**LOCAL NEWS & ACTION**

**Improving the Coordinated Entry Referral Process for Families**

As part of an on-going effort to refine and improve Family Housing Connection (FHC), King County’s Continuous Improvement Team led FHC through a Lean process. Lean is a systematic, customer-centric approach to identifying and eliminating waste through continuous improvement. To achieve the goal of reducing the amount of time it takes to match and refer a family to a homeless housing resource, the Lean process looked at the FHC referral process with input from Catholic Community Service, providers, and families served by FHC.

Participants reviewed how providers enter openings, the process of matching an eligible family to an opening, and the response after a referral is made. Four provider agencies participated in the event alongside FHC staff. The team developed a new “future state map”, along with an implementation plan, measurement plan, and communication plan.

“While coordinated entry is a powerful first step to streamlining resources for families experiencing homelessness, we need to keep up a consistent dialogue with all those involved in the process to better fit the program to the needs of our community,” said CEH Director Mark Putnam. There will be a meeting for all FHC participating providers in mid-March to hear about the process and learn about what changes are being made. Broader communication to community stakeholders will also occur at other meetings such as CEH’s April IAC meeting.

**Family Shelter Diversion Pilot Overview**

Several King County organizations recently launched a Diversion pilot project to provide creative alternative housing options for families who are homeless (unsheltered) and seeking access to shelter. Funded by Building Changes and the City of Seattle, in partnership with CEH Family Homeless Initiative, Catholic Community Services, Interim Community Development Association, Neighborhood House, Solid Ground, and Wellspring, the pilot aims to help families tap into resources outside of the traditional homeless housing system to ensure the most vulnerable families can access limited shelter spaces.

Since Diversion launched in mid-January, we have already seen several successes, including one family who had been staying in their car at Wal Mart despite the fact that their head of household had a job lined up. After talking with the FHC Housing Specialist and hearing about the reality of the demand for shelter, they decided to call a friend who otherwise would not have known the family was staying in their car. The friend was able to let the family stay while they get back to work. Meanwhile, FHC diversion was able to assist with move-in assistance and connected them with Child Care Resources (CCR) to help the family with childcare when they resumed work.

In this and many other ways, diversion offers light-touch (brief, tailored) services with minimal financial assistance to families who are homeless, which may include non-traditional housing options, such as doubling-up or relocating back to a previous housing situation. Diversion case managers will provide a combination of direct services and financial assistance to families for up to 30 days, resulting in alternate safe housing arrangements outside of the homeless housing system. In turn, this allows FHC to prioritize shelter beds for those families that are the most vulnerable and have no other options.

Diversion services begin with every family who is eligible for Family Housing Connection through a discussion/brainstorming conversation with the Housing Specialist at the initial appointment. Families who may need additional financial assistance or support will be referred to one of four community partner agencies. The families that clearly need more in-depth services or have very high barriers will complete the housing assessment as usual and will be placed on the roster for a shelter or other housing resource.
Youth & Young Adult Count US In 2014 Results

Count Us In 2014 results are now available! Count Us In is King County’s annual point-in-time count of youth and young adults (YYA) aged 12-25 who are unstably housed or homeless. January 2014 was our community’s 4th year of conducting Count Us In.

Based on Count Us In surveys and data from HMIS, we know that 777 youth and young adults in King County were homeless or unstably housed on the night of January 22, 2014. Of these YYAs:

- 460 were staying in shelter or transitional housing programs and identified through HMIS.
- 317 were identified through Count Us In surveys. Of these youth,
  - 124 were unsheltered; and
  - 193 were imminently at risk or at risk of losing their housing.

Of the 777 youth identified as homeless and unstably housed through Count Us In, 54% were youth of color, 22% identified as LGBTQ, 50% were female, and 11% were under age 18. They came from nearly every zip code in King County.

There were 46 Count Us In locations in 2014, completing more youth surveys than in any previous year. By involving libraries, parks and recreation locations, agencies in the homeless youth continuum, and other youth-serving agencies, we were able to engage a wide range of youth, including those who do not typically access homeless services.

