



PLAN FOR ACCELERATING TRANSFORMATIVE HOUSING (PATH) INNOVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2022, 3 pm – 5 pm

Recording of Discussion:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/FqW8kkhcnY-J-wss4rNIsVexxW0Ay8BY349RSVqT_3swAe3TjZAkjyjIjGLT-7sJw.NWZ5mUIWFicFlrO9

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Time	Agenda Item	Presenter/Facilitator
3:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introductions 	- <i>Matt Mitchell, Focus Strategies</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Approval of Minutes 	- <i>Matt Mitchell, Focus Strategies</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Comment - Open Period for public comment on items discussed or not listed on the agenda. 	- <i>Members of the public</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements 	- <i>Matt Mitchell, Focus Strategies</i>
3:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workgroup Status Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Conferencing Workgroup • Data Workgroup 	- <i>Shelby Ferguson, H3</i> - <i>Nate French, Community Solutions</i> - <i>Matt Mitchell, Focus Strategies</i>
3:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing Work through December 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and timeline • Discuss bodies of work proposed in April meeting • (ACTION ITEM): Propose and approve priorities through December 2022 	- <i>Jamie Schecter, H3</i> - <i>Matt Mitchell, Focus Strategies</i>
4:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Steps 	- <i>All</i>

Welcome and Introductions

Committee Members in Attendance: Deanne Pearn, Jo Bruno, Margaret Schiltz, Shawn Ray, Teri House, Tony Ucciferri, Wayne Earl

Staff and Consultants: Christy Saxon (H3), Jamie Schecter (H3), Jamie Jenett (H3), Shelby Ferguson (H3), Dana Ewing (H3), Kimberly Thai (H3), Matt Mitchell (Focus Strategies), Hana Gossett (Focus Strategies), Tracy Bennett (Focus Strategies)

Review and Approval of Minutes

Seeking approval of the minutes from March 17th, 2022 and April 29th, 2022. Minutes were posted separately and not included in the meeting packet and therefore were not voted on in this session.



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Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Workgroup Status Updates

The case conferencing workgroup met a few times over the winter. During these meetings, Community Solutions introduced best practices and simple tools to help improve case conferencing processes. Provider organizations learned from these workgroup meetings and have begun adopting the best practices that were discussed. No further case conferencing workgroup meetings are needed at this time.

Case conferencing is most often conducted at the provider organization level and generally takes place once or twice a month. Case conferencing is often centered around housing plans and may include multiple community partners, as needed. By contrast, Housing Placement Meetings happen at the CoC level and on an as-needed basis. These are convened when 5 or more units are available through Coordinated Entry at the same time with the goal of efficiently identifying referrals for multiple openings.

Data Workgroup

The data workgroup met four times between December 2021 and March 2022, identifying key metrics for measuring unsheltered homelessness. During the March meeting, the RED team presented an analysis of the causes of homelessness, and the workgroup discussed future analyses and data needs.

The unsheltered data mart, which forms the foundation for reporting on the unsheltered metrics, is nearly complete. The RED team has developed and implemented a new tool that streamlines the analysis of data quality. They are engaged in an iterative improvement process, and they continue to refine their data models and tools to improve the accuracy of the data. The goal is to use the unsheltered data mart to produce key metrics. Once the data mart is complete, the RED team will create a data dashboard for the PATH Innovations Committee.

The data workgroup will continue to help provide a feedback loop for driving this work. The next two meetings will be scheduled soon.

Prioritizing Work through December 2022

In the April Committee meeting, the Committee discussed the fact that the goal of reducing unsheltered homelessness by 30% by December 2022 is a goal of the entire county, not solely on the shoulders of the PATH Committee. This allows for H3 to work with partner systems across the county to support reducing unsheltered homelessness.



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The proposal today is to establish direction for the work for the next 6 months, then complete an assessment of direction and alignment at the mid-point of September 2022. Further assess of progress and development of next steps will occur by December 2022.

