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Delaware Interagency Collaborative to End Homelessness

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

9:30am – 12:00pm

Buena Vista, 661 S. DuPont Highway, New Castle, DE 19720

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtt_sG-toYo

MEETING MINUTES**I. Welcome, Introductions, Expectations/Goals 9:45 – 10:00am**

DSHA Director Matthew Heckles called the meeting to order at 9:45am with introductions and an overall review of the goals/expectations. He thanked Governor Meyer for signing Executive Order #8, creating The Collaborative, and giving this group the chance to:

1. review homelessness system in Delaware and analyze its impact; and
2. consider opportunities for consolidation of services; and
3. identify gaps (and fill those gaps as we move forward).

This is an opportunity to restart the conversation on homelessness, funding, and coordination, ensuring we have a coordinated and collaborative system moving forward.

Members Present:

DSHA Director Matthew Heckles, Chair
Rachel Stucker, Housing Alliance Delaware
Susan Kent, Chair of the COC
Ruth Uhey (proxy for DOE Secretary)
Brandy Nauman (proxy for SC Administrator)
Steve Yeatman, Secretary, DSCYF
Josette Manning, Secretary, DHSS
Terra Taylor, Commissioner, DOC
Carrie Casey (proxy for NCC Administrator)
LaKresha Moultrie, Secretary, DOL
Cerron Cade (proxy for Mayor of Wilmington)
Robin Christianson, Mayor of Dover
Kevin Sipple, Kent County Administrator

Staff Attendance

Emily Cunningham, DSHA
Alexander Modeas, DSHA
Michelle Statham, DSHA
Stephanie Griffin, DSHA
Ashley Dawson, DSHA
Melissa Ziegler, DSHA
Caitlin Del Collo, DSHA (virtual)

Heather Delia, DSHA (virtual)
Deb Whidden, DSHA (virtual)
M. Wesley-Ford, DSHA (virtual)
Justina Brinkley, DSHA (virtual)
Ashley Meier, DSHA (virtual)

Other attendees:

Joe Walls
Karen Eller

Virtual attendees:

Mimi Rayl, UD
Aundrea Almond, OGOV
Kevin Myers, OGOV
Sophia Boumsidia, Sen. Blunt-Rochester's office
Ronda Ramsburg, DOS
Bria Greenlee
Janice James-Webb
Sean Matthews
Ruthie White
Judson Malone
Latoya Jones

II. 10:45am

i. Homelessness Data Review 10:00 – 10:30am

Rachel Stucker, Executive Director, Housing Alliance Delaware

The presentation is attached to the meeting minutes; more information and data can be found at www.housingalliance.org

The need for housing resources is far greater than we can help with the resources we have right now. PIT data last year was at the highest level we have tracked. Annually, 40-50% of adults in the PIT report having a disabling condition. Increase overall in number of homeless who are over 55 and under 18 and veterans over the last year. By county, homelessness is highest in NCC at 60%, with Kent and Sussex at 20% each, but the numbers in SC are rising. Homeless numbers have been rising since 2019.

Director Heckles doesn't want to focus on housing supply overall because there are others working on that around the state. Instead, our focus needs to be on the homelessness system and getting people into the housing supply that we have available.

ii. Needs Assessment Review 10:30 – 10:48am

Alexander Modeas, DSHA

The presentation is attached to the meeting minutes; more information and the Housing Needs Assessment can be found at www.destatehousing.com

Level-set on the definitions of affordable, cost-burden(ed), and fair market rent. 50% of renters in Delaware face a cost burden.

III. Overview of Current Status

When you think about homelessness, what are the biggest challenges your agency and your clients are facing? How does your agency respond?

Director Heckles made general remarks: We tend to know what works and what doesn't work across our state. How quickly do we/can we get someone out of the system into a permanent outcome? We have relatively manageable numbers in Delaware, and we have seen some expansion of our system over the past few years, but some of that was one-time funding, to which we will need to acclimate. We have a fragmented system but a lot of great work happening; this group will help bridge that. How do we maximize our resources? We need to think about whether the system has the capacity, operating system, and policies to apply resources in the best way possible.

BREAK 11:10 – 11:20am

11:20am – 12:00pm Around the Horn (2-3 minutes each)

What your agency is and what do you do regarding homelessness services and resources?

Rachel Stucker, HAD: entity that made it possible for Delaware to receive federal funding. Largest pot (COC, emergency solutions grant \$) and we play a role in deciding what non-profits get the funding and then monitor. They do the administrative work but are not the passthrough. HMIS lead as well; the data system is administered by us, and we train other users in compliance with HUD's rules. They do coordinated entry work (centralized intake), work to prioritize resources, and partner with those receiving ESG funds to coordinate.

