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## Employment, Income Supports, and Supportive Services Workgroup Meeting Notes

**TO:**  
EISS Work Group Members

**FROM:**  
Nancy Hewat and David McConnell  
(PPA)

**SUBJECT:**  
Employment, Income Supports, and  
Supportive Services Workgroup  
Meeting Notes, October 15, 2008

**DATE:**  
October 15, 2008

Public Policy Research,  
  
Development,  
  
and Evaluation

### *Items Relevant to Other Workgroups*

- The training workgroup may need to get involved in developing a comprehensive plan for addressing SOAR training needs.
- The issue of transportation may arise in other groups. Ongoing communication and coordination among the workgroups will be important to avoid duplication.
- There may be a need for coordination with the communications workgroup in regard to efforts to make individuals more aware of One-Stop services and service providers more aware of the services available through the One-Stop centers.

Jeffrey D. Padden  
  
President

### *Attendees*

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| ■ <i>Chuck Jones, Chair</i>     | ■ <i>Jennifer Stewart</i>              |
| ■ <i>Stacey Smith, Co-Chair</i> | ■ <i>Diane Bonds</i>                   |
| ■ <i>Janet Howard, Co-Chair</i> | ■ <i>Susan Hornfeld</i>                |
| ■ <i>Alysia Babcock</i>         | ■ <i>Erin Riley</i>                    |
| ■ <i>Paul Beiring</i>           | ■ <i>Michelle Walker</i>               |
| ■ <i>Dave Verseput</i>          | ■ <i>Andy Bennett</i>                  |
| ■ <i>Nancy Oliver</i>           | ■ <i>Brant Winbush</i>                 |
| ■ <i>Cathy Truss</i>            | ■ <i>Nancy Hewat (Facilitator)</i>     |
| ■ <i>Camille Price</i>          | ■ <i>David McConnell (Facilitator)</i> |

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119 Pere Marquette

Lansing, MI 48912-1231

517-485-4477

Fax: 485-4488

[ppa@publicpolicy.com](mailto:ppa@publicpolicy.com)

[www.publicpolicy.com](http://www.publicpolicy.com)

## *Discussion Topics*

### **Identification of Third Co-Chair**

- After providing introductory comments, Chuck Jones welcomed Stacey Smith who has agreed to serve as a third co-chair of the workgroup.

### **Review of Charter**

- The Charter that was reviewed during the previous teleconference meeting served as a base for discussion. Based on the input from that meeting the Charter was updated to incorporate a fifth strategic issue area, transportation. The new wording is as follows: *Strategic Issue Area #5: Develop effective strategies for addressing transportation issues in both urban and rural communities.*
- Chuck Jones led the review and discussion of the Charter. Points of discussion included the following:
  - *Scope:* The focus of the workgroup will be on coordination, identification of gaps, unmet needs, and any regulatory/procedural barriers, and identifying and disseminating best practices. The group discussed the importance of identifying a preliminary set of priorities with the option of getting into new areas in the future.
  - *Membership:* The membership might need to be expanded to include someone from the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and other topic areas as needed.
  - *Sub-Groups.* In order to address all of the issue areas within EISS (i.e., employment, income supports, and supportive services), the Leadership Team decided to create three subgroups, one for each main topic area. The composition of the subgroups was discussed, and it was agreed that additional members may be added on an ad hoc basis if there are other areas of expertise needed. Since the current version of the Charter limited membership to 18, the wording will be revised, allowing for a maximum of 30 participants, i.e., 10 per subgroup.
  - *Meeting Frequency:* It was agreed that each subgroup will meet monthly via conference call. The entire EISS workgroup will meet quarterly. All subgroup meetings will be facilitated by PPA. A meeting schedule is provided at the end of this summary. The meetings will be scheduled for 90 minutes each, although they may end early if the goals of the meeting have been achieved.
- There were no other requested changes to the Charter. The document (with revisions) was approved unanimously by the workgroup members.

### Subgroup Break-Outs

- The workgroup members were divided into subgroups, each of which was led by one of the co-chairs. Chuck Jones will lead Supportive Services, Janet Howard will lead Employment, and Stacey Smith will lead Income Supports.
- Workgroup members who were not present at the meeting will be assigned to the Income Supports subgroup.
- The strategic issues included in the EISS Charter were divided among the three subgroups.

