Coulee Collaborative to End Homelessness

*Collaborative, diverse, and compassionate individuals working to eliminate homelessness in La Crosse, Vernon, Monroe, and Crawford Counties.*

**MEETING MINUTES**

**August 15, 2023**

Present:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Abagail | Jeffers | Couleecap |
| Anthony | Larson | Center for Veterans Issues |
| Ashley | Handley | Independent Care Health Plan |
| Becky | Koske | Couleecap |
| Brian | Sampson | City of La Crosse |
| Dave | Konkol | First Free Church |
| Ebony | Hyter | Quartz Benefits |
| Isaac | Hoffman | La Crosse County LAFC |
| Izabel | Balk | New Horizons |
| Jessica | Thill | Cia Siab, Inc. |
| Julie | McDermid | Karuna Housing |
| Karla | Hein | Catholic Charities of La Crosse |
| Katie | Spaeth | ICA Alliances |
| Kim | Cable | Couleecap |
| Kristina | Bechtel | Peace of Mind Counseling |
| Kristine | Herold | La Crosse County ISRS |
| Lauren | Heitman | DHS Area Admin |
| Le Anne | Martinez | Consumer Advisory Council |
| Liz | Evans | Great Rivers United Way |
| Megan | Gruber | Couleecap |
| Meredith | McCoy | Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care |
| Mike | Basford | WI DOA Interagency Council on Homelessness |
| Rosanne | Northwood | YWCA La Crosse |
| Rose | Monhaut | Legal Action of La Crosse |
| Sadie | Nelson | Independent Living Resources |
| Sandy | Brekke | Gundersen Health System |
| Vie | Matty | Head Start |

Introductions and Housekeeping were done.

June Meeting Minutes. Vie Mattie motion to approve. Isaac Hoffman second. Minutes approved.

Brian Sampson presented the [Data Dashboard](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/julie.mcdermid/viz/July2023CouleeCOCDashboard/Story1). The Dashboard is a snapshot as of the end of July 2023. 223 singles and 60 families were on the housing prioritization list. 89 individuals were in Shelter. Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing with Intensive Case Management are the categories of interventions needed most. Compared to the end of June there were a lower number of singles on the list and 15 more families on the list. Inflow trends up. Outflow trends slightly upward. No Exit Interview Completed is the top reason people leave the Coordinated Entry List followed by rental with no subsidy. People going into permanent housing is trending up. Returning from Housing is trending upward. New clients trend is steady. Returning to the list in general is increasing. Housing placement rate is trending upward.

Kristi Bechtel presented a Balance of State (BOS) update. The CoC competition is in progress. The CoC team is collecting all the necessary information for the application. Be on the lookout for emails from Carrie Poser. Because the Balance of State is bringing in so many funds for the housing programs, they are being offered more for planning funds. They are looking for input regarding interest in receiving any of the planning grant funds. We’ll discuss it further later in the meeting. CoC Board meetings have been focused on the application process and deadlines. Meredith did not have anything else to add.

Liz Evans announced CCEH is requesting nominations for our Balance of State Representative and CoC Delegate. We really need one or more people step into these positions so we have representation at the Balance of State CoC level. We’ll keep sending reminders and requests and reach out to individuals to fill these roles.

CoC Planning Grant Funds: Kim Cable presented on the Planning Grant Funds. The Balance of State is eligible to increase the funding for their planning grant. The funds have primarily been used to fund positions within the BOS to increase capacity. With the significant increase the BOS is interested in finding out from local CoCs what the needs are. Approximately $15-$20k may be available for each coalition. 25% match would be required. The grant timeframe would be 1/1/2025-12/31/2025. Some activities could be facilitating coalition meetings, work groups, lived experience advisory committee, summits, compliment CoC application activities, activities aimed at developing a homeless crisis response system, HUD compliance activities (PIT process, etc.), Homeless Connect could possibly be included. We need to turn in input/questions/concerns by August 18.

