

*The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on July 19, 2016*

JOINT MEETING OF EASTSIDE CITIES  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSIONS & ADVISORY COMMITTEES  
BELLEVUE, ISSAQUAH, KIRKLAND AND REDMOND  
MINUTES

June 28, 2016  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-108

BELLEVUE: Chairperson McEachran, Michele Kline, Ann Oxrieder, Carla Villar

ISSAQUAH: Elizabeth Maupin, Derek Franklin, Ana Jimenez-Inman, Loretta Jancoski

KIRKLAND: Margaret Schwender, Jessica Wells, Kimberly Scott, Anne Radcliff, Karen Turner,

REDMOND: Gerald Wright, Steve Daschle, Kellen Baker, Josh McQueen, Valerie Bay

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Kayla Valy, City of Bellevue; Martha Sassorossi, David Fujimoto, City of Issaquah; Sara Baker, Leslie Miller, City of Kirkland; Brooke Buckingham, Alaric Bien, City of Redmond

GUEST SPEAKERS: Mark Ellerbrook, King County; Kira Zylstra, All Home

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair McEachran who presided.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair McEachran welcomed everyone and invited them to take a minute and introduce themselves.

3. COORDINATED ENTRY FOR ALL PRESENTATION

Kira Zylstra, Assistant Director for All Home, allowed that a number of changes are under way. Improvements are being made to where the Coordinated Entry System



will be able to respond to anyone experiencing homelessness in the community and will create a clear and transparent pathway to access housing.

Ms. Zylstra explained that All Home has played a role in planning and designing the Coordinated Entry System. The Family Housing Connection has been in place since 2012, the young adults program has been operating since 2014, the Veterans One program has been going throughout all of 2015, and the system is close to being responsive to everyone experiencing homelessness. All Home has led the charge in terms of convening stakeholders, gathering input, and is in the midst of transitioning to the team at King County for the actual management and operation of the system.

Mark Ellerbrook, Manager of the King County Housing and Community Development program, said the program includes the housing finance program, the homeless program, housing repair, housing planning, community development work, and now the new coordinated entry for all team. As the Coordinated Entry System comes online, there will be a learning curve. While tweaks will likely be needed along the way, the system is the way to go to better address the needs of homelessness across the region. King County has the third most housing units and resources in the country dedicated to homelessness. Sara Hoffman is the new Coordinated Entry for All System Manager, and a contract manager will be brought on in the near future to help manage the regional access points.

Mr. Ellerbrook said the referral specialists element went live in the county on June 27. It is the job of the specialists to take people who have been assessed as being homeless and make direct referrals to available housing units. It has been shown nationally how important it is to have a process that actively helps people get to housing units by seeking units for them. The new Homeless Management Information System that is administered by King County will in the long term be handling the placement task. The referral specialists will know when units will be available, and those in need will be matched with the available units. Everyone who accesses homeless services will have a common assessment to determine their vulnerability.

Ms. Zylstra explained that the federal government mandates Coordinated Entry Systems as a continuum of care. King County also believes the approach is the most dignified and transparent way to connect people with housing. All Home is leading the charge in terms of planning and designing the system. With the design work wrapping up, it makes sense to transition to the implementer, which is King County. Coordinated entry is a way to ensure the creation of a clear path to housing for people experiencing homelessness. The program transitions away from having to navigate a maze of resources

Ms. Zylstra said those who are experiencing homelessness can connect with resources through various access points. One way is to call 2-1-1 and schedule an appointment with the Family Housing Connection to get an assessment completed. There are also regional access points aimed at decentralizing coordinated entry; they ensure that there are key locations geographically located that serve as entry points.

There is also the regional access point mobile housing assessor option where staff go out into the community to make sure they are meeting the needs of people in their regions; they will set up at places such as libraries, meal sites and community centers where they are likely to meet with those experiencing homelessness. There are also community based housing assessors which are essentially case managers and outreach folks who are outside the regional access points and who serve a community that is likely to have barriers to accessing input locations.

Ms. Schwender asked for a sense of how language barriers are addressed. Ms. Zylstra said the regional access points are still in the process of hiring staff and getting ready to launch. They have been encouraged to look for folks with bilingual skills. Each regional access point will be required to use language access services and making the process seamless. Feedback has been received about language services through 2-1-1 not being as seamless as it could be so steps are being taken to rectify that.

Ms. Buckingham asked if 2-1-1 is just for families or if it is also for single adults. Ms. Zylstra said it is for everyone. One of the key aspects of expanding coordinated entry to all populations is to have shared messaging and consistent process for anyone regardless of their household composition. There may be some additional sites that will be geared to specific populations, such as veterans, and they will be posted on the website.

Ms. Jimenez-Inman asked if the documents will be