Prospective Bodies of Work

Four bodies of work that were discussed at the April meeting are well-aligned with the Committee's objective: communicate CES processes, refine housing placement meeting, integrate housing problem solving, and identify alternatives to VI-SPDAT. Additionally, two new ideas were brought forward by Committee members in the prior meeting: explore interim housing options and increase supportive services.

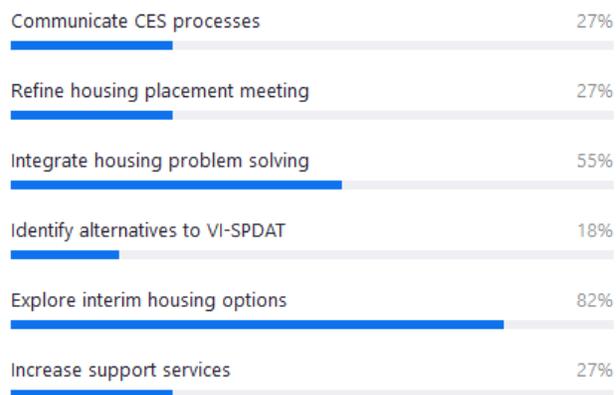
Poll:

The committee was polled to prioritize the order of topics for discussion. The poll resulted in the following discussion order:

1. Explore interim housing options (82%)
2. Integrate housing problem solving (55%)
3. Communicate CE processes (27%)
4. Increase support services (27%)
5. Refine housing placement meeting (27%)
6. Alternatives to VI-SPDAT (18%)

Discussion

1. Which of these topics would you like to focus the discussion on?
(Multiple Choice) *



You did not answer this question

Close



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Explore Interim Housing Options

Shawn Ray opened the discussion by emphasizing the importance of helping people quickly obtain short-term housing or shelter. He encouraged finding ways to reconnect people with their families and then provide support to the whole family to maintain stability. Wayne Earl agreed, noting that interim housing and shelter serve people while they are waiting for longer term housing opportunities, further noting that interim housing can save lives. Shelby Ferguson stated that a similar program already exists through the Hume Center and that program could potentially be expanded upon. Margaret Schiltz described the Hume Center program in more detail, explaining that the prevention program helps reunite people with families and work through resolving issues to help them stay housed once reconnected. Hume Center also subsidizes hotel rooms with extended stay hotels and provides case management and then helps to move people into a longer-term housing subsidy.

Jamie Schecter stated that some of the ideas discussed could be considered part of housing problem solving. She explained that the term “Interim Housing” refers more specifically to physical units to house people temporarily.

Shawn Ray responded to the prior discussion stating that law enforcement does not know about Hume Center’s program. He emphasized that how the system breaks down silos and collaborates with police and county jails is important to improving outcomes. He also noted that there will be two additional officers dedicated to homeless outreach and they need to have a partnership with H3.

Deanne Pearn noted the importance of defining terms. She noted that Diversion, Prevention, and Rapid Exit are terms that describe a lot of what has been discussed. These programs are usually less financial assistance and more supportive services. In contrast Interim Housing is usually short-term units. She also noted that hotel vouchers are very expensive.

Jo Bruno commented about the importance of shared housing. She gave the example of community housing, people with elder care who do not need much support but can rent a room. She also noted the importance of having conversations about property owners and land trusts. She gave an example of renters buying a building together from the landowner. Additionally, she recommended peer respite as an opportunity to explore and consider turning into a housing model in the system.

Integrate Housing Problem Solving

Matt Mitchell described this body of work as: finding more ways to house consumers outside of the housing resources available within the system and identifying best practices and creative ways to spread and scale problem solving. For this body of work, the Committee’s role could include learning from providers to identify promising practices, recommending best practices to spread across service providers, and brainstorming creative opportunities to scale housing problem solving. The body of work is expected to take between four and eight months.

Margaret Schiltz expressed interest in data about causes of people becoming homeless. She wanted to know whether the causes are related to families losing jobs and then losing their housing. She noted that mental health (her area of focus) is a domain of its own. She wanted to know what the best short



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term housing strategies are for most people. Shawn Ray agreed, stating that the “why” can serve as the basis of what to work on. Matt Mitchell noted that it sounds like there is demand for analysis from RED team to help understand the promising practices in the community.