Brandy Nauman, SC: They do not receive homelessness dollars as a county but offer grant programs through SC that agencies can apply for. They do work on the supply side with a new working group and think they will see policy changes in diversifying housing stock, which will make a difference moving forward.

Susan Kent, COC Chair: COC meets bi-monthly, and follow HUD's recommendation of trying to get all participants around the table. This seems like a great blend of COC and local committees that she hopes

will work together.

Steve Yeatman, DSCYF: Kids does 3 things: 1. make use of SRAP vouchers, which is very positive, but especially for youth exiting foster care. 2. HOPE Center (money set aside) helps keep families intact. 3. hired staff to do housing case management only, which is beneficial.

Josette Manning, DHSS: Touch housing across 9 of 10 division (not child support). They have a pilot program with HOPE Center now to extend the 90-day timeline. PIT count, dual-gen center, long-term care ombudsperson program, 333 SRAP vouchers annually across the department. 2021 we used Medicaid funding for housing needs; we have expanded through CMS and figuring how it will connect with their partners. Designated a point of contact. They are already – internally – working on this project.

Terra Taylor, DOC: Whole unit dedicated to re-entry planning for their divisions. They see overlaps but also exclusions (i.e. sex offenders and aging). To improve, we need long-term planning. Difficult to oversee those released who are on the streets.

Ruth Uhey, DOE: McKinney Vento coordinator. Spending down our ARPA funds – Social Contract did a statewide review of homelessness services for schools and students. Partnered with TAP Network as well. She shared flyers and information, and she is the direct contact for anyone calling. Digital “Stay in School” campaign running through September. Work with the schools and districts and partner with other states.

Carrie Casey, NCC: As an entitlement community, they get \$200K in emergency funding. Huge decrease from COVID but they know we can make changes. They get other funding as well. Also have the HOPE Center with a huge footprint with the state. Only operate through referrals through 18 agencies statewide. No NCC funds. Carrie named many of the agencies that partner with the HOPE Center and noted they are a patchwork quilt of money. 85% of their residents are from NCC and 15% are from Kent and Sussex Counties. They would be 100% occupied if they could take direct referrals from HAD, but are usually 80% full at any given time. They bring resources into our building to make it easier for residents and serve 450 households a year.

LaKresha Moultrie, DOL: Division of Employment and Training specifically works on this issue, including reskill and upskill residents. Regarding outreach, we have vans that are critical in meeting people where they are to provide services. Anyone that receives unemployment gets additional support.

Cerron Cade, Wilmington: City doesn’t have a social services arm, but is chartered to work on law enforcement, inspection, planning, development and parks, etc. When they think of our unhoused, they direct them to county resources. Their direct connection a lot of times ends up being with law-enforcement, unfortunately. They are focused on trying to figure out how to work in short-, medium- and long-term ways. Short-term is trying to develop day-shelter opportunities and stand up a building/services to contain belongings safely. In medium-term they are working with land-use and planning regarding zoning laws to increase housing supply in the city. Longer-term is working to create diversity in affordable housing/subsidized projects.

Mayor Christensen, Dover: Do not have a dedicated department but have started working with HUD, DSHA, with vouchers, referrals and first-time homebuyer program. Maria Bynum, Joe Walls and the Mayor worked together to end homelessness for veterans and that template for the Mayor’s Challenge was successful, and we might want to look at it. Worked under Markell and Carney Administrations.

Kevin Sipple, KC Administrator: Growing concern, and we are committed to being part of the solution. Working with Sarah Kiefer in the county. Kent County provides grants to HAD and some shelters for assistance. Preparing to launch rehab project with Shepherd’s Place and working on this through policy and rezoning. They don’t have funding for direct services or shelters but are committed to working with others who can.

Matthew Heckles – we need to figure out what we do and where the gaps are in more detail. At DSHA, we will work to collect information from you regarding people who are experiencing homelessness with a focus on critical funding and resources. We will collect the information, bring it back to you and meet on

July 8th. Over next 60 days, we'll determine what works, what doesn't, and where our opportunities are. We will set up some public listening events over the summer and invite you to attend. Recommendations in early January.

Rachel Stucker said COC is working on a blueprint on needs, gaps and best practices.

Matthew Heckles mentioned reaching outside this group to those already doing some work around homelessness, including but not limited to Social Contract, UD, etc.

IV. Public Comment*

Public Comment began at 12:03pm. The following member of the public provided comment: Joe Walls.

Written public comments can be sent to collaborative@delaware.gov and comments received within 48 hours of the meeting will be appended to the meeting minutes.

I. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:06pm.