Anyone else interested in joining, please send Liz an email (lizm@hearthconnection.org)

1. **Youth Access** 10 minutes

Steep decline in the number of youth active on PL (*youth program openings came during this time too*) so it wasn’t just the prioritization adjustment. Still too early to determine future trend data but seems to be consistently around 30-40 youth households at any time that are active on the PL across SMAC.

To better determine whether this was accurate, Liz met with Youth access points. Through these meetings it was identified that there were likely more youth outside or in shelter who were not on PL. That said, there weren’t any glaringly obvious red flags that dictated why this was happening

If this is truly reflective of our youth homelessness numbers, then it may be suggestive of a pretty significant downward shift in the number of youth entering our system that are either experienced sheltered homelessness or unsheltered homelessness. This is of significant note because it will likely allow for us to seek to broaden our eligibility criteria for youth to access PL. This will be created in conjunction with our youth access points & will be clearly communicated.

LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS!

Understanding that this is a discussion centered around ending sheltered/unsheltered youth homelessness. This does not include youth that are couch-hopping/doubled-up and/or those that are exiting foster care into episodic homelessness. These would serve as examples for the next population groups that we would have an opportunity to focus our attention & efforts around.

1. **Eligibility Review** 40 minutes

Eligibility Criteria for SMAC CE Programs is available to be reviewed here: https://www.smacmn.org/coordinated-entry

We reviewed the new programs that need to be added to this site, programs that have updated their eligibility criteria since they were added to this site, and then received updates on the programs that had previously provided eligibility criteria that elicited additional questions and/or required additional discussions & recommendations.

The Excel worksheet that we reviewed was provided to us in the meeting materials that Liz sent out prior to the meeting. The is titled ‘*Program Eligibility Updates 2021*’

*New Programs*: (This list can be found in the ‘2020 Updates’ tab of the aforementioned Excel worksheet)

* Anoka Cty. Metro HRA Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Program – This was really just a name change.
* Sarazin Street Flats II & Vista Ridge – HSP Programs at site-based locations provided by the CAP Agency
* Center City – Cahill Place – new provider in SMAC serving families & HPH
* CommonBond – Guardian Angels (Hastings), Headwater’s Landing (Forest Lake), and The Willows (Shakopee) – Property management delivered by CommonBond & HSP services delivered by CommonBond
* Louisiana Lofts (Savage) & Sarazin Street Flats I – Site-based HSP programs for single adults provided by Guild
* Mn Care Counseling – Scattered Site HSP in Dakota: New provider for SMAC
* Scott CDA – Housing Trust Fund – adjusted program to take referrals from CE
* Greenway Terrace (Ramsey) & Nova at Riverdale (Coon Rapids) – Site based HSP provided by Simpson Housing Services. Included in the information was insight into property management standards for denials & notice of things that SHS staff have noticed lead to additional PM scrutiny. Nova at Riverdale required Anoka residence previously – seeking clarification
* Tubman – RRH & TH program that serves youth fleeing violence

Action Step: Adding property management eligibility into 2021 workplan

*Updated Programs*: (This list can be found in the ‘2020 Updates’ tab of the aforementioned Excel worksheet). It encompasses programs that either changed or added criteria.

* Mental Health Resources (MHR) Permanent Housing For Chronic Homelessness – Adjusted their criterion to ‘willing to live anywhere in SMAC’ – noted improvement for referrals
* MHR – Haralson Supportive Housing – Incl. automatic denial information from Property Management perspective
	+ Please note that we sought to request that PM companies provide clear guidance on tenancy approval processes, so if this feels restrictive, it is what we asked for. May need to use as an example in the future as we get more of this info from PM companies
* Solid Ground: Home Again & Home Safe – Restricted Sex offenses & Arson convictions

*Governing Board Concerns/Recommendations*: (This list can be found in the ‘2019 Follow-Up’ tab of the aforementioned Excel worksheet)

* Canvas SHARE: Trouble filling vacancies because of specific eligibility criteria. Were defunded in 2019 NOFA
* Dakota County RRH – Plan was pretty extensive. Program filled their vacancies through their shelter programming. Gov. Board recommended that a lot of monitoring be done to ensure equitable access. The monitoring group was supposed to a CoC group that never actually was formed/scope was less than previously anticipated. Monitoring did not happen, but since then the process has changed to allow CE a chance to fill the vacancy first through Case Consult before going to shelter programming
* Hearth Connection – Rental assistance with no services. Seeking funding to deliver services moving forward, but not there yet.
1. **Review actions/next meeting** 5 minutes

Noted the need to dive into denial data with the CES Committee in 2021. The hope would be to cross reference the eligibility data that we reviewed today with the denial data, broken out by programs, so we can develop better strategies on how to encourage adjustments to eligibility criteria for projects where issues or concerns are identified.

**Next virtual meeting Feb 4th from 9-10:30am**