

Notes for Southern Mountains Homeless Coalition online/Zoom meeting
Region 2 in the N.C. Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) for Homeless
July 2, 2020, 9:30 AM Kristen Martin hosting

Persons attending: Kristen Martin and Emily Lowery (Regional co-leads), Alyce Knaflich (Aura Homes), John Lauterbach (Safelight), Carrington Cosby (Thrive), Chris Berg, Bri Griffin, Trisha Eklund (BRCHS), Traci Corn (DSS), Brenda Ploss and Jennifer Drum (NC Works), Sarah Kowalek (Henderson United Way), Matthew Gruebmeier (Henderson Public Schools), Michael Absher (Only Hope WNC)

Kristen asked Sarah Kowalek what fund source the UW accesses for emergency assistance. Sarah said FEMA gives them emergency shelter funds.

Minutes of June 4 meeting: Kristen asked for any corrections or comments on those minutes of the Coalition, as distributed. None were offered, so the distributed version was adopted by common consent.

Call updates: As the monthly regular **Balance of State (BoS) Steering Committee** is not till July 7 and there are opportunities and deadlines coming quickly, Kristen will update us by email after that call. Today she will go over what we know now.

CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) emergency funds are available through Community Action Agencies. Buncombe County's CAA, Community Action Opportunities, plans to publish an RFA – Kristen has been in contact with them and is urging this to come out soon. Potential implementing agencies include IAM – Interfaith Assistance Ministries in Hendersonville, and Salvation Army of Hendersonville; Emily said Transylvania will work with Sharing House, DSS, and SAFE; Kristen said the Rutherford funds would be available through their United Way, and Isothermal will implement in Polk County.

The CARES Act (COVID-19 relief) NC funds are through DHHS. It has two components, a Crisis Response Program, and a Back at Home program.

The Crisis Response Program supports stabilization; this can be in the form of shelters, of outreach, or eviction prevention. Emailed information on applying has been sent to the Coalition, in several batches. The applications are due to NCCEH by July 7th at 6 P.M.

This application is along the lines of our previous ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant) submissions, but with the NCCEH Balance of State being the Regional Applicant, in place of our previous Region 2/Southern Mountains scoring work. The application uses a Smart-sheet, which automatically copies to DHHS; but applications are processed by NCCEH, which may choose to tighten up proposals or serve as a gate-keeper for any problems in project applications. Application reviews are expected to be less nit-picky.

The Back @ Home program is to emphasize Rapid ReHousing, and there may also be homeless-prevention activities. Instability in housing may cause the need list to grow rapidly. Agencies interested need to submit for letters of support by tomorrow (July 3), 6 PM. There will be a feed-back turnaround on July 8; the overall submission will go to DHHS by July 17th.

Alyce asked if the ESG resources will be used through private non-profit organizations only. She may need to check with Erika T. Ferguson@dhhs.nc.gov (address approximate, see Chat log).

Trisha Eklund has been a grant writer at BRCHS. She recommends taking any questions regarding budgeting and the like to NCCEH, they readily do phone consultation.

Michael Absher said he is looking into applying for crisis stabilization funds.

Racial Equity: Carrington Cosby said this subcommittee to the Steering Committee began work early this year. On June 5 there was an online gathering to open a space for this. Dr. Penny lead some sharing of personal and professional stories. They will seek a wider audience. Invitations for open dialog are expected. Stephanie Gilliam of Thrive will be in the organizing group.

Some related questions: Do these applications provide for obtaining bilingual staff, or interpreter services? How will anti-discrimination policies need to work? They will suggest how agencies could access external training (and training dates).

The role of equal access will mean charting to review identities of clients, of staff, of leadership including boards of directors.

Children and Youth Homeless Action Coalition 'CYHAC': Kristen noted that Beth Branagan and Kim Guice are not on this call. Michael said he's been working with Child and Family Resource Center to get baby supplies/diapers distributed. Kristen said that child care is a concern, to maintain a service level for emergency and essential workers – there are webinars that will be coming. Alyce raised the issue of what plans can be made for a restart of school. Matt Gruebmeier said the Henderson announcement is postponed, that schools are scenario-planning for three options in reopening.

