

Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance CoC
Warming Task Force

1. In attendance:

Name	Organization	Email
1. Lindsay Dent	MWVCAA	lindsay.dent@mwvcaa.org
2. Sam Dompier	Church of the Park	sam@church-at-the-park.org
3. Bennett Teal	MWVCAA	Bennett.teal@mwvcaa.org
4. Noelle Gore	Church of the Park	noelgore@comcast.net
5. Stephen Goins	NW Human Services	sgoins@nwhumanservices.org
6. Emily Neves	Sheltering Silverton	
7. Lynelle Willcox	SafeSleep United	lwilcox@unitedwaymwv.org

2. Updates:

Lindsay Dent of MWVCAA reviewed the Warming Network charter and noted key points:

- Jan from the CoC shared their Conflict of Interest form for our use. **We'll distribute that form for members to sign and submit.**
- We will hold meetings at least monthly; we'll prepare meeting minutes and submit them to the CoC within a week of the meeting date.
- The Warming Task Force purpose is to 1) expand the network of shelters; 2) create a blueprint of best practices; and 3) create trainings for independent warming centers to use.

Sam Dompier: Church at the Park (CATP) Director of Housing:

- Sam is new to CATP and to Salem; she moved from Spokane where she did homeless service work.
- She is now CATP's Director of Housing. Her responsibilities include shelter operations, outreach, and case management.

Noelle Gore: Coordinator for Shelter on State Street (SOS) (also with CATP):

- SOS shuts down as of today.
- CATP will be operating the Portland Road pallet house village.
- That site will also offer safe parking.

Bennett Teal: MWVCAA Hotel Program Coordinator as of late January:

- Had about 20-25 people in hotels in January; now over 100 people are sheltered in Arches' hotel programs.
- Having people in hotels is making it easier to know where people are, offer services, develop connections, meet needs, and provide case management to enable people to transition to more permanent housing.

Stephen Goins - Director of Transitional Programs for Northwest Human Services (NWHS).

- Programs include a 24 hour hotline service since 1971, a youth resource drop in center, HOST transitional living shelter for youth aged 18 to 24, and a Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Project (HOAP) for people who are 25 years old or older. HOAP has a day center and offers medical outreach and case management services.

The purpose of the CoC Warming Shelter Task Force is to:

- *Expand emergency warming shelters in Marion-Polk County.*
- *Collaborate to create a shared blueprint for best practices.*
- *Create training opportunities for community members to learn how to host their own warming shelters.*

- NWHS has supported warming centers in the past by purchasing mats, and offering transportation. They also used to offer youth emergency shelter at HOST, but now that space is used for transitional living for youth.
- Currently, NWHS does outreach to share about warming center activations, and their hotline also shares about warming center activations and capacity information.

Emily Neves - Sheltering Silverton Resource Coordinator

- Sheltering Silverton used to offer a low barrier duration warming center from November 15th to March 15th. They hope to have that again in the future, as well as Pallet shelters.
- For now, Sheltering Silverton offers a low barrier day center, offering resources, information, and support to individuals. They also coordinated hotel stays for some people this season.

3. **Minutes**

- Reviewed/approved 11/2020 notes.

4. **Warming experiences and statistics:**

- **Shelter on State (SOS)** women's shelter operated from November 2020 till March 30, 2021. It was closed two nights due to a power outage. They initially chose guests by pulling from a master list, yet only 1-2 people were showing up. They changed to a drop-in model and that resulted in more people staying at SOS. **Sam will try to bring statistics about bed nights and number of guests to the April Warming Task Force meeting.**
- **Fairgrounds Pavilion** opened 2/1/2021 and operated till 3/30/21. Although there was some guest turnover, the shelter was consistently full. Sam will finalize data and will share how many they served, and outcome data. Overall, it was easier to connect guests with services since the shelter operated 24/7. Guests were connected with OHP and SNAP, 6 households moved to permanent housing with 10 more on their way. 15 people were working part time or full time - having a safe place for their belongings enabled working to be more viable.
- **Polk County warming network** - Matt is not here to share details, but he coordinated 3 rotating church warming centers in Polk County. There were 15 warming center activations, serving 53 unique individuals in Polk County. Their warming trailer was stolen during the season, full of warming center supplies. They purchased a 15 person vehicle, to be shared with Polk County.
- **Sheltering Silverton** - Like many of us, their volunteer pool decreased drastically when Covid hit, since so many of their volunteers are elderly, and at higher risk for Covid complications. Instead of operating a warming center, they offered hotel stays for some people - 50 clients were hoteled intermittently based on weather; 4 people were hoteled more consistently based on being elderly and/or experiencing significant disabilities, making them more vulnerable.

Hoteling people is very different than providing warming center beds. Hotel stays may require coordination of pets, family needs, and transportation needs, and with so much coordination needed, some people may fall through the cracks. It is also easier for people to know where to go when it is one warming center, as opposed to sheltering people at different hotels. Sheltering Silverton prefers to find a way for a warming center to work.

- **Community Action** - Lindsay Dent shared that statistics are being compiled, yet initial analysis is showing that it is less expensive to hotel people than to use congregate shelters. Bennett shared that Shelter Representatives are now staffing hotels, enabling guests to have easier access to services and supports to move forward. The original plan was to end the hotel program 3/31, yet it has been

extended to 5/31, with staff rotating to provide 2 staff onsite 24/7 at each hotel. Two main hotels are in use now, with over 100 rooms used for sheltering homeless guests.

