

Transition to Independence Subcommittee

Tuesday, March 11, 2008, 3 p.m., Greenville Community Shelter

Committee members present: Ann Bonner-Stewart, Robert Cobb, James Corbett, Ernis Lee, Sandy Lee (co-chair), Sharon McLaughlin, and Cassius Williams (co-chair). Also present were Lynne James and Marilyn Williams (management advisory subcommittee contacts).

Working draft as 3.11.2008

Goal: Improve access to public benefits and services for homeless individuals.

Strategies:

- Implement SOAR (SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access, & Recovery) in Pitt County by bringing in people to train people locally to understand this process who interface with people who are in need of benefits. Prevent people not being due to technicalities when the need is real.
- Coordinate and offer Project Homeless Connect event with Vet Stand Down in September 2008. Repeating it annually or biannually.
 - Banks
 - Credit reports
 - IDs
 - Landlords
- Improve training of public service providers as to federal funding for which homeless individuals may be eligible.
- Expand the availability of the existing public transportation system by increasing the routes and hours.
 - Pitt Area Transit helps people go to doctor's appointment for outside city limits... is there something we could work with here for employment, too?
 - Bus vouchers?
 - Provide trainings so people can read the bus schedules.
- Implement a Housing First program.
 - Offer a variety of support services within the context of the home itself.
 - Focus on complying with the lease.
- Family Reunification
 - Locate and contact family members of homeless individuals.
 - Provide support to formerly homeless individuals and their families

Outcome: More chronically homeless individuals receive benefits that they are eligible for receive; the income of chronically homeless individuals increases.

Goal: Identify and diversify housing options for special populations.

- Educate that permanent housing does not mean home ownership or single family dwellings—group living, retirement living, apartment rentals, supportive housing.
- Identify what resources are available and needed for people with all disabilities (physical, mental, substance abuse, dual diagnoses, developmental).

Strategies:

- Identify what is currently available locally.
 - Local Life Houses
 - vocational rehab, mostly developmental but not restricted to that.
 - One on 14th street—Ramona...? **Need name**
 - One in Winterville **Need name**
 - Veranda in Farmville
- What kind of housing do we not have that we need? **Need a strategy around this?**

Goal: Identify resources and systems that lead to financial independence.

Strategies:

- Identify and have targeted job training. People who are being training/receiving education that it's something that's needed in the community. The biotech center does this. How can service providers meet with the business community/PCC to make sure we're training based on hiring needs? Ernisi? Advisory Council/Workforce Council—county economic development? What's already going on? What could help fast track people. Retraining to different skill sets. Workforce Investment Act. Welders. The old fashioned apprenticeship.
- Improve financial literacy through collaboration with local programs such as the Strive program, which improves job retention through screening, basic education, life skills (going to work every day, having back-up plans if transportation falls through/child gets sick).
- Identify local financial institutions amenable to individuals who are homeless.
- Education of local community and homeless individuals regarding minimum wage versus livable wage, cost of living.
- Improve tenants/landlord relationships by educating tenants and landlords about the rental application process. Identify and remove barriers to rental, such as poor credit, incomplete application, and prior history of not having paid rent on time. Inform landlords of the support process being provided to the individuals.
 - Identify the landlords.
 - Community Development people from the city?
 - Guaranteed rent for the first few months for certain individuals?
- Identify people who are eligible to apply for and receive the Earned Income Tax Credit. Sandy Lee with Legal Aid is a good resource.
- Expand the availability of the existing public transportation system by increasing the routes and hours.
- Identify accessible, affordable childcare.
 - Regular childcare
 - 2nd and 3rd Shift Options
 - Sick day/bad weather day childcare?
 - Partner with the businesses—could the business pay for 1/2 of the childcare for the first month and then afford a reduced rate? Subsidize the difference for the initial period. Provide financial incentives...?
 - On-site childcare at industrial park?

Outcome:

The committee reviewed and discussed potential public forum discussion questions. Please email Lynne James and Marilyn Williams before Thursday a.m. with suggestions and input.

The committee also looked at the point in time homeless count in Pitt County 2007 to 2008 (emailed to the committee already by Lynne James). This is more representative of Greenville; participation in counting in outlying areas is minimal. The idea is to this more often and develop relationships so that people will not “hide” from official counts, so to speak.

Other Items Discussed:

- Increase accessibility to food pantries (more income to spend on rent?)

Next subcommittee meeting will be decided via email.