The full Count Us In report, as well as a one page summary of the data, are available at the YYA Initiative website: http://tinyurl.com/homelessYYAinitiative

The full Count Us In report provides additional information on the YYAs identified as homeless and unstably housed through Count Us In, including connections to family, educational attainment, employment status, and history in foster care and detention/jail.

United Way of King County - FREE Tax Preparation Campaign

Filing taxes can be tough, especially for people who aren't sure which deductions they qualify for, whose first language isn’t English, or who have trouble because of their age or a disability. United Way’s Free Tax Preparation Campaign is here to help!

The Free Tax Preparation Campaign runs from January to April. This program helps people secure all the refunds and credits that they’re eligible for, including the Earned Income Tax Credit. Services are really free—no hidden fees or charges. With this money in pocket, people can better keep food on the table and a roof overhead. There are 19 locations located throughout King County with daytime, evening, and weekend hours. To find the closest site, hours, and languages available at the locations, visit www.uwkc.org/taxhelp or call 2-1-1.

FUNDING AND RFP’S

There are no RFP opportunities at this time. However, CEH will distribute information about upcoming funding opportunities throughout the month. Please be on the lookout for future communications regarding funding and RFPs.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Rapid Re-Housing Lessons Learned Informational Session

On Wednesday, March 19, the Family Homelessness Initiative will hold an informational session detailing what communities have learned about Rapid Re-Housing. The session is targeted to Family Shelter Providers and will take place from 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. at 100 23rd Avenue S in Seattle.
CEH COMMITTEE UPDATES

Governing Board
Co-Chairs: Dan Brettler and Dow Constantine. Staff: Gretchen Bruce (gretchen.bruce@kingcounty.gov) Typical Meeting Schedule, 4th Wednesday of the Quarter, 8:30–10:30am. Meeting Summaries of previous Governing Board meetings are available at www.cehkc.org.
Upcoming Meeting: Wednesday, April 23, 8:30 – 10:30 am Seattle City Hall, Bertha Landes Conference Room
Agenda Topics: Annual Workplan, Legislative session recap, Crisis Response plan, Continuum of Care (CoC) Governance

Recent Meeting: Wednesday, January 22
Discussed: CoC Governance, Governing Board Roles & Responsibilities, Moving Towards a Crisis Response System, 2014 Annual Workplan

Interagency Council (IAC)
Upcoming Meeting: Monday, March 3, 2:00 – 4:00 pm Bellevue City Hall
Agenda Topics: Legislative Priorities Update (Mockingbird Youth), Crisis Response Elements, Lessons from other CoC

Recent Meeting: Monday, February 3
Nomination of new members (Anitra Freeman, Jarvis Capucion, Steve Walker, Josh Hall), CoC Governance, IAC Roles & Responsibilities, 2014 Annual Workplan, Safe Harbors Steering Committee

Consumer Advisory Council (CAC)
Co-Chair: Rotating members; Staff: Gretchen Bruce (gretchen.bruce@kingcounty.gov). Typical Schedule: 3rd Wed of the month, 6-7:30pm at Plymouth Congregational Church in Seattle. Meeting summaries of previous CAC meetings available at www.cehkc.org.
Upcoming Meeting: Wednesday, March 19, 6 – 7:30 pm Plymouth Congregational
Agenda Topics: Planning for 2014 Focus Groups

Recent Meeting: Wednesday, February 26
Discussed: Lessons from other CoC

Legislative Advocacy
Chair: TBA. Staff: Gretchen Bruce (gretchen.bruce@kingcounty.gov) Typical Meeting Schedule: Every Other Tuesday during session, from 8:30–9:30, in person or via conference call.
Upcoming Meeting: Tuesday, March 11, 8:30 – 9:30 am. Call in number 206-205-1111
Agenda Topics: Next steps in promoting the 2014 legislative agenda

Upcoming Meeting: Tuesday, March 25, 8:30 – 9:30 am. Call in number 206-205-1111
Agenda Topics: Next steps in promoting the 2014 legislative agenda