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## Employment, Income Supports, and Supportive Services Workgroup Strategic Issues

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**Strategic Issue 1:** *Increase income for homeless and at-risk populations by targeting workforce development resources and linking supportive housing with employment and other asset-building supports. Assure services are available and accessible to persons living in supportive housing, including services that allow people to remain in their own homes.*

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**Strategic Issue 2:** *Assure that services are available and accessible to persons living in supportive housing, including services that allow people to remain in their own homes.*

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**Strategic Issue 3:** *Develop tools and strategies that increase immediacy of receipt of mainstream services and entitlement benefits (e.g., SSI, Medicaid, VA) by eligible homeless populations.*

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**Strategic Issue 4:** *Develop comprehensive, integrated, community-based strategies for homelessness prevention.*

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**Strategic Issue 5:** *Develop effective strategies for addressing transportation issues in both urban and rural communities.*

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- Issue 1 is assigned to the Employment subgroup.
- Issues 2 and 4 are assigned to the Supportive Services subgroup.
- Issue 3 is assigned to the Income Supports subgroup.
- Issue 5 cuts across all subgroups.

### Sub-Group #1: Employment Subgroup

*Subgroup Members: Janet Howard (lead), Alysia Babcock, Camille Price, Diane Bonds, Susan Hornfeld, Michelle Walker, Andy Bennett, Brant Winbush*

- There was a broad discussion about an array of issues related to employment, including barriers encountered by homeless and at-risk individuals, current efforts of DLEG, and possible action steps.
- The discussion led to the identification of several barriers for homeless and at-risk individuals who seek employment.
  - Language/literacy
  - Lack of marketable skills
  - Lack of “soft” skills
  - Insufficient education
  - Transportation
  - Lack of marketing strategy to business and employers
  - Prejudice
  - Child care

- Availability of guidance and support when visiting agencies to seek information and services.
- It was noted that the homeless population includes many subpopulations such as: homeless veterans, those with head injuries, seniors, youth aging out of foster care, ex-offenders, those with significant substance abuse problems; non-custodial parents, people who are disabled, mentally ill, those with autism, immigrants that have language and/or literacy issues (Note: the group was not clear on the extent of the immigrant challenge).
- Similarities and differences between periodic and chronic homeless populations were also noted as a concern.
- Members noted that the needs of some subpopulations (e.g., ex-offenders) are already being addressed and that there are other subpopulations (e.g., young, single mothers) whose needs are not being served because of the current way in which program funds are being allocated and eligibility determined.
- Some extreme and unusual cases were mentioned, but the group agreed that the charge was to identify issues and strategies to address the common needs of large groups of homeless and at-risk individuals rather than focus on unusual cases.
- Janet H. explained that leveraging multiple funding streams is a primary challenge. There is a need to be more effective at leveraging funds, including what is available through government and foundations as well as what is available for education such as WIA dollars.
- Capacity of existing organizations to address the needs of homeless and at-risk individuals was also viewed as a challenge. The group agreed there were situations where some organizations are at their service capacity regardless of whether or not they might get additional funding.
- All agreed that employment for homeless and at-risk individuals is a complex issue, and that the strategies to address it should address multiple components and barriers.
- The issue of retention in employment was not discussed.

#### *Action Items*

- The following action items were mentioned during the group discussion:
  - Recruit additional members for the subgroup:
    - ◆ AARP (possibly someone from CLEG)
    - ◆ MDOT (Janet H. has already made a preliminary contact)
    - ◆ MPRI
    - ◆ Others?
  - Build knowledge base
    - ◆ Opportunities for leveraging funds and other resources
      - DLEG's "Share Network" of community and faith-based organizations
      - AARP
      - Industry-specific employment opportunities (green building, deconstruction, material recovery)
      - WIA/ "No Worker Left Behind"
      - Other federal funding streams (TANF, Veterans Grants)
      - DLEG's "Foster Care Demo" which is currently focused on SE Michigan but might be applicable to other areas of the state (more data needed).
      - Other foundation-funded programs in the state
      - Asset map of state resources is needed.

- ◆ Comprehensive Strategies and Capacity
  - Identify comprehensive strategies currently being used in Michigan and elsewhere
  - Assess existing capacity within Michigan regions and locally
- ◆ Transportation
  - Strategies and best practices within Michigan and elsewhere
- ◆ Other barriers to employment
  - Document any regulatory and program-related barriers (e.g., pay increases that threaten loss of housing voucher, child support payment requirements)
- Promote and enhance effectiveness of provider networks with employment goal.
  - ◆ Identify specific approaches to and promote cross-communication and collaboration among service providers
  - ◆ Identify and disseminate information about services and programs that address specific barriers to employment, including transportation as well as other barriers.
  - ◆ Identify, summarize, and disseminate information related to services available through One-Stop Centers and outreach networks (F/CBOs).
  - ◆ Address professional development needs of One-Stop staff in regard to working with people who are homeless or at risk, including the need to address both soft skills.
- Marketing/Outreach
  - ◆ Develop strategies for outreach to homeless and at-risk individuals (multiple subpopulations) regarding the availability and sources of supports and services to find employment.
  - ◆ Coordinate outreach campaign with Communications Workgroup

