

Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance CoC

Warming Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 28 from 2:00 to 3:30 pm

1. **In attendance:**

Name	Organization	Email
1. Lindsay Dent	MWVCAA - manager of Arches' sheltering services and warming network; Chair of this task force.	lindsay.dent@mwvcaa.org
2. Sam Dompier	Church of the Park Director of Housing	sam@church-at-the-park.org
3. Bennett Teal	MWVCAA - Arches Hotel Coordinator, since January 2021	Bennett.teal@mwvcaa.org
4. Carla Munns	Homeless Alliance consultant/staff support	carla@csuitenw.com
5. Noelle Gore	Church at the Park - warming center lead and Coordinator of Shelter on State (SOS)	noelgore@comcast.net
6. Emily Neves	Sheltering Silverton Data Intake Coordinator	emily@shelteringsilverton.org
7. Sarah White	Sheltering Silverton Program Manager	sarah@shelteringsilverton.org
8. Shyanne Tovar	MWVCAA - Arches' Warming Coordinator, also staffs hotels as needed	shyanne.tovar@mwvcaa.org
9. Lynelle Willcox	SafeSleep United Program Manager; Warming Task Force Secretary	lwilcox@unitedwaymwv.org
10. Matt Sucker - not able to attend	Representing Polk County warming network	matt@praiseonline.net
11. Stephen Goins - not able to attend	Director of Transitional Programs for Northwest Human Services (NWHS)	sgoins@nwhumanservices.org

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.*

2. **Minutes:** March Warming Task Force minutes were approved with one change: Warming Task Force will meet on the last Wednesday of each month, from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm. Motion, Noelle Gore. Second, Sarah White. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Updates

- **Lindsay Dent:** Lindsay shared that this committee is tasked with expanding emergency warming centers, and collaborating to create a blueprint for best practices. Yet with the Covid pandemic, more people lost jobs and became homeless, and warming centers needed to significantly reduce capacity in order to attain the social distancing to reduce the risk of Covid spreading. Funds became available for hoteling people who are vulnerable, and we also had pallet shelters for the first time ever for a duration time period that was not contingent on weather.

With these recent options, it seems like warming centers are just one alternative for keeping people warm, safe, and sheltered, so we wondered about revising the work plan for this task force to have shared policies and procedures available as a library for new groups to peruse and choose whatever guidelines and rules fits their agency and model best.

- **Lynelle Wilcox:** Lynelle spoke with Jan Calvin about the new options available and asked about making this group's work plan more broad to enable "blueprint" ideas for various models. She shared some of Jan's thoughts about that, with Jan's analogy that it's like we're on a highway to the same destination of having people sheltered and safe through bad weather, and each option is like a different on ramp to the same highway. With that analogy, it seems like having policies and procedures for various models would be a valuable library, where people and groups can pick and choose whichever combination of policies and procedures fit the model(s) they wish to create. And with policies and procedures seeming to often be fluid in this work, items can be added to the library any time along the way. Lynelle asked groups to share the policy and procedures they have created so far, as the start of this library project.

At SafeSleep United, we continue to encounter many women who are so traumatized that it's not reasonable to expect them to have their next place by 30 days, 60 days, or even 90 days, so we now focus more on what supports women need, help them to connect to resources, and define "success" as bigger than getting to more stable and permanent housing. Success includes so many little things and intangibles, and we need those to count too, so that those things become part of a person's sense of progress, pride, accomplishments, and abilities.

- **Sarah White:** Sheltering Silverton operated a warming center in the past; this year they operated a resource center and hoteling people. Sarah prefers the warming center model and hopes the COC will play a role to help low barrier shelters to be culturally appropriate based on specific regions and populations, ie women, youth, single adult males, families with kids.
- **Carla Munns** shared that the COC is doing a low barrier gap analysis, and they discussed the need for low barrier shelters for families with kids, especially boys over the age of 12. The COC Collaborative Committee will weigh in on that topic, with the Strategic Plan to be revised as needed, based on those conversations and analysis. They have so far identified that a youth emergency shelter is needed.

- **Noelle Gore** shared that CATP has been fundraising to buy their property. They are also trying to open a shelter or managed camp in each ward. Meanwhile, showers and laundry services are busy!
- **Bennett Teal** shared that hotels have been a new way to shelter people who are homeless and vulnerable. Arches staff meet with each hotel client to try to identify paths for people to move forward. The hotel referral form will be shared so that there is a consistent way for people to be considered for a hotel stay.

