

Transition to Independence Subcommittee
 Tuesday, February 05, 2008, 3 p.m.
 Greenville Community Shelter

Committee members present were: Leslie Bass, Ann Bonner-Stewart, James Corbett, Velma Harper, Ernis Lee, Sandra Lee (co-chair), Sharon McLaughlin, and Cassius Williams (co-chair). Also present were Lynne James and Marilyn Williams (management advisory subcommittee contacts).

The committee took the following actions:

1) The committee **reviewed its assignment**. They received the job description given to them and **added “life skills”** as necessary:

Transition to Independence

- Financial Literacy
- Education
- Job Training
- Employment/Wage Rate (not just any job—a living wage)
- Interim Housing (Shelters and Transitional Housing)
- Transportation—public/private—i.e. Industrial Park on third shift, driver’s licenses—how can we help people get that? IDs, 2 forms of an ID to get an ID (need an ID to get into GED classes, even).
- Life Skills

2) Review best practices information, sent via email. There were four plans from other cities already in the implementation, with links to the four plans and a link to Housing First model.

Reading Assignments

Velma, Lynn: Housing First
 Marilyn, James: Income information, pastor
 Cassius, Ann: Durham
 Sandra, Leslie: Winston-Salem
 Sharon, Ernis: Raleigh

Come back ready to report what the key ideas/initiatives are, whether they’re applicable to our community.

3) Identify resources

Who do we know in the areas that are providing services that fall under the committee’s purview? Email Sandy (SandyL@legalaidnc.org) so she can compile and we can identify the gaps. Who do we want to hear from? What subject do we want to hear about? Who are the resource people?

- Community College HRD program Job Link
- Joyce Jones Strive program.

- Pitt Resource Connection—the Tuesday morning meeting in Ayden
- Mary at the reel crisis center.

Keep in mind the possibility of a “Project Homeless Connect” in the fall to try to bring as many resources as possible—all resources at one place at one time. Repeat. This is a best practice. Marry with veterans events.

4) **Brainstormed topics for the public forums** every other week starting on March 18 (depending on availability of locations).

Suggestions—

- Education/employment changing attitudes?
- Transportation?

Throughout—imaging/life skills

Childcare/transportation available. Committee members need to help get the word out and to attend not all, but at least one. 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

- Tuesday, March 18
- Tuesday, April 1
- Tuesday, April 15
- Tuesday, April 29

The committee agreed to meet again on **Tuesday, February 26 at 3 p.m. Greenville Community Shelter**. All committee members should print out copies of “Subcommittee Planning Template” and bring to meetings to bring to future meeting. There was a blank template and a sample template. These are good reference documents off which to work.

The committee adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Further Discussion on Pitt County and Homelessness

The **focus groups** are happening this week, purposefully kept small so people would talk. Series of twelve questions. The information will be compiled and given to all committee members at the Thursday, February 21 meeting. Key themes/quotes will be given in a summary document. Also some research going on about the current homeless population in order to provide data. Asking the questions you don’t have answers to and adding more members based on expertise is a good idea.

Monday, February 4th: Greenville Community Shelters

Tuesday, February 5th: Flynn House

Wednesday, February 6th: Zoey house

Who GCS sees: 500 people a year the past 5 years. People need transportation, childcare, livable wage, affordable and decent housing. Barriers: long waiting list for public housing (section 8 voucher program)—people can’t get into the affordable housing; the wage that is required in order to be able to afford a market wage 2 bedroom apartment is \$34,000—the connection

between livable wage and affordable wage. 56% of the Pitt county population spends more than 30% of their income on housing (NC Housing Finance Agency's website).

One of the Best Practices: The document "**Housing First.**" The traditional school of thought was to make people "housing ready"—financial management, education, giving tools to be ready to move into housing. Newer models is called "housing first;" get them into housing and then identify the support/services that they need in order to sustain it over time—1) gets people off the streets quicker 2) raises self-esteem/self-worth to feel like someone's willing to take a chance and more willing to take the chances they need to live successfully.

There was a long discussion about imaging/attitude problems—expelled from the system before given a chance; somehow trying to get over victim mentality and/or blaming people who are unemployed.

The stigma of the shelter. Basic job training in the community—dress, interview skills, being on time etc.? Strive, the Intergenerational Center, JobLink. Support after getting the job. The importance of the instructors' attitudes *not* "I've made it; you're going to do what I tell you to make it."

Jobs need to be at least \$8-10/hour, they have to maintain it. The minimum wage is insufficient; it is not a living wage. Streamlining the process/get some training—you don't have to get the certificate but take the class to show you have the skill.

More incentives for employers to hire people—tax breaks? OJT—pay half of the training cost 90 days—it's too much paperwork. Ernis says the response is minimal. The trade jobs pay a lot per hour. Reading/math at certain skill level. Where are the areas that are in demand? What does the market need right now to get people channeled?

Getting the business community on board—the HR people—need to go to the public forums. One-on-ones with business people.

Problem of only hiring people temporarily, not allowing people to apply for the job permanently.

NC scholarships for heating/air... How do people find out about scholarships? Some scholarships are available for West Greenville people—Piggy Wiggly.

CNs will pick you up, pay you, and help send you to school. RNs.

The Intergenerational Center—have to develop supportive problems/life coaches, pull from the ECU programs to go with people.

How do we create programs that are a length specific time to reach more of the population?