Teri House commented that local jurisdictions have funding for tenant-landlord counseling. Services available through programs run by Shelter, Inc. and Bay Area Legal Aid. She suggested surveying these organizations to learn more about the causes of homelessness and what interventions are working. Jamie Schecter noted the importance of scaling what is working and finding creative prevention and diversion methods. Margaret Schiltz elaborated, stating that she wants to understand what interim housing solutions would be most helpful for people impacted for different reasons. Dana Ewing noted that people with completely different situations will need completely different solutions based on their different experiences and complications. Shelby Ferguson stated that Committee members should focus on what is realistic given the role and capacity of this Committee. Deanne Pearn agreed with Dana’s comment, noting that we should look at data and look at what is working within our own services and programs. She also stated that short-term solutions become the long-term solutions. Due to the nature of COVID, the CoC has been working in a restricted way and focused on the short term; however, it is important not to lose sight of the longer term.

Teri House noted that Antioch receives many calls from people who are disabled and seniors on fixed income looking for assistance. Antioch is putting together instructions on what to do and where to look and how to access help, but she noted that this is not enough.

Jo Bruno suggested that the Committee not reinvent the wheel. Some interventions are already working in other communities. She asked how Contra Costa can build on what has already started and is working well. Perhaps the Committee can tie in with other departments’ discussions and build a stronger network to find more places for people and alternative solutions.

Margaret Schiltz stated that staffing is a challenge. There is not enough funding to pay the staff doing the work. In response, Jo Bruno suggested that people donate to a trust that can help with funding for the positions.

Deanne Pearn commented that integrating housing problem solving as a more immediate strategy that echoes what is coming out of the program models. However, this takes training, tools, consistency and marketing about CES. Concrete next step would include figuring out what the training is and getting aligned and see some outcomes and learn from that.

Jaime Schecter reflected that this topic has a lot of interest and can be something that Committee takes on.

Communicate CES Processes

Matt Mitchell described the “Communication about CES processes” body of work, noting that the work may be achievable within three to four months. The outcome for this body of work would be improved understanding of accessing CES and related housing resources. The Committee would help develop the strategy, provide feedback on the content, and share information about CES.



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Wayne Earl commented in context of PATH, work on CES is about optimizing resources already in place. However, the catch is whether we have the housing. The Committee's objective may be an impossible goal, and this needs to be communicated because there are not enough resources available right now.

Christy Saxton responded, agreeing that right now we do not have the resources or money to build our way out of homelessness. However, not enough people know about the resources that already exist. The marketing needs work, so we can educate people about what the programs are and what is available to help. She noted that Cal-AIM will be even more support. Messaging can be done while still gathering resources to build more housing.

Jo Bruno commented that it is problematic that Shawn Ray (law enforcement) was not aware of the Hume Center's program, identifying that as a specific case of a larger problem. She suggested creating informational videos that explain what programs do as a possible solution. Margaret Schiltz shared additional information about the Hume Center's programs.

Jaime Jenett described the communication issue as complicated and needing to be tackled from various angles. She commented that the communication strategy needs guidance from the Committee to help inform how the system is marketed. There are many nuances and complicated referral pathways, which need to be communicated at a high-level.

Refine housing placement meeting

Matt Mitchell described the "Refine housing placement meeting" body of work as further standardizing housing placement meeting process and increasing the transparency of housing resource allocation. The work would include evaluating the housing placement meetings and providing recommendations on how to improve. The committee would learn about processes, provide feedback, and monitor changes and improvements.

Wayne Earl asked a clarifying question about coordinated entry and how the prospective bodies of work fit in. Matt Mitchell responded, stating that all four of the bodies of work with strong alignment are parts of or closely related to the CE system. The bodies of work came out of the CES evaluation.

Deanne Pearn asked whether the housing placement meetings would help achieve the goal of reducing unsheltered homelessness. Shelby Ferguson described the housing placement meeting as being about how to assign, refer and prioritize people equitably, with an eye toward improving the system as a whole. Jamie Schechter commented that this body of work could improve trust and the outcomes of people exiting homelessness.

