



Douglas County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC)
Housing Subcommittee minutes

Noon, Tuesday, March 27, 2019
Room 310, Douglas County Courthouse

PRESENT: Di Bradley, *UCAN*; Larry Clark, *UCAN*; Lance Colley, *City of Roseburg*; Betsy Cunningham, *Citizen*; Marie Dixon, *NAMI*; Mike Fieldman, *UCAN*; Allen Hobson, *City of Winston*; Melissa McRobbie-Toll, *LPSCC Coordinator*; Jerry O'Sullivan, *Adapt*; Sarah Thompson, *Cow Creek Tribe*; Robert Wilson, *Treatment Court Coordinator*

ABSENT: Cheryl Carson, *DHS*; Wayne Ellsworth, *Adapt*; Aric Fromdahl, *Juvenile Department*; Shelly Hendrickson, *Battered Persons' Advocacy*; Janeal Kohler, *Douglas County Housing Authority*; Amber MacPherson, *Umpqua Health Alliance*; Karan Reed, *NeighborWorks Umpqua*; Brian Shelton-Kelley, *NeighborWorks Umpqua*;

Chair Hobson opened the meeting shortly after noon.

MINUTES APPROVAL: *Marie Dixon moved to approve the draft minutes from the Feb. 19 meeting. Sarah Thompson seconded. Motion passed.*

UPDATES

- **The Connecting Point** – The Connecting Point resource room, an initiative of the LPSCC Behavioral Health Subcommittee, operates on Monday mornings, currently in Room 310. It is intended to connect individuals releasing from jail to resources, but turnout has been low. The group is considering moving the Connecting Point to the Dream Center in order to access more people needing assistance. LPSCC Coordinator met with Dream Center director Tim Edmonson this morning and he is supportive of the idea.
- **Mobile Crisis** – The City of Roseburg and Compass are launching a new Mobile Crisis program with a federal DOJ grant. One counselor has been hired and another is in the interview process. Program will eventually operate 12 hours a day, 7 days a week.

HOUSING FIRST UMPQUA

Subcommittee heard a guest presentation by Betsy Cunningham, chair of the Board of Directors of a new organization called Housing First Umpqua. The organization, which is seeking 501(c)(3) status, will operate out of the senior center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to mid-afternoon beginning in mid-April. SOAR-trained volunteer advocates (SOAR stands for SSDI/SSI Outreach, Access and Recovery) will assist homeless individuals in obtaining Supplemental Security Income and/or Social Security Disability benefits to allow them to pay for housing. Paperwork tends to be a major barrier, and volunteers will commit to spending up to 60 hours helping clients navigate the process. Housing First Umpqua was the result of a grassroots effort, and UCAN is assisting with its rent at the senior center.

The organization also helps individuals fill out housing applications and assists with removing other barriers to attaining housing. Discussion points included:

- **Housing application** - Betsy Cunningham said it would help to have a universal housing application used by all local housing agencies
- **Collaboration with agencies** - Lance Colley asked whether Housing First Umpqua will be partnering with existing agencies. Housing First Umpqua is working with UCAN on capturing data. Mike Fieldman said UCAN is also using the SOAR model but there is more demand than UCAN is able to meet. DHS also has one local employee whose work includes helping people with Social Security cases.
- **Getting money quickly** – Mike Fieldman said Oregon has set up a program in which individuals who are presumptively eligible for SSI can get about \$500 in assistance from the state as they navigate the process. This program is underutilized.
- **Need for case management** – Once individuals are in housing, they often require case management to help them navigate issues that might cause them to lose their housing. This case management is not always available.
- **Rent Well program** – UCAN offers a “Rent Well” program (formerly “Second Chance Renters’ Program”) that trains individuals in how to be good tenants and offers rent guarantees to those who do well in the program. Participating landlords are covered for up to \$5,000 in damage. Weekly classes are held over a 6-week period. Robert Wilson floated the idea of having RSAT graduates and Drug Court/Mental Health Court participants enroll in the program. Maximum class size is 12 people.
- **Supportive housing funding** – State funding may be allocated for Permanent Supportive Housing during the current legislative session.

ACTION ITEM: *Subcommittee will have a follow-up conversation about these issues at its April meeting.*

JRI TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FUND

LPSCC has allocated \$24,000 in state Justice Reinvestment grant funding to help RSAT graduates pay for their first three months of rent in re-entry. Sometimes, the first month’s rent is paid by Parole/Probation, in which case the JRI Transitional Housing Fund pays for months 2, 3, and 4. The rental assistance amounts determined by LPSCC at its April meeting were \$200 for the first month of assistance; \$150 for the second month; and \$100 for the third.

The program launched in the fall after several months of delays, and to date about \$1,500 of the \$24,000 has been spent. The LPSCC Housing Subcommittee has been tasked with examining the program and making recommendations to the full LPSCC on changes that should be made heading into the 2019/21 biennium. Discussion points included:

- **Eligible individuals** - Robert Wilson said about a dozen people came out of RSAT over a recent 7-month period. He will go back and look at RSAT completion rates over time. There has been a recent uptick in RSAT graduations.

- **Application forms / Paperwork** – Wilson was initially given a 16-page application by UCAN and was able to reduce it to 6 pages. He would like to condense it further. Other required paperwork includes a W-9 and a form landlords need to fill out.
- **Landlord delays** – There have been some delays in obtaining the required forms from certain landlords.
- **Jail in-reach** – The group supported the idea of having RSAT participants fill out the paperwork *before* they are released to get the process in motion. This could be done either through the UCAN jail in-reach, or RSAT counselors could assist individuals with the paperwork.
- **UCAN continuing assistance** – UCAN has been providing rental assistance to program participants after the three months' JRI rental assistance runs out to ensure housing stability.
- **Possible program changes** – Group will consider recommending to LPSCC possible changes including increasing rental amounts, increasing assistance time frame, or expanding the assistance beyond RSAT graduates.
- **Spending deadline** – JRI Transitional Housing funds allocated for the 2017/19 biennium must be spent by the end of December 2019.

ACTION ITEM: *Group will continue JRI Transitional Housing Fund discussion in April.*

NEXT MEETING: Noon, Wednesday, April 10

Mission statement: *“The LPSCC Housing Subcommittee’s mission is to increase the availability and affordability of re-entry housing in Douglas County.”*

Vision statement: *“A safe and healthy community where those in re-entry from incarceration have a place to live and there is sufficient affordable housing, including for veterans, those with mental illness, people in recovery and others.”*