Suggestions/thoughts on whether the CoC should accept the funds and what activities folks would like to see supported:

From Chat: Karla Hein: What if we used the planning grants funds, with persons who may be on the lived experience advisory group and/or are recovery coach or peer support specialists, with homeless experience, who work with homeless person's that are needing a singular strategic plan in their recovery and/or mental health services, so they have some individual investment in their lifestyle change? (maybe not the place for this idea, but just throwing it out there)

There was no opposition to going for the funds. If you have ideas, please email Kim Cable kim.cable@couleecap.org

Budget items need to relate back to strengthening the coalition.

Homeless Person’s Memorial Planning: Brian stated the CCEH Calendar states for us to begin discussing the Homeless Person’s Memorial Planning in August. Abbi presented – Homeless Person’s Memorial is a national event on the longest night of the year. CCEH wants to make sure we remember those who have passed in our community if they have been unhoused at any time during their life. Please email Abbi if you are interested in helping plan the event. Abagail.jeffers@couleecap.org

Homeless Connect and Point In Time Update: Becky Koske presented. The PIT Count was on July 27. Homeless Connect also happened that day. For PIT canvassers connected with 114 individuals in the early morning street count. When canvassing there are two options when encountering an unhoused individual: observation only or observation with survey – based on the paperwork so far, more people were spoken with than in the past. Homeless Connect happened at English Lutheran Church. Approximately 40 vendors were there plus haircuts, yoga, blood pressure checks, other healthcare related items. An individual from HUD attended and was impressed with our event. There were more individuals visiting than the previous year (82). The focus of the day is to get connected with resources and fill out applications. A debrief will happen in September. Meredith mentioned that any donated mileage or time can be used at matching dollars. Becky will send out the link to those who participated. LeAnne mentioned someone from the Mayor’s office and folks from the church were amazed at the amount of vendors and participants. LeAnne expressed thanks for the volunteers who were either currently or previously had been unhoused.

Action Plan Progress – Brian presented. The Action Plan Committee has been meeting every-other week. They are working to figure out what exists for DEI training in the community already. The are collecting information and costs for training. They will prepare a recommendation for the coalition to vote on. An Action Plan Update to the Balance of State is due soon and the committee is preparing that report.

Camping for the unsheltered: – Brian is serving the role as messenger – not an advocate for the ordinance. City Council redefined the camping ordinance to further define camping and to prohibit camping in city parks and parking ramps. Any other City-owned properties that are not on prohibited list have to go to the Board of Public Works to get added: City Hall, La Crosse Center, Pump House, and a property diagonal from City Hall have all requested to be on the camping prohibited list. Brian’s role helps people understand what is going on and understand the ordinance. Brian goes out with the Homeless Outreach Team and the Police Department to give people information and get them to other locations before police have to take action.

Discussion:

Kim: Shared concern about ticketing people who don’t have money creatring a longer list of citations that landlords will see. This puts up additional barriers for people. She expressed disappointment to have this action after announcing the City and County working together. This means criminalizing people for being unhoused.

Kevin Hundt, Coulee Tenants United: Went from opposing the ordinance to supporting when a clause was added to allow the Mayor of City to announce an emergency property be declared for housing. People are camping on city property now anyway, but are in hazardous locations. Kevin is advocating for Mayor or City Council to declare a site for camping.

From Chat: How does this help?

Brian: This decision was made by City Council where the plan to work with the County was more administrative from Mayor and Brian’s role. The timing is bad and the announcement and ordinance appear to contradict each other.

Julie: Agree with Kim. One of the Council members stated the tickets people get are municipal and don’t show up on CCAP. More landlords are doing full background checks though and they do show up there. Jess: We’re mid-August. What are we going to do going into cold weather season? Having a property declared for camping is all ok, but what are we doing for the winter?

City/County Plan: Brian Sampson provided an update on the City/County Collaboration. The ordinance is separate from the City/County partnership. There hasn’t been any plan put into place yet. There have been preliminary meetings to design a process to engage key stakeholders in giving input. The plan developed will happen after stakeholders give input. More about the process will be coming out in a month to six weeks. Isaac: The goal is to deliver a plan to policy makers by the end of the year. The plan should help inform some of the questions that come up – like where to shelter in an emergency and whether or not the CoC should accept planning dollars.

Compass Group Interview: Liz went through five questions to gather input from the group for the Compass Now 2024 Report.

Agency Updates: None

Next Meeting: September 19, 2023

Minutes Submitted by Liz Evans,