4. Shelter options:

- **Sites of warming centers/emergency beds:** First Presbyterian Church, Friends Church, Weslynn Church, Church at the Park, Shelter on State (SOS), Tanner's Project (for veterans), HOME (was adding emergency beds for youth, but we don't know if that was possible after Covid happened), Polk County has three churches that rotate as a warming center, and Falls City has a warming center; UGM men's mission and Simonka Place women's shelter are 2 of Salem's **transitional shelters** that also offered emergency beds in cold weather pre-Covid.

Sheltering Silverton operated a warming center last year, offering beds or mats and bedding from 8pm to 8am. This year, they served as a resource/navigation center and hoteled vulnerable people who needed a safe place for a period of time - seniors, people with disabilities, people experiencing Covid symptoms, people who are at high risk of contracting Covid, people with kids, and many domestic violence survivors. About 1/3 of their hoteled guests were not eligible to return to hotels once their initial stay ended.

- **Pallet shelters** - Church at the Park has 20 pallet homes open at the old DMV site on Portland Road. Each shelter has 2 beds, so the capacity is 40 individuals. The shelter prioritizes women, yet women with a partner are also accepted so the site has some men staying there too. The site also offers safe parking and they hope to also add managed camping to the site.
- **Safe Parking** - Church at the Park (CATP) is one of 13 sites offering safe parking spaces. Each safe parking provider can offer up to 8 vehicle spaces. The provider needs to provide porta potties, with policies and procedures that guests sign off on. CATP has an on-call site manager available 24/7.
- **Permanent Supported Housing (PSH)** - Redwood Crossing is Salem's PSH, and Sequoia Crossing and Yaquina Hall are upcoming PSH projects. Lindsay may have policies and procedures to share from Redwood Crossing.

5. Review/update work plan - Based on the diverse shelter options that are now possibilities in addition to warming centers, we'll update this task force's work plan to include:

- **Developing a library of policies and procedures for various models, with entry criteria and staffing info also included.** The goal is to have policies and procedures, staffing, and entry criteria available from as many providers as possible, so new providers would have a starting point for developing their own, with individualization also supported.
- **Identifying shelter gaps.** So far, we noted that we need more shelter options for youth, for families with boys who are 12 or over, and for individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities that require more assistance than most shelters can accommodate.

- **Involving municipalities in CoC work and advocacy, broader than this task force's role.** Finding ways for CoC advocacy work to include mental health professionals, hospital advocates, mental health agencies, representatives from groups that serve people who are medically fragile, so that groups might work together to identify needed supports, and develop tool kits to help people shift from crisis mode to more stability.
6. **March 31 Warming Task Force follow-up:**
- **Sam:** Share statistics about SOS bed nights and number of guests. ***Status: Outstanding.***
 - **Stephen and Lynelle re: working with trauma.** ***Status: completed for now.*** Met separately, and Stephen shared details about trauma and care of people who have experienced significant trauma, and how long term trauma might not be healable in the remaining lifespan of some people. Yet we can help connect people to resources to learn strategies for working through their traumas more effectively. Stephen generously offered to be a resource if more questions come up.
 - **Lindsay and Sam:** Work together to develop processes for estimating cost savings. ***Status: Cost estimating work is in progress.*** Sometime after the April Warming Task Force meeting, Lindsay and Sam met separately to discuss and coordinate some details that go beyond the role of his task force. Topics included options for sharing a place to live (ie. HomeShare Oregon), rental classes to enable people to be responsible tenants, tax credits that may be available to developers that build permanent housing, the need for 24/7 staffing for Permanent Supported Housing units, outreach teams possibly doing assessments to help triage coordinated entry process, using hotel referral forms for more equitable access, processes to share about and fill vacancies in each type of shelter, coordinating how to track and summarize cost savings that happens when people are sheltered vs. not.
7. **Next Warming Task Force meeting:** Wednesday, July 28, 2021 2:00 to 3:30 pm.
The May and June Warming Task Force meetings were cancelled due to warming managers and staff still unburying from the warming season. Yet a mini planning meeting was held to develop ideas and next steps for the Warming Task Force's consideration.
8. **Meeting adjourned.**