The consistent shelter, daily connection with staff, and information and resource sharing is resulting in guests experiencing better health, fewer emergency room visits, fewer charges, and less jail time. Statistics will be gathered to show taxpayer savings as a result of hoteling people. There are also plans to purchase a hotel for use as a shelter.

Sam asked how people get into the hotel program, and she wondered if entry is based on SPDAT scores? Lindsay shared that the SPDAT is not the best tool for determining health risks, so hotel entry is based on 20 different partners referring people based on chronic health conditions, age, and overall vulnerability. Families with kids, fire victims, and people with chronic health conditions have been high priorities for hoteling. **Lindsay will share the hotel referral form.**

- **Portland Road** - Sam shared that the Portland Road site will offer 8 Safe Parking spaces and 20 pallet homes, with 2 beds in each pallet home. The pallet homes are women-centric, where a woman may share the pallet home with a partner or a child, yet men and kids are not eligible for a pallet home on their own. If a woman does not have a partner or child, a female roommate will be assigned to share the room, so that all 40 beds are filled.

The old DMV building at the site will be used as a day center/navigation center with the goal of helping people move forward to permanent shelter. The expectation is that people will stay up to 60 days, as they work to find more permanent shelter, yet time extensions are possible for people who are working to move forward.

Women who stayed at the Pavilion will have the opportunity to move into a pallet home, with agency partner referrals also accepted for equitable access for other vulnerable women to be considered. Additional referrals can be submitted for consideration as vacancies occur. Sam and Lindsay can work and learn together about best ways to track data to reflect taxpayer cost savings. Transitional shelters will also need to enable equitable access systems-wide, and identify measurable outcomes that constitute "success".

- **SafeSleep United (SSU)** - SSU is a year round low barrier women's shelter that can accommodate up to 19 ladies. Remodel plans are in progress to add restrooms (we only have one restroom), a laundry room, a shower, a commercial kitchen, and to open space to shelter about 40 women in the future. However, best practices now show that separate space enables better health and outcomes than congregate space, so they will consider that as they raise money and plan more details of the remodel.

Lynelle shared that as a year round shelter, SSU is not the same as temperature based or duration warming centers, yet some similarities exist. SSU has been open since 12/15/20, originally intending for ladies to stay up to 30 days before transitioning to something more stable.

Yet we learned that so many women are so traumatized that it's not reasonable to expect them women to have their next place by 30 days. They tried 60 days and 90 days, yet women were rarely ready even at those longer timeframes, so they became more open ended, focusing more on what supports women need, and helping them to connect to resources and help.

They ask if women have been assessed by Arches, if they are on the SHA and Marion County or Polk County housing wait lists, if they have a phone, SNAP, SSI, SSDI, if they have a job or could get one, if they have income, if they have expenses, to see what connections and applications they can help with, and to see what options may be available for the women to transition to permanent shelter. Yet with Covid reducing so many supports, and with such a shortage in affordable housing, and such long wait lists, it continues to be hard to expect ladies to move on in 90 days or less. It has also been a huge

surprise to see how many homeless women are very senior citizens, sleeping on concrete parking lots, and how many women experience significant abuse, trauma, and mental illness.

It has been heart-wrenching to not be able to accommodate women who have high support needs, when those women are most vulnerable staying on the streets. It has been devastating to see those situations are more a norm than the rare exception, and these women fall through the cracks in our system. It continues to be a learning curve to apply homeless brain concepts as our systems require more than traumatized people are able to do. It becomes so hard to know what is reasonable as far as timeframes and other boundaries, when so many people are still in trauma and survival mode, even after months of being safe at night in our shelter. Safety doesn't make enough of a difference as we hoped for. Stephen shared that it's unlikely people can heal quickly from trauma, yet they may be able to develop skills to manage things more effectively in spite of their trauma. He offered to talk with Lynelle.

It would be helpful to be able to see housing list status of SSU guests. Lindsay shared that is possible if ladies sign the CoC Release of Information.

- **Northwest Human Services (NWHS)** - Stephen gathers data from his NWHS programs, and tries to find ways to show equitable access and positive health outcomes. There is a shift in philosophy, to consider services to be care management, instead of case management, coming from the perspective that people require care, but are not cases.

Stephen has noticed more IDD and DD among youth; Lynelle shared she has been seeing a lot of that with SSU guests of all ages as well. NWHS services are provided with a focus on identifying people's strengths and barriers, and helping people to work through those barriers. It's inevitable that sometimes the squeaky wheel gets the focus, yet he hired a new manager who will help with planning ways to strategize and assign risk, based on connecting people to resources, considering unmanaged mental health, likelihood of people going to jail or the hospital, and other factors. The goal is to spend less time putting out fires, more focus on managing risk, and investing more time in people who want to change and move forward, while still providing drop in services.

With the reality that we don't have enough housing to meet the needs, he is committed to figuring out how to be more effective with what we have.

5. **Action items from this meeting**

- **Lindsay:** Distribute CoC Conflict of Interest form for members to sign and submit.
- **Lindsay:** Share hotel referral form with members.
- **Sam:** Share statistics about SOS bed nights and number of guests.
- **Lindsay, Sam, and Lynelle:** Schedule time to discuss more about shelter options and processes, what constitutes success, and measurable outcomes.
- **Lindsay and Sam:** Work together to develop processes for estimating cost savings.
- **Stephen and Lynelle:** Schedule time to talk about care management and trauma.

6. **Next Warming Task Force meeting:** April 28, 2021 2:00 to 3:30 pm

7. **Meeting adjourned.**