



Housing and Homeless Coalition of Beaver County

Housing and Homeless Coalition of Beaver County November 8, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Attendees: Debbie Ahern, Laura DiMuzio, Regina Abraham, Kaitlin Rhodes, Herta Madder, Rebecca Salopek, Karen Edwards, Gregory Hill, Ashley Mancine, Mary Ann McDevitt, Lisa Smith, Judy Barilaro, Deana Law, Sharon Henry, Lisa Signore, Veronica Seery, Ada Milliner, Heidi Gumbert, Carol Kirk, Lisa Kelleher, Linda Swaney, Carmen Wilkerson, Carl DeChellis, Phillip Little, Shon Owens, Randi Livengood, Rosalyn Johnson, Ted Hoover, Christine Winniewicz and Norah Miller.

Norah began the meeting at 1:35 pm and welcomed the Coalition members. The following individuals were introduced: Heidi Gumbert (Glade Run Lutheran Services), Karen Edwards (Allegheny HealthChoices, Inc.) and Shon Owens (Franklin Center).

The minutes from October were emailed last month. Printed copies are available today.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Norah Miller reminded Coalition members that if they would like to be scheduled on the agenda, please notify her prior to the meeting. Anyone is welcome to formally have the floor for 5-10 minutes.

Rebecca Salopek – Christian Assembly CARES Ministry is currently organizing the annual Christmas Day Dinner. Please see attachments.

- Anyone is welcome. There is no income validation requirement.
- Santa, Mrs. Claus and the Elves will be present. Children will be able to have their picture taken with Santa.
- Last year there were 267 volunteers representing 64 churches in the western PA region.
- Rebecca has a \$500 budget from the church to plan a \$20,000 event, which requires a lot of donations. She expresses her sincerest thanks for all who contribute in any way. Donations can be dropped off at [Christian Assembly, 8th Avenue & 9th Street, Beaver Falls, PA 15010](#) Phone: [724.836.375](tel:724.836.375) The church secretary is there Monday, Wednesday and Friday. However, if you call ahead, arrangements can be made for other days and times.

Carmen Wilkerson from The Cornerstone brought Fair Housing and Crossroads flyers for people to take and post at their agencies.

Veronica Seery from the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) announced:

- LIHEAP applications are now being accepted. She brought some to distribute or individuals can apply online through COMPASS (www.compass.state.pa.us). Any questions related to the program or if you would like an application, please call 724-773-7490.

The mission of the Housing and Homeless Coalition of Beaver County is to provide support, direction, and collaboration in effectively addressing the issues of homelessness and affordable, sustainable housing in Beaver County by identifying and utilizing all available resources.



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- The Crisis Program will open 1/2/2013.
- If you have someone in dire need of assistance (i.e. their power or gas is shut off, broken furnace, oil is almost empty) they may be eligible for **Crisis Exception**.
 - This is meant to assist individual with future service, not designed to pay off past due bills.
 - DPW will have to verify shut off. Cannot apply online, must call the office.
- Ronnie also clarified that DPW can assist with primary and secondary heating sources.
- Anything that slows the process down will hinder access to assistance. Please make sure the applicants have all documentation readily available: proof of income, copy of heating/fuel/electric bills.
- Ronnie noted that the State of PA has imposed a new phone system across all state agencies which is experiencing technical glitches as it now goes through the computer system. If you or anyone you know has left messages for someone and not received a response, you may want to email them or go to the office. Ronnie reinforced that faxing or mailing documentation will also help in many instances.
- If someone is employed and doesn't meet income guidelines for the various programs, please have them re-apply the following month. Under the new system they can go back 30 days or 1 calendar year to establish eligibility. Overtime in one month may make them ineligible, but the following month they may meet the income guidelines. If they wish to go back 1 calendar year, they must bring in all of their pay stubs for that time period.
- Income guidelines are set at 150% of federal poverty level.
- Carl DeChellis of the HACB announced that applications for the Weatherization Program are also processed through DPW – this program primarily targets furnace repairs/replacement. The program opened 11/1/2012.

Lisa Signore from Community Development shared that they have funding available through their Emergency Home Improvement Program:

- The program targets replacement, not repairs, of electrical systems, hot water tanks, broken gas lines, etc.
- The need must be an emergency, which makes the home inhabitable and cannot be a regular maintenance issue.
- The program has higher income guidelines than the Department of Public Welfare.
- For more information, please contact Rocco Bianco at Community Development - 724.847.3889.

Lisa Smith from Holy Family Institute/Duquesne Light CAP announced:

- Dollar Energy Fund or Catholic Charities may be able to assist if individuals are over the LIHEAP income limits.
- If a customer does not have the \$150 match for Dollar Energy, you as the advocating agency can request in the comments section of the application an exception but you must state why the exception should be granted and/or what amount the customer can contribute.
- Duquesne Light CAP offices can assist with Dollar Energy applications.
- Lisa distributed information on CAP – see attached.



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Carl DeChellis suggested that representatives from the Housing Authority are available to provide an overview of the agency's programs at a future Coalition Meeting.

- Carl announced that the Housing Authority has 100 available Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers at this time as a result of the funding they received for the Virginia Heights site in Baden. Only one resident applied for and qualified for the HCV voucher.

Rosalyn Johnson from the Franklin Center announced she has cards available with her new contact information at The Cornerstone in Beaver Falls. She also reinforced how important collaboration among agencies is when individuals seek assistance. In many cases no one agency is able to provide the full assistance due to various regulations and eligibility guidelines, but with the collaboration often multiple agencies are able to help resolve the issue.