## **Sub-Group #2: Supportive Services**

*Subgroup Members: Chuck Jones (lead), Erin Riley, Paul Beiring, David Verseput, Nancy Oliver, Cathy Truss*

- The subgroup had a focused discussion of the strategic objectives and developed a specific action plan. The details of the plan are provided below.

### *Action Items*

- Identify best practices, models and strategies to learn from – like Traverse City PRI, West Michigan Therapy, Grand Rapids Shelter model.
  - *Lead:* Paul Beiring with input from the team.
  - *Milestones:* input to Paul from team members from areas of expertise.
    - ◆ Paul to compile list and analyze list for trends then provide report to team.
    - ◆ Additional milestones to be added following presentation of best practices.
  - *Timeline :* 12/1/08
    - ◆ At January sub-group meeting (date TBD)
  - *Outcome:* Case management and/or system navigation for all homeless persons or those at risk of becoming homeless based on need.
- Revisit the 2-1-1 system – who has it, who doesn't, where is it working?
  - *Lead:* Erin Riley
  - *Milestones:* Report out on 2-1-1 findings
  - *Timeline:* At February sub-group meeting.
  - *Outcome:* Service information resource system (manual, 2-1-1, web page) in every community.

- Investigate database or resource portal possibility. Looking at the variety of existing web sites.
  - *Lead:* Dave and Cathy
  - *Milestones:* Engage DIT
    - ◆ Look at Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness site, V4A site, etc.
  - *Timeline:* By November meeting.
  - *Outcome:* Service information resource system (manual, 2-1-1, web page) in every community.

### **Sub-Group #3: Income Supports**

*Sub-Group Members: Stacey Smith (lead), Jennifer Stewart. (others to be named later)*

- Due to the small number of people at the meeting, there was a preliminary discussion of the topic area and some initial ideas for the action plan. The discussion is summarized below.

*Action Items (leads to be decided)*

- Train at least one frontline worker in each county in the application process.
  - *Milestones:* Identify underserved counties; identify trainers; schedule and deliver training.
  - *Timeline:* One year; months 1-3 identify counties, months 3-12 schedule and deliver training and continue to identify.
  - *Outcomes:* (Short) Have identified underserved counties, (med) conducting trainings, (Long) increase applications and approvals.
- Increase communications surrounding successes and barriers.
  - *Milestones:* Schedule statewide meeting of trainers.
  - *Timeline:* TBD (should come through DCH).
  - *Outcome:* Breakdown barriers (e.g. stability of training teams), increase success of program (increased applications, increased use of SOAR material), increase implementation of best practices across regions.

### **Strategic Issue 5: Transportation**

- As noted earlier, this issue area was added following the initial conference call for the EISS Workgroup. The October 15 session was used to continue that discussion.
- Identified Barriers
  - Hours of operation (no nights or weekends)
  - Lack of rural transportation
  - Routes do not go across city or county lines
  - Lack of funding for bus passes through agencies
- Possible actions
  - Bus workshop to explain and demonstrate how and where service works, to help people learn bus routes.
  - Build awareness among transportation providers as to where service agencies are located.
- Discussions will continue during subsequent subgroup meetings, leading to the identification of a specific action plan to address this topic area. The facilitators will ensure coordination across the subgroups.

***Tasks Completed***

- Approved Charter
- Assigned Strategic Issues to Groups
- Developed draft Action Plans to address Strategic Issues
- Set dates for future meetings

***Tasks Assigned***

- Review draft Action Plans for Subgroups

***Next Meeting***

- EISS Group (quarterly meetings starting in January 2009, specific date TBD)
  
- Employment Subgroup
  - November 18, 2008 2:00-3:30p
  - December 2008 – 2009, second Wednesday of every month, 2:00-3:30p
  
- Supportive Services Subgroup
  - November 21, 2008, 8:30 – 9:30a
  - December 19, 2008 8:30 – 9:30a
  - January 2009 ongoing (TBD)
  
- Income Supports Subgroup
  - November 4, 2008, 10:00 a.m.
  - December 2008 – 2009, first Tuesday of every month, 10:00 a.m.