

Lincoln County Homelessness Task Force Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2017
Menard Resource Center

Attending: Dee Olsen-Merrill Area United Way, Art Lersch-UW-Extension, Diane Senholz-NCCAP, Ann Jelinek-Our Sister's House, Melissa Schroeder-NCCAP, Tammy Degner-Haven, Judy Woller – HAVEN, Tina Elvins-Our Sister's House, Kathy Gruett – Our Saviors, Don Heyel-Trinity Lutheran Church, Sue Norenberg-SVDP.

Welcome and Introductions:

Welcome and introductions were made.

Overview of Last Meeting:

Melissa reviewed the September meeting minutes.

Homeless Counts:

Art gave the local counts for December.

NCCAP -2

HAVEN- 13

SVDP- 15

Our Sister's House – 4

Tomahawk Schools-69

Merrill Schools-6

Merrill Housing Authority

Update from Merrill Warming Center Committee on new Organizational Structure: The Warming Center Group has met several times since November. Currently they are working on establishing a separate 501c3 status. The group has secured pro bono assistance with preparing the necessary documents. Contact has been made with Our Sisters House regarding their application and if they would be willing to share their information as a starting point. There was a joint meeting of the Homelessness Taskforce and the Merrill United Board Members on January 18th to review the progress and steps we need to take moving forward. Sue noted that over the past month 18 individual adults presented themselves as homeless and would have been able to use the Warming Center. Here numbers are as follows; 18 individuals were lodged at a local hotel 139 nights at a cost of \$4034.

Program Updates:

HAVEN: recently received a grant to fund 1 ½ positions which will assist with their minority population, especially the Hispanic clients. They had an uptick in calls after the November election concerning safety in the LGBT population and it appears that their Hispanic clients have gone “underground” for now. HAVEN's coalition is addressing these issues and developing services for these groups.

SVDP: has had a large influx of homeless individuals and families since our last meeting. The dollars spent on hotel lodging was higher than expected. Many of the people they are dealing with are not able to be housed at any of the shelters because of criminal backgrounds.

Our Sisters House: there has been a few changes in staff recently and they are looking the use of Therapy Dogs at the Shelter. Tina noted that it seems that residents “open up” more if they are relaxed. Tina will email the information regarding the CIT training she just finished. This might be helpful for the other agencies.

NCCAP: at this point NCCAP has not used all of their 2016 United Way dollars do in part to a change in how WPS handled the energy moratorium and being proactive with customers who were behind on their bill. She is out of ETH Prevention dollars and the ETH Rapid Re-housing funds are also allocated.

University Extension: Art reported that the re-structuring is moving along but at a slower pace.

Point in Time: Melissa noted that PIT will take place January 25-26. HUD is asking that we expand our search area and there are new reporting forms that we need to use. Don Heyel and Dee Olson will assist along with Melissa Schroeder and Tammy Degner (?) from HAVEN. Tina from Our Sister's House said that they will have a crew going out in Tomahawk.

Other Items: HAVEN will be holding their annual Elvis Fundraiser on 2/18/2017 and their Guest Chef fundraiser is tentatively set for the Thursday after Easter. Our Sister's House is holding a Soup Fundraiser on 2/25/2017

Next Meeting: Next meeting is February 16, 2017 at the Menard Center beginning at 8:30am.