Teri House suggested that this body of work should be lower the priority because it does not have a direct impact on unsheltered homelessness.

Identify alternatives to VI-SPDAT

Matt Mitchell described the "Identify alternatives to VI-SPDAT" body of work, stated that it would result in a more equitable and trauma-informed assessment for prioritizing housing resources and in reduced time spent asking unnecessary questions. The work would involve developing trauma-informed



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assessment content and designing a streamlined assessment process for CES prioritization. The committee would evaluate the content of the VI-SPDAT through feedback from consumers and providers, define what success looks like, and sponsor a process to develop or identify alternatives.

There were comments from multiple committee members indicating that replacing the VI-SPDAT is important but may not be appropriate for this Committee at this time.

Margaret Schiltz asked a clarifying question about the scope of CES and how it can be accessed from outside of shelters. Shelby Ferguson described the three types of access points: 211, CARE centers, and CORE outreach. She also described the role of the VI-SPDAT as the housing needs assessment for prioritizing consumers for housing and helping them get into housing appropriate for their needs.

Jo Bruno commented that replacing or changing the VI-SPDAT would involve changing the whole process that CE utilizes. Wayne Earl commented that there is not yet a replacement for the VI-SPDAT at the national level. He suggested that this issue is beyond the scope of this Committee. Perhaps the COH should appoint a longer-term Committee to tackle this specific issue.

Christy Saxton commented that CES must use an assessment tool, and the VI-SPDAT was chosen because it was one of the only tools available at the time. It is not the only one now, there are a lot of different things out there and can be implemented. She noted that Contra Costa can be on the cutting edge, and it would be good to be cutting edge on this one.

Tracy Bennett noted that the tool's author does not support it any further, understanding that it is not optimal for many communities. Many communities are replacing it, and many have already done research on what is out there. Some are developing tools that are unique to their communities, so they can incorporate what is important for their community. It is a big job, but Contra Costa would not be out of line to tackle this.

Teri House stated that if goal is to meet reduction of 30% of unsheltered homelessness, it is not clear that the VI-SPDAT body of work would help achieve this goal.

Summarizing the Discussion

Matt Mitchell summarized what the Committee had discussed. Refining the housing placement meeting and replacing the VI-SPDAT were not top priorities. However, creative solutions to prevention and diversion and communication strategies for CES emerged as potential priorities.

Teri House and Wayne Earl expressed support for the proposed priorities, and each offered more detailed descriptions of the work. Teri House underscored the importance of leveraging existing evidence on what interventions work. Wayne Earl reaffirmed the time-sensitive nature of prevention, diversion, and housing placement work. Jamie Schecter underscored the use of evidence for supporting policy and advocacy goals. Deanne Pearn expressed concern about the potential of private fundraising for community initiatives, as community-based organizations rely heavily on private donors already.

Jo Bruno asked whether any community-based organizations are currently buying buildings or creating land trusts. Jill Ray responded with information about Measure X.



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Vote on Priorities

Matt asked whether any Committee members would like to make a motion about proposed priorities or whether the Committee would need additional time or information to get to a proposal.

After discussion, a potential proposal emerged to focus on two bodies of work: homelessness prevention and rapid exit from homelessness. Both bodies of work should include an understanding of the “why,” evidence on what works, and foreground communication and training.

Jo Bruno made a motion to vote on this proposal.

Margaret Schiltz seconded the motion.

The committee discussed the proposal, but disagreement emerged on the scope of the “rapid exit” portion of the proposal. There was confusion over terminology because rapid exit is the name of an existing program model. Deanne Pearn indicated she would abstain from the vote due to lack of clarity, and other members of the Committee came to consensus that they were not ready to hold a vote.

A vote was not held.

Matt Mitchell summarized next steps, which include revisiting the priorities at the June meeting and developing workplans for the July meeting.

Additional Attendees

In addition to the facilitators, H3 staff, and Committee members listed, the following people attended the Zoom session:

- Jill Ray (Office of Supervisor Candace Andersen)
- La Tanya Johnson
- Derlin Hsu
- Gina Bills