

Notes for Southern Mountains Homeless Coalition online/Zoom meeting  
Region 2 in the N.C. Balance of State (BoS) Continuum of Care (CoC) for Homeless  
**November 3, 2022, 9:30 AM** Thrive hosting

**Persons on the call:** Regional co-leads: Kristen Martin, Emily Lowery.

**Kristen Martin, Nickie Kilgore, Rachelle Dugan, Kenny Sylver and Josh Shelton** (Thrive); **Emily Lowery** (The Haven of Transylvania County); **Danita Simpson, Haley Simons and Trisha Ecklund** (Blue Ridge Health); **Ellis Pinder** (NC Works Veterans Services); **Jennifer Drum** (NC Works-Veterans, Polk & Rutherford); **Alyce Knaflich** (Aura Homes); **Amanda Stancil and Howard Anderson** (VA Healthcare for Homeless Vets outreach); **Suzanne Porter** (United Way of Rutherford County); **Michael Absher and Kim Fletcher** (Only Hope WNC); **Catherine Beaver** (Henderson County DSS); **Matt Gruebmeier and Jessica Ownbey** (Henderson County Schools); **Beth Branagan** (N.C. Homeless Education Program); **Patrika Lathan** (Eden of Abundance); **Morgan Abendroth** (Safelight); **Chariden Lewis** (ABCCM veterans programs); **Cpt. Sherry Stokes** (The Salvation Army); **Pat Chamberlain**; (Micky Robinson?-Isaac Homes); **Chris Berg**. See also the **appended Chat**.

**Emily Lowery** facilitated. She went over our ground rules statement; please see our Agenda.

**Minutes** of our October 6 online meeting were approved by common consent.

**BoS Steering Committee** has not met since our October 6 meeting.

#### **Election of 2023 Regional Committee Leadership:**

These positions will need to be filled for Calendar 2023: Regional Lead; Regional Alternate; Coordinated Entry Lead; Webmaster; CYHAC= Children and Youth Homeless Action Committee lead; Project Evaluation Lead; and Veterans Subcommittee lead. Please contact Kristen Martin or Emily Lowery if you have an interest in taking on any of these positions. These **elections will be held at the December 1** meeting. Alyce Knaflich (as Project Evaluation lead) and Chris Berg (as secretary/webmaster) offered to continue their 2022 positions through 2023. Emily asked everyone to consider stepping up for work on an overlapping basis, that current position-holders could then turn over functions as suitable. This Region also has workers on BoS subcommittees such as Lived Experience Council and Racial Equity, but these are not elected positions. None of these duties are very hard, but we are better off if they are shared around.

**Coordinated Entry (CE):** Kristen said this committee is organized by Thrive as the receiver of CE resources (grants). During 2023 Rachelle Dugan will take up managing meetings, informing the Coalition of activities etc. The by-name list unfortunately continues to grow and is now over 500 cases. The limited unit-rental funds mean CE must focus work upon those homeless with prospects to self-resolve their problems and stabilize. Thrive searches through the list cases to find promising pockets of homeless folks to assist.

**Racial Equity (RE):** Kennet Melgar is unavailable, he's doing field work today. No current report is on hand.

**CYHAC, Children and Youth Homeless Action Coalition:** Beth Branagan said the group meets on Friday, Nov. 18 at 9 AM on Zoom. Beth will send out invitations. They will hear from Project CATCH from Wake County, about their contract work from N.C. Dept. of Child Development and Early Education.

Beth reported on the October 13 Kickoff of our early childhood Community Engagement project, at Blue Ridge Community College. About 50 attenders from our four counties are creating a task force, to better cooperation, cut barriers and improve lives of young children in homeless or unstably housed situations. Both Beth and Michael Absher just returned from a NAACE conference in California. Only Hope WNC is holding its annual SLEEPOUT fund-raiser and homeless youth awareness event Friday night, at the Historic

Henderson Courthouse steps: Bring a tent, a sleeping bag, or curl up in your vehicle, and share in coffee, hot dogs and perhaps a new hoodie. It starts at 4 PM.