Population Affinity Groups
Family Homelessness Initiative Information Sessions:
Debbi Knowles and Triina Tennelo host open sessions to talk with local stakeholders (providers and funders) about the Initiative. Reoccurring: 3rd Wednesdays each month 9:30 – 11:00 am at varying locations
Next meeting: Wednesday, March 19, 9:30 – 11:00 at 100 23rd Avenue S in Seattle.
Contact Triina Tennelo for more information: 206.263.9110 or triina.tennelo@kingcounty.gov or visit the Initiative website for more information: http://www.kingcounty.gov/socialservices/Housing/ServicesAndPrograms/Programs/Homeless/HomelessFamilies.aspx

Family Housing Connection:
FHC staff holds quarterly meetings of feedback sessions to talk with family housing providers on how to make the coordinated entry system for families most effective. Check Family Housing Connection website for dates: www.ccsfhc.org

Youth & Young Adult (Y/YA):
The monthly Y/YA Stakeholder Forums provide a monthly opportunity to hear about the changes planned for our homeless youth and young adult system in King County. Please check the YYA Webpage for updates. For more information on the Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in King County contact Megan Gibbard
(megan.gibbard@kingcounty.gov) or visit the YYA Webpage. To be added to the YYA stakeholder email list, which provides bi-weekly updates on the initiative, email Carrie.Hennen@kingcounty.gov.

- **YYA Stakeholder Forum** - March 25, 2-3:30pm, New Horizons (2709 3rd Ave, Seattle 98121)-Information on upcoming funding will be shared at this forum. The forum will be preceded by a Community Sign In Training (1-2pm), and immediately followed by a YHC feedback forum (3:30-4:30pm). Please RSVP for the Community Sign In Training by emailing Megan Gibbard.

### RELATED COMMUNITY MEETING UPDATES

#### South King County Forum on Homelessness

Contact: Manuela Ginnett, manuelag@multi-servicecenter.com or Jo Cherland, johannac@ccsww.org. The SKC Forum on Homelessness meets the 1st Wed. of every month at 9–10:30am at Kent Commons, 525 – 4th Ave N. SKC Forum on Homelessness web address: [http://kentwa.gov.aspx?id=2728](http://kentwa.gov.aspx?id=2728)

**Upcoming Meeting:** Wednesday, March 5, 2014, 9 – 10:30a.m. Kent Commons, 525 – 4th Avenue N.

**Agenda Topics:** One Night Count of Homeless, Planning for 2014

#### North King County Housing Stakeholders Meeting

Contact: Kelly Rider at kelly@housingconsortium.org. The NKC Stakeholders group coordinates homeless housing & service activities in North King County. Typical Schedule: Every other month, 2nd Wednesday, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm, (brown bag) Shoreline City Hall

**Upcoming Meeting:** Wednesday, March 12, 2014, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Shoreline City Hall

#### Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee (EHAC)

Contact: Arthur Sullivan ASullivan@bellevuewa.gov or Sharon Anderson sanderson@ci.kirkland.wa.us. EHAC coordinates homeless housing & service activities in East King County. Typical Meeting Schedule: 2nd Thursday of the month, 2:00pm – 4:00pm, First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue, 1717 Bellevue Way NE (just south of 520)

**Upcoming Meeting:** Thursday, March 13, 2014, 2p.m. – 4p.m. First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue, 1717 Bellevue Way NE

#### Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness (ITFH)

The ITFH works among, between, and within the faith community and seeks to create the political will to end homelessness using targeted education, outreach and advocacy. Typical Meeting Schedule: 3rd Wednesday of the month, noon-1:30pm at St. Mark’s. Contact: Bill Kirlin-Hackett at itfh@comcast.net or (425) 442-5418.

