

Chelan-Douglas Coalition for Health Improvement  
Meeting Minutes  
September 11, 2019, 3:00 PM to 4:45 PM

**Introductions-All**

Attendance: See Sign In Sheet

**Panel Focusing on the Homeless Unseen Population**

**Panelists:**

- Victor Estrada works for Women's Resource Center with those experiencing homelessness and provides snacks, water and essentials. He works with the Community Housing Network.
- Oliver Crain works for the City of Wenatchee and helps coordinate the Homeless Task Force. There are 9 agencies in supportive housing.
- Darby Hammond works for Entiat School District as Homeless Liaison for Entiat Schools. She assesses what the families housing conditions are. There is an assessment of each family and currently there are under 400 kids in Pre-K through 12. Most are not on the streets or cars but camping out on friends or family couches.
- Suzanne Stanton works for the Wenatchee School District. There are 7,500 students in the School District. For a child to succeed in school they need backpacks and school supplies.

**Discussion-Questions and Answers-All**

- What can we do to help?
  - Right now, there is a unique opportunity for a homeless strategic plan through the City of Wenatchee.
  - To find out more information go to [wenatcheewa.gov/homelessplan2019](http://wenatcheewa.gov/homelessplan2019).
- What can we do to prevent, identify and coordinate?
  - Your feedback is welcome and encouraged.
  - The City of Wenatchee Homeless Task Force talks about and Identify those experiencing homelessness goes through. Victor's program was new in 2016. The Homeless Task Force meets quarterly. Again, there are 9 agencies currently. Any of these agencies are looking for partnerships and there maybe connections.
  - Take donations to organizations or schools that will accept them. The Wenatchee School District and Women's Resource Center will take donations.
- Can we help you in supporting a family?
  - At Women's Resource Center, there are some families that are able to be sponsored. Chelan County Sheriff's Office puts on an event every year and the benefits go to the homeless youth. From this event, children are able to receive Christmas gifts.
  - Food banks are a critical thing for this population.
- How do we get public and private grants? Is there a role for partners?
  - Letters of Support are beneficial.
  - There are a lot of housing agencies that need partners that can extend the work. As a region, the primary need is housing.
- Where is the money that is currently funded? Why is there not housing for youth?

- It is too expensive and the community cannot afford it. Solomon's Porch could not afford it.
- State and local funds- managed and not allocated- Commissioners are the ones that allocate the funds. The U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have different definitions of homelessness, which creates a disconnect.
- Where are the unseen homeless population?
  - The community in Entiat, do not typically see the person experiencing homelessness because they live with relatives or couch surf. The couch surfers who have been problematic and get kicked out, do not typically realize that they are homeless.
  - Between the Department of Education and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) the people in the gap of these definitions are the unseen.
- Where is a safe place, especially for young men that are not the men's shelter? Why don't we have a shelter?
  - There is not a place. As far as a low barrier shelter, it would solve a lot of problems. For young men they are currently in the parks.
- Can you define what low barrier shelters are?
  - Many low barrier shelters have less criteria than others. Some are available for men or women. Currently, no shelter takes pets and some charge a fee to stay. Some make you take a drug test. At a low barrier shelter, for the most part a person would not get drug tested.
- How do we as a provider or organization provide ongoing education to elected officials?
  - Homeless Steering Committee will recommend the plan. Each board will schedule a plan. Wenatchee and East Wenatchee will have meetings. Anyone is able to go to the meetings, so that is one way.
  - Outside of the housing agencies, anyone can educate and advocate. In February, there will be recovery and homelessness Advocacy Day. Members of the Central Washington Recovery Coalition was able to speak with Senators. Any coalition and group can go. We spoke on behalf of the bills that we wanted passed, testify and told stories.
  - Educating politicians is something everyone can do.
- How do you approach someone that experiencing homelessness?
  - Treat them like they are human. Give them a bottle of water and have a conversation. Homeless people can feel like they are not a person.
- The solution is a low barrier shelter. Low Barriers are workable and can provide counseling and help people in a building.
- Substance use and mental health comes with stigma. A big society change can take place.
- In Okanogan County, the first Oxford House opened. It was scary for people that did not know the program. The residents went and helped educate those in the neighborhood. The Oxford House residents told neighbors who they are and what their mission is. It is a new program, but it is part of the community. There is not just one answer, but education is the key and makes it less scary and more successful.

- In smaller communities the staff at schools know every kid. Using the word homeless can be detrimental to a child. We do not use the word homeless too often and break down the barriers to fear.
- One thing that we hear about is othering. Something that has been taught is instead of using the phrase homeless people use experiencing homelessness. It starts with us as individuals. If we turn away than other people have the right to do so too.
  - We need to turn our thinking around. Do what matters to you and not what is the matter to you.
- There is a Community Housing Network. That is how someone can get enrolled. Also, the Landlord Liaison Program through the Women's Resource Center for landlords helping those get housed.
- Panelists, what is the biggest takeaways from this meeting?
  - Hopeful that there will be a low barrier shelter.
  - Community Housing Network hotline is a great resource.
  - Encourage partnerships and work on extending more to support.
  - Increase support for local organizations such as, Children's Home Society and Sage.
- Panelists, what is one thing if it could make a difference?
  - If you see a person experiencing homelessness, let them know that you see them as human.
  - Please provide information to the plan. Feel free to reach out to the City of Wenatchee.
  - Education is very important and primary to any poverty. If you want to do something-get involved in schools. There are huge needs for volunteers and supplies.

#### Round Table-All

- Chelan-Douglas NAMI currently has peer to peer workshops.
- Beacon Health Options has released a funding opportunity for substance abuse and marijuana RFQ. Jerry Perez can provide more information.
- The YMCA will be staffed and partnered with 5 agencies the program will start on October 15. The program will be for middle school and high school aged children.
- Hands Across the Bridge event is happening September 28th, hosted by the Central Washington Recovery.

Meeting Adjourned