Alyce asked about rumored shortage of lunch money at schools for some children. Matt Gruebmeier reported Henderson nutrition chief Robert Balff said there's a contribution path to get individual funds to any school the contributor designates; or givers may drop gifts off at a school they are concerned for.

**Lived Expertise:** Alyce wasn't able to attend the last group session. Rachelle Dugan said a Bill of Rights model from Connecticut is now to become a draft for Balance of State use. They next meet November 11<sup>th</sup> at noon, but Alyce will be tied up for an Aura Homes fundraiser then.

**Veteran Updates – Coming Events:**

November 8-9, 9 to noon, a career/job fair for veterans, at Grove St. career center in Asheville.

November 11, 11 AM ceremony at VA Charles George health center, marking the end to World War 1.

Also: free dental services at two locations (7 AM to 2 PM, see Chat from Rachelle Dugan).

Wed., Nov. 16, 9 AM, the new Veterans Coordinated Entry Regional group meets; Rachelle will lead.

November 19, noon to 4 PM, an affordable housing fair at East Asheville Library, Tunnel Road.

Next month's Vets Coordinated Entry meeting will be Wed., Dec. 21.

We saw **three presentations** by providers for homeless veterans (or vets with related issues):

**Aura Homes:** Alyce Knaflich showed slides covering her effort since 2004 to help vets 'falling through the cracks', and its establishment as the current nonprofit in 2014, to specifically help veterans in need, especially women. She covered the group's mission, vision and work, from assisting with applying for VA benefits to some home repairs, to mortgage help, car repairs, health and hygiene, transports, health appointment escorts, providing furniture, local hotel rooms short-term, or cooperation with VASH, SSVF or Grant-per-diem housing provision. They work in nine counties, including the four in our Region. Most efforts are built around veterans' self-educating to meet their needs. This year the group has served 26 women, 15 children, three men and three adult dependents. Estimated local homeless women vet numbers by county were shown, based on a 10.8% of women vets that go homeless, and counts of about 8800 vets living in Henderson, 1470 in Polk, 3600 in Transylvania and 4000 in Rutherford counties. Renovation of a disused retirement home for twelve women vets is an ongoing project in Hendersonville, on Meadowbrook Terrace off Asheville Highway.

**Veteran Services of the Carolinas:** Cheriden Lewis outlined the case management, health support and employment-finding support in their programs. NC Serves partners this work in 74 counties; three of their case coordinators work from Asheville. All use a 'Unites' platform to enable cross-referrals. Cheriden works with SSVF, a housing program, across 28 counties west from Charlotte. Intakes are based on documents, which staff will help secure: Income (any under 50% of Area Median Income can participate), ID, Social Security card, DD 214 discharge document (any status above Dishonorable discharge can be served). Rapid Re-housing and preventing evictions/loss of units are other ways used to help. Employment is a similar goal, supported by training, job search ideas, and providing uniforms. These are available to vets in housing through VASH, or grant-per-diem shelters. A VA tool, 'Squares', is also helpful. A parallel effort, STEP, 'Services for Training, Employment and Placement', is open to non-veterans. These are 'very low barrier' efforts; there are cases where Judicial services has referred to SSVF for housing. Henderson outreach is fronted by Joe Landry, to connect those living outside and those in shelters to useful supports.

Suicide prevention is a new focus for VS of the Carolinas. Vets offer peer support; some are case managers with mental health training. Therapy is not offered but crisis intervention is an aim. If anyone is aware of a vet at risk of suicide, then first connect to help [phone 855-862-8387], see [www.abccm-vsc.org](http://www.abccm-vsc.org) for on-call 24/7 responses.

