

**Greater Nashua Continuum of Care**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 2, 2011**  
[www.nashua-coc.org](http://www.nashua-coc.org)

**Call to order:** Chair Wendy LeBlanc called the meeting to order at 8:00am. All present introduced themselves, and visitors were welcomed.

The February 2011 meeting was cancelled due to winter weather conditions. Therefore the minutes from the meeting of January 5, 2011 were reviewed. J. LeClerc suggested that future minutes spell out acronyms, and specifically in the 1/5/11 minutes the acronym AHAR is Annual Homeless Assessment Report. J. LeClerc then motioned to accept the minutes. L. Wilshire seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**Letter of Support Request:**

P. Kelleher indicated that Harbor Homes is applying for a statewide grant to provide services under a federal grant for Veterans Administration families for rent, security deposits and supportive services. The amount of the grant is \$1 million. He requested a letter of support of the application from the Greater Nashua Continuum of Care. M. Wirbal asked if the security deposits portion of the grant would be duplicating services currently offered through the Security Deposit Loan Program administered but he Care Center. Peter indicated that he did not believe so but that he would follow up with her. With no other questions, L. Wilshire motioned that the letter of support be provided and this motion was seconded by L. Christie, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Presentations:**

**Bridget Belton – Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Nashua**

Bridget Belton was honored with a special presentation and plaque by the GNCOC for all that she has done over the past 20+ years to bring affordable housing to the Greater Nashua area. L. Christie, P. Kelleher, L. Wilshire, and B. Alves all spoke on behalf of the entire Continuum and expressed its appreciation and gratitude for all her hard work, it has been an honor to work with her, and she has been invaluable to so many in the group. Bridget will be sorely missed. Bridget then thanked various agencies and the COC.

**Emergency Preparedness**

Patty Crooker, Regional Public Health Coordinator for Greater Nashua spoke to the Continuum. Ms. Crooker explained what is public health, ‘the science and practice of protecting and improving the health of a community’. She spent time focusing on shelter planning for emergency situations, alternative care sites and hospitals. She explained how they staff volunteers to prevent a public health outbreak. She discussed various policies and training procedures, triage, exercise situations for emergencies and many others. She provided handouts that further explained the diverse roles of the public health department as well as provided brochures on emergency responses for various situations.

**Cynthia Day Family Center**

Annette Escalante, VP of Keystone Hall and Thisvi McCormick, Program Coordinator updated the Continuum on the status of the Cynthia Day Family Center. The Center opened in January 2011. It is funded through the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services. It is a 6-9 month, 24/7 program and very structured. They work with pregnant IV drug users, women transitioning back to the community from the justice system, and homeless addicted women who are pregnant or have children. It is a holistic, family-centered approach to the treatment of women, while they care for their young children. Women live on site as they work to overcome their addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. There are weekend visits with family. Daycare is being provided at Marguerite’s Place. Referrals come from various agencies, DCYF, attorneys, Corrections Departments, and others. Priority is given to pregnant women who are using drugs. The program can take up to 16 women with one child each. They are close to capacity.

**Announcements**

E. Brady indicated that there are many bills effecting social service agencies concerning a myriad of issues and she has recommended contacting your state reps and senators to advocate on your agencies behalf. All of the issues were to numerous to cite specifically, however she did mention tenant policies are changing, Citizens Alliance regarding women advocacy issues, and Housing Action NH is working hard on housing bills. She suggested that you invite representatives and senators to COC agencies to familiarize themselves with what your agency does, who you help, etc. Also, on 3/7/11 there will be a public hearing at Palm Court regarding the Broad Street Parkway and the impact to Palm and Pine Streets.

L. Christie asked about the Homeless Radio Marathon which took place recently on a Portsmouth, NH station, a 24 hour marathon discussing homelessness issues. E. Brady indicated they did a lot on national and regional homeless issues and the station was WCAS, and it was possible to get an on-line transcript.

L. Christie also discussed that federal funds are used to support many NH services that the State doesn't fund, and it is important for everyone to be watching what is happening at the federal level on various regulations, and to contact the U.S. Reps and Senators from NH on issues of concern.

D. Curley comment on HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) and provided handouts of the February results. She then discussed the outcomes measured against HUD expectations.

- Section 2.3 which is to increase percentage of homeless persons staying in permanent housing over 6 months to at least 77%, which is the HUD goal (87% is the GNCOC goal). The GNCOC demonstrated excellent results, which in February 2011 the outcome was 92.3%.
- Section 3.4 which is to increase percentage of homeless persons moving from transitional housing to permanent housing to at least the HUD goal of 65% (GNCOC goal is 76%). The outcomes in this area need work and she asked the group to push to improve the data being provided, which should improve the outcome, which was only 34.6%. There are too many 'unknown' clients in this category which appears to possibly be the reason for the low results.
- Section 4.3 which is to increase the percentage of homeless persons employed at exit to at least the HUD goal of 20% (GNCOC goal is also 20%). The outcome in Feb 2011 was 21.8% meeting this goal.

D. Curley also said that starting 3/7/11 there would be a greater initiative underway to make sure data was 'clean'. She will be working with the State of NH HMIS representative to adapt state practices so that agencies will now have 12 monthly reports to check and correct any faulty data more quickly.

K. Beaulieu from the Manchester COC talked about the Point-in-Time Count. They have made the form more usable making it easier for the next count. They are trying to go electronically, rather than paper. There will be challenges with this method. W. LeBlanc indicated that the numbers seemed higher this year, and attributed it possibly to (a) the Continuum's catchment area's welfare officers did much better reporting; and (b) the schools did a lot of reporting whereas in past years they have not always reported. K. Beaulieu indicated the overall count numbers should be released shortly. W. LeBlanc will post them on the COC website at that time.

**Announcements:**

E. Brady indicated that NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) will be hosting a briefing on the NH State Budget, Wednesday, 3/16/11, 5:00-6:30PM at St. Joseph Hospital.

The Manchester COC's website has gone live. It was developed for them pro bono by a seacoast firm. It is [www.MCOCnh.org](http://www.MCOCnh.org)

M. Wirbal shared that they have hired a homeless and housing coordinator. She also thanked E. Brady for all the legislative emails and updates and also recommended that clients also be encouraged to send letters to their representatives about their concerns over budget issues.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:00AM; and minutes were prepared by L. Piper, Merrimack County Savings Bank.