**Upcoming Meeting:** Wednesday, March 19, 2014, Noon – 1:30p.m. Saint Mark’s Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E, Seattle

#### University District Conversation on Homelessness

Contact: Nathalie Gerhke. Monthly Gathering share thoughts and strategies on local and regional concerns around homelessness. Typical Meeting Schedule: 2nd Monday of the month, 9 – 11:30 am. Meetings rotate throughout the U District, and frequently at University Congregational Church though location may change.

**Upcoming Meeting:** Monday, March 10, 2014, 9 – 11:30a.m. University Congregational-UCC Church, 4515 16th Ave N.E. Seattle

#### University District Service Provider’s Alliance Service Provider Team

Contact: udsp.spt@gmail.com U-District Service Provider’s Alliance share information relevant to working with homeless youth and young adults, program updates, and neighborhood updates. A service provider debrief follows each meeting. Typical Meeting Schedule: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 11am-12:30pm

**Upcoming Meeting:** Wednesday, March 12, 2014, 11a.m. – 12:30p.m. Street Youth Ministries, 4540 – 15th Ave NE, Seattle

#### Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCH)

The General meeting is the 3rd Thurs of each month, 9-11am at E Cherry YWCA. Learn more and sign up for meeting reminders at [www.homelessinfo.org](http://www.homelessinfo.org)

**General Meeting:** Thursday, March 20, 2014, 9 – 11a.m. E Cherry YWCA 2820 E Cherry Street, Seattle

#### SKCCH Population & Advocacy Committee Meetings

- **SKCCH Youth & Young Adults:** Tuesday, Mar 11, 10-11:30 a.m., Capitol Hill Public Library (425 Harvard Ave E, Seattle)
- **SKCCH Single Adults Advocacy:** Thursday, Mar 13, 12-1:30 p.m., Plymouth’s Simons Seniors Apts (2119 3rd Ave, Seattle)
- **SKCCH Families with Children:** Wednesday, Mar 26, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. at E Cherry YWCA (2820 E Cherry St., Seattle)
Seattle’s Road to Housing Program

The Road to Housing program started in Seattle as the Safe Parking Pilot Program in 2012. In its first two years, the pilot has demonstrated an effective public-private partnership between the City and faith-based organizations for helping people living in their vehicles get back into housing.

In this partnership, the faith-based organizations provide safe places to park and access to a bathroom for participants in the program. The City provides case management services for program participants and outreach to potential participants and host organizations.

Goals

There are two primary goals of the Road to Housing program. The first goal is to assist homeless people living in their vehicles to get back into housing as soon as possible. The second goal is to reduce neighborhood tensions in communities where vehicular residents tend to congregate.

Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safe Parking Program results</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households served in the program</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households enter a more stable living situation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved to Emergency shelter</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved to Permanent Housing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved to Transitional Housing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with Family/Friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chose to leave the program</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remained in program at end of year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households remain stably housed 6 months later</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of stay in the program (in days)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Challenges

The City Council approved additional funding to expand Road to Housing from a pilot to a citywide program, but more needs to be done to serve this growing population. Expanding the program further will require more available of parking spaces, more host organizations and a faster placement into improved housing options for participants in the program. Expansion will also be aided by similar efforts from Seattle’s neighboring cities throughout King County.

Opportunities

- By engaging with faith-based organizations, this program is a neighborhood based approach that engages more of the community in ending homelessness.
- City resources are leveraged with additional volunteers and contributions from faith-based organizations and members of the neighboring community to help support the participants.
- In Seattle and King County, people in their vehicles account for about one-third of the unsheltered population, and in some suburban cities we see an even larger proportion. Churches in other parts of the region have already started hosting vehicular residents on their own, so there are opportunities to work with suburban cities and the County on a region-wide approach.

If you are interested in learning more Seattle’s Road to Housing program or are interested in starting something similar in your area, please contact Councilmember Mike O’Brien at mike.obrien@seattle.gov or (206) 684-8800.

If you are currently living in your vehicle and are interested in accessing the program, please call the Road to Housing program intake line at (206) 357-3264.

If you have an item of interest for the CEHKC community, please contact Anand Balasubrahmanyan at anand.balasubrahmanyan@kingcounty.gov