

County of Santa Clara

Office of Supportive Housing

3180 Newberry Dr. Suite 150
San Jose, CA 95118
(408) 793-0550 Main
(408) 266-0124 Fax



Working Group Meeting Summary

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

10:30 am – 11:30 am

North County Shelter Facility
999 Hamlin Court
Sunnyvale, CA 94089

Meeting Attendees:

Amanda Olson, Downtown Streets Team
Aurora Olivares, Bill Wilson Center
Brandi Jothimani, Community Services Agency
Charisse Ma Lebron, County Office of Supportive Housing
Daniel Strickland, Sunnyvale Guest/Client Collaborative
David Hernandez, Sunnyvale Community Services
Donna Beres, Our Daily Bread
Gary Martin, Sunnyvale Guest/Client Collaborative
Glenn Fritz, ProofPoint, Inc.
Jelaine Smith, West Valley Community Services
Keisha Miller, Sunnyvale Community Services
Kelcy Fleming, HomeFirst Services of SCC
Kristina Loquist, Office of Board President Simitian
Linda Jones, HomeFirst Services of SCC
Michelle Covert, County Office of Supportive Housing
Mila Romero, Sunnyvale Guest/Client Collaborative
Shila Behzadiaria, City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Summary

- Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) staff opened the meeting and solicited feedback from Working Group members about the desired outcomes from the meetings moving forward. The input included:
 - The Working Group meetings are an opportunity to provide high-level updates on facilities issues, but the details of facility-related concerns are best brought to

the attention of facility staff instead of the group in order to address concerns in a timely manner.

- The Working Group could meet once a month, as opposed to every two weeks when there is little to report and meetings are less constructive.
- Providers would like the opportunity to convene a service providers' specific meeting in order to discuss client concerns, which are not appropriate to be discussed during Working Group meetings.
- OSH staff shared the latest data regarding the demographics and facility utilization.
 - The average length of stay for all clients was less than two months.
 - Group members expressed interest in seeing the demographic data include "Latinos" as a specific race identifier, since it currently is not included in the report.
 - Facility staff noted that there needs to be a concerted effort to identify which clients are getting housed, which requires additional communication with the case workers.
- OSH staff continued with a discussion on Operations and Procedures. The discussion focused on how the shelter may best position itself for success in the short- and long-term.
 - OSH staff shared literature on best practices from the National Alliance to End Homelessness.
 - Working Group members discussed aligning the shelter's operations and procedures with identified best practices. This necessitates operating as a low-barrier shelter, which can allow staff to successfully prevent someone from homelessness. The focus is on diversion, as opposed to diving into the intake process with a client. The shelter also needs to be easy to access. Facility staff indicated there also must be clear metrics for success.
 - Linda Jones with HomeFirst shared that she and HomeFirst leadership have already embarked on a process to better align their policies, practices, and operations consistent with the Best Practices guidelines. A part of that process involved conducting outreach to many shelters, which revealed that HomeFirst has already been consistent with most of the best practices and low-barrier standards. Among the standards are for low-barrier shelters to have no sobriety requirement, no criminal background search, and simplifying and condensing shelter rules for clients to the rules most necessary to support a safe and healthy environment.
- Service Providers shared their latest client observations and identified general homelessness trends, such as:
 - The number of clients has not increased since spring, but there has been a consistent increase in homelessness.
 - There has been some success with preventing low-income families from becoming homeless because they have been willing to move out of the County to more affordable locations.
 - They have seen an increasing number of people living in their cars and RVs.
 - The shelter has been receiving more referrals from other agencies.

- Representatives of the Sunnyvale Guest/Client Collaborative shared recent efforts and ideas on opportunities to ensure the success of shelter clients. Among the items discussed were:
 - Shelter staff have begun conversations with clients about a proposed “New Starts” Program, a pilot project for the summer, which would serve to get clients motivated to change their situation and transition toward self-sufficiency.
 - The New Starts program idea came from previous iterations of other programs the shelter has adopted. The Program would allow clients the opportunity to gain skills and experience (e.g. food service prep work and janitorial skills), which they would be able to leverage to secure gainful employment. The Program is informed by client input, peer-driven and peer-supported, and helps to build self-esteem among participants.
 - The County of Santa Clara is exploring the opportunity to have a formal training program focused on culinary skills.

Updates

- OSH staff announced that the sidewalk project is on track to be completed by the end of the summer. The contractor will clean shrubs and bushes for 1-2 weeks in preparation for construction to start.
- OSH staff also shared that the County Board of Supervisors has approved funding for 40 safe parking opportunities at 2 sites, which will ultimately grow to accommodate 80 cars to help 200 individuals. The contracts were approved by the Board. Participating agencies already had one location pre-approved for safe parking. Agencies will manage the referral and case management process for safe parking clients. Ultimately, the County will support three nonprofits to host safe parking programs.
- The City of San Jose also put out an RFP for safe parking, and received 5 proposals.

Next Steps

- The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for July 11th. OSH staff will follow-up with invitations and details.
- The next At-Large meeting is scheduled for August 15th. Working Group members will also receive information about the meeting.