**Veterans Administration HCHV, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans:** Amanda Stancil (828-273-3266) and Howard Anderson (828-708-9603) listed their approaches: a walk-in clinic; outreach, and inreach (to

VASH or Grant-per-diem housed vets); a veterans justice program to help 'reentry veterans', which may work with local treatment courts ; a medical team; a homeless SUD team. These functions are based at Building 14 at Oteen VA, Outreach can cover 22 counties (but this is very limited, except in Buncombe County). Most outreach is to build rapport and to verify enrollment eligibility including VI-SPDAT, and identify concerns about mental health or substance abuse. They connect to clinical social workers (M-F, 8 to 4:30). Housing support was outlined by program:

1. VASH- Section 8 rent assistance and clinical case management. Cases should go thru Coordinated Entry. Generally help is targeted to the 'more vulnerable', such as those literally homeless or in emergency shelters. It is limited to those under 50% of AMI (but to a less restrictive level in Buncombe). A 'Lifetime' sex offender designation disqualifies for this help.

2. Grant-per-diem – this includes two ABCCM facilities: Veterans Restoration Quarters, and Transformation Village. Their program design is to enable vets to be 'housing-ready' in 90 days. This may be adjusted by health concerns such as substance abuse – there is a clinical track available.

Alyce asked about eligibility particulars: A two-year minimum of active military duty; an exclusion of National Guard or reserve soldiers. Some eligibility points need research, often available through the VA Squares program. Alyce said the situation keeps Aura Homes busy, with veterans that may fall thru the cracks.

The next regular meeting will be **Thursday, December. 1, at 9:30 AM** on Zoom.

- With respect, Chris Berg

### Chat messages:

09:32:05 From Danita Simpson, BRH to Everyone: Danita Simpson - BRH Outreach  
09:32:07 From Kristen Martin (she/her); Thrive to Everyone: Kristen Martin, Thrive  
09:32:44 From Alyce to Everyone: Aura Home Wome Vets Alyce 828-771-6979  
09:32:49 From Michael Absher to Everyone: Michael Absher, Only Hope Wnc  
09:32:53 From Nickie kilgore to Everyone: Nickie Kilgore Thrive  
09:32:59 From Emily Lowery to Everyone: Emily Lowery, The Haven  
09:33:09 From Rachelle Dugan (she/her) to Everyone: Rachelle Dugan; Thrive  
09:33:40 From Haley Simons | she/her to Everyone: Haley Simons - BRH Outreach  
09:33:52 From Morgan Abendroth to Everyone: Morgan Abendroth  
09:33:52 From Beth Branagan to Everyone: Beth Branagan, NCHEP  
09:33:53 From Catherine Beaver to Everyone: Catherine Beaver - Henderson  
County DSS  
09:33:58 From Chariden Lewis (She/her/hers) to Everyone: Chariden Lewis- Veterans  
Services of the Carolinas (ABCCM)  
09:34:00 From VA HCHV Outreach to Everyone: Amanda Stancil and Howard Anderson  
- Asheville VAMC  
09:34:07 From Jennifer Drum to Everyone: Jennifer Drum-NCWorks Veteran  
Services for Rutherford/Polk  
09:34:10 From Matt Gruebmeier to Everyone: Matt Gruebmeier, Henderson County  
Schools  
09:34:11 From EOA to Everyone: Patrika Lathan, Eden Of Abundance  
09:34:17 From Jessica Ownbey to Everyone: Jessica Ownbey, HCPS  
09:34:18 From Morgan Abendroth to Everyone: Morgan Abendroth Safelight  
09:34:35 From Kim Fletcher Only Hope WNC to Everyone: Kim Fletcher Only Hope WNC  
Good Morning!  
09:59:36 From Rachelle Dugan (she/her) to Everyone: Mills River Family Dental  
and Hendersonville Family Dental will also be providing free dental care for Veterans  
on the 11th from 7:00-2:00 <https://wncsource.org/free-dental-care-day-for-veterans/>  
10:03:50 From Kim Fletcher Only Hope WNC (she/her) to Everyone:  
Wow! Congratulations on the new building!  
10:12:18 From Matt Gruebmeier to Everyone: brb  
10:16:53 From Chariden Lewis (She/her/hers) to Everyone:  
NCServes call center 855-962-8387 or VSC@ABCCM.ORG  
10:16:59 From Chariden Lewis (She/her/hers) to Everyone:

My email is [Chariden.Lewis@abccm.org](mailto:Chariden.Lewis@abccm.org)