Ashley Mancine from SDHP announced she will be on maternity leave for about 12 weeks, beginning the end of November.

- In her absence, you can contact Mary Penney by phone 610-873-9595 or by email at mary@sdhp.org
- Ashley asked if the Housing Authority has changed its designations for housing preferences. Carl indicated they have not but offered assistance to those displaced by the recent disaster.

Shon Owens from the Franklin Center announced:

- There will be a Fatherhood Leadership Summit on 11/15/12 at CCBC, sponsored by the Beaver County Children's Roundtable.
- Shon is asking agencies become more father and male friendly.
- The summit is to bring the community together to brainstorm on ways to help men get on their feet and become responsible fathers.
- There are 25 seats left. If you are interested in attending, please contact Shon at 724-378-2882 or sowens@franklincenter.org.

Kaitlyn Rhodes from Trails Ministries announced:

- The agency works with those impacted by incarceration.
- They do not provide housing, but often refer and coordinate with other agencies including those represented by Coalition members.
- It is Angel Tree season. The Angel Tree program will purchase a gift on behalf of an incarcerated parent. They have opened this program to also assist those currently in halfway houses or other residential programs and current caregivers. Any donations not used will be passed along to the Christian Assembly for the Christmas Dinner or used during the Point In Time Survey.
- The office number is 724-891-7541 and is staffed daily. Diane Williams is the secretary and will email the staff member you are trying to reach if they are not available when you call. If you are having particular difficulty connecting with a staff member, please feel free to contact Katie at krhodes@trailsministry.com or 724-469-1419.

Ada Milliner from Heritage Valley Health System reminded everyone of the free mammograms available to women with no insurance coverage. Mammograms will continue to be available



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through 12/31/12 and can be scheduled by calling the Medical Center in Beaver 724-728-7000 or Sewickley Valley Hospital 412-741-6100. See attached.

Lisa Kelleher from the Help House/Housing Authority announced the availability of 3 Section 8 housing choice vouchers. Eligibility criteria are:

- Currently homeless.
- History of or current involvement in behavioral health treatment.
- Involvement with case management or some source of support to help ensure housing stability.
- Minimum of \$50 in monthly income.
- If you know of anyone possibly eligible, please call Lisa at 724-775-4535.

Regina Abraham from the Salvation Army announced she is awaiting notification of the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) funding for emergency motel stays for homeless households. Lisa Signore indicated the funding is there and asked if the Salvation Army has completed the contracting process. Regina will follow-up and forward information to the Coalition.

Norah Miller announced:

- The Housing Alliance of PA is sponsoring a conference call on the Budget Control Act 11/14/12 from 11am-noon. The call in number is 866-740-1260, passcode 2811137.
- Beaver County Rehabilitation Center is having a Christmas Open House. See attached flyer.
- Current statistics about the Emergency Solutions Grant Program were provided. 11 eligible households were enrolled in October. 3 were literally homeless (rapid re-housing) and 8 were facing imminent homelessness (prevention). 7 households had children and 4 were single adults. A significant number of ESG program applicants do not attend their first scheduled appointment at The Cornerstone.

AGENDA ITEMS

Food Service Program Outreach

Christina Winniewicz

This program provides free meals to children over the summer. For 2012, the summer food program did not meet their projected goal in Beaver County. Christina attributes this to two issues: lack of education about the program and the need for more sites. If you know of any agency, entity or church who might consider becoming a site, please refer them. See attachments for more information.

Christina is also happy to provide you with any information on food service programs. Please don't hesitate to contact her at CWinniewicz@pittsburghfoodbank.org.



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Point in Time (PIT) Homeless Survey

Norah Miller

Scheduled for Wednesday January 30, 2013, the HUD mandated survey includes the counts of both sheltered and unsheltered Beaver County homeless households. BC-LAUNCH will once again take the lead on coordinating the unsheltered count. Tom Kaminsky from LAUNCH will share more specific information at the December meeting.

Patterson Christian Missionary Fund (PCMF) Application

Norah Miller

As noted earlier, Maureen Morelli, Crossroads Coordinator, submitted an application to the PCMF for operational expenses for Crossroads Severe Weather Shelter under Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Norah Miller also submitted an application to the PCMF through The Ladle for bus tickets. Currently, bus tickets purchased through a grant to The Ladle from the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) are strictly limited for use by literally homeless individuals and are available through The Cornerstone. Until the Patterson Fund makes a decision, The Ladle will continue to purchase bus tickets through its discretionary budget line item. Those bus tickets will be available to any individual or agency who can demonstrate that lack of safe, affordable transportation is an impediment to a household's ability to achieve self-sufficiency.

Crossroads Severe Weather Shelter

Laura DiMuzio

crossroadsmensshelter@yahoo.com 724-417-1436

- Crossroads Shelter opened 11/5/12.
- As of today, there has not been any utilization.
- The shelter is currently in a transition period. Maureen Morelli is the new Coordinator and has an assistant, James Sherwood. Supportive Services Inc. and Harbor Point Housing have been the parent agency of Crossroads up to this point. Currently they are seeking another entity to take over this responsibility by June 30, 2013.
- Laura hopes to transition out of her leadership role for the shelter by 12/1/12.
- Currently the shelter continues to be in need of monetary donations and checks can still be made out to Supportive Services/CROSSROADS Shelter. They have enough tangible goods at this time.
- See attached flyer calling for volunteers and advertising the shelter availability.

Norah adjourned the meeting at 2:40.

**Next Meeting
December 13, 2012**