

**SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES
CONTINUUM OF CARE WORKING GROUP
JANUARY 16, 2009 – 8:30 A.M.
MANCHESTER ROOM – TOWN HALL**

Members present: Marian Garcia, EHCHC; Miles Godard, CPAS; Phil McNally, MACC; Debra Macht, Work Source; Andrea Harnois-Cherry – CHR/Genesis

Also present: Gary Anderson, Planning Department
Heather Donoghue, Planning Department
Diane Wicks, Elderly Outreach

Mr. Anderson and Ms. Wicks welcomed the group and asked each member in attendance to introduce themselves and the agency they represent. Among the new members of the working group in attendance was Heather Donoghue, the new Community Development Program Manager. Mr. Anderson told the group Ms. Donoghue will be transitioning into staffing the working group with Ms. Wicks, although he will continue to work with the group through the writing of the October Point-In-Time Count report.

January 28 Point-In-Time Count

Ms. Wicks told the group the Continuum is ready for the statewide Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless scheduled for the night of January 28th. The Connecticut Commission to End Homelessness has assisted with the recruitment of volunteers and so far Manchester has 20 volunteers signed up. There will be a training for all volunteers on Monday, January 26 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Manchester Room of Town Hall. The staff's goal is to have volunteers placed into groups and assigned to certain block groups before the night of the count. Volunteers will be meeting at MACC at 6:30 a.m. on the 28th.

Ms. Melquist will be administering the sheltered count at the Manchester Council of Churches' Samaritan Shelter. Ms. Harnois-Cherry will be responsible for coordinating the count of the Genesis Center's supportive housing beds. It was agreed that on the night of the count one group would go to the Dinda House on Center Street to administer the count. Mr. McNally agreed to contact the staff of Dinda House prior to the 28th.

October Point-In-Time Count

Mr. Anderson said the data from the October week-long Point-In-Time Count has been assembled and asked for volunteers to be involved in a subcommittee which would write the report. Ms. Harnois-Cherry, Ms. Melquist, Ms. Wicks, Mr. Anderson, and Ms. Donoghue volunteered to be on the subcommittee. Ms. Martin volunteered at a previous meeting and will also be involved. The group set a goal of completing the report by the end of March 2009.

Money Matters Program

Ms. Wicks told the working group of the Money Matters program, a basic money management program offered by the Human Services Department. The program will take place on Tuesday, January 27 at 6:00 p.m. at the Manchester Senior Center and provides residents with money management and budgeting skills. The program is related to the town Earned Income Tax Credit Program which provides free income tax preparation to low income workers who may be able to retrieve significant tax refunds. This program requires very basic level math skills and the Town hopes to provide child care.

Ms. Macht said the Work Source is thinking of running a budget training program as well and wondered if a partnership with this or a similar program was possible in the future. Ms. Melquist recommended an FDIC program that Manchester Area Conference of Churches has used in the past. She felt the eight-session program has been very effective in the past.

Ms. Garcia said it was her experience that many people have no knowledge or ability to access the earned income tax credit or budgeting programs like this one. She felt this was very valuable because people often get discouraged attempting to navigate the system.

Ms. Wicks said there will be an Earned Income Tax Credit Program kick-off on January 30 at 2:00 in Town Hall. The IRS will send representatives and the media will be there to cover the event. The Town plans to frame the program as a free alternative to some local tax preparation services.

Ms. Wicks updated the group on the state-wide Operation Fuel program and said the program has thus far had very few applicants. There is a limit to the assets an applicant can have in order to qualify for the program. Currently MACC and the Town are receiving few calls on the program but she said it is important to publicize that the program is still available.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m. The next meeting of the Continuum of Care working group will be ***Friday, February 13, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. in the Manchester Room of Town Hall.***