It was said that under quarantine, homeless families get priority (as for essential workers) to access day care.

Coordinated Entry ('CE'): Funding implies CE will continue. Changes in policy may be adopted to allow expedited action in a state of emergency; these would not need prior adoption by a BoS Coordinated Entry Council or the Steering Committee. Local CE would have authority to make changes, and must then notify the state (rather than getting prior approval).

The state expects 2-1-1 service to do first-round screening. For our region, the prior work-up of VI-SPDAT (by The Haven, Blue Ridge Health, Safelight, United Way of Rutherford County or Thrive) will convert to calls to 2-1-1; and then to a process within Back @ Home when that goes live.

DHHS is creating fliers to explain how to shelter via these processes.

Kristen said these changes are to add flexibility. For example, if the potential renters would typically need 1 one-bedroom and 4 two-bedroom, we need to not miss opportunities to assist unhoused people. So the CE assigners will meet more frequently; they will look at incentives to landlords, such as move-in priority, doubled deposits, perhaps to address unit code deficiency.

Veterans: Jennifer Drum reports they are not to staff the office till Phase 3. Brenda Ploss continues to work with VA reps but not on their site. Alyce is housing women vets. She is

concerned that veterans' services offices are closed and are not responsive. United Way is working with Aura Homes women, including in getting masks. ABCCM is not responsive. Alyce is concerned that duty to accommodate trans vets is being abandoned. Kristen proposed using our grievance process re discrimination to alert NCCEH of issues.

Kristen got email info yesterday that a list of WiFi hot-spot locations is being distributed. We're aware of free WiFi on Hendersonville Main St. Similar lists are being made in other counties. Anyone knowing of extra locations please report them.

Masks: It's important to emphasize mask wearing.

Carrington wondered if the Rescue Mission was coordinating with emergency-shelter requests. Trisha said there will be a related meeting next week.

Testing is available at Blue Ridge Health.

Funding: Kristen and Emily hope the region will apply for each funding resource.

Steering Committee is to meet online next Tuesday. There will be questions about how intakes/discharges will be able to afford units after loss of Federal help: If the rent becomes \$1200

we would be setting many up to fail. If a family is looking to relocate, how does that get done? Matt wondered about the migrant population. He has heard (last night?) that 95% of homeless here are coming from ZIP code areas in the four counties. Most were from Hendersonville city. Two of 'other area' origin folks were from Fairview. Carrington adds concern about those precariously housed. Alyce asked what will happen to the ~300 on the list.

The session was closed. The Chat log follows this break.

Chris Berg, note-taker, Southern Mountains (Region 2) coalition

From **Kristen Martin** to Everyone: 09:51 AM

Ferguson, Erika T <Erika.Ferguson@dhhs.nc.gov>

From **Brenda.Ploss** to Everyone: 09:56 AM

Economy adds 4.8 million jobs in June, unemployment dips to 11.1 percent. The U.S. economy added 4.8 million jobs in June, according to data released Thursday by the Labor Department, as the gradual easing of coronavirus-related restrictions helped more businesses reopen and bring back workers.

From **Michael Absher** to Everyone: 09:58 AM

<http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/blog/2020/06/30/an-update-about-hcps-return-to-learn-plans/>

From **Brenda.Ploss** to Everyone: 10:00 AM

NCWorks Offices in MAWDB are open to the public in Asheville, E Flat Rock and Brevard. AB Tech Madison office will open next week.

From **Alyce Knaflich** to Everyone: 10:12 AM

VA COVID-19 cases 76, Active 17, convalescent 47, Deaths Known 12

From **Brenda.Ploss** to Everyone: 10:14 AM

For May 2020, our region (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties) unemployment rate remains historically high at 15.8%. Buncombe County now has the #3 highest rate of any county in NC at 17.5%. Henderson County unemployment rate declined slightly to 13.4%. Madison County is at 13.1% and Transylvania County is at 10.3%. Buncombe, Henderson and Madison Counties are above the state average of 12.7%.

From **Matthew Gruebmeier** to Everyone: 10:17 AM

New info portal not yet live. Here is where it will be when it is open:

<https://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/alert/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>

From **Brenda.Ploss** to Everyone: 10:17 AM

Thank you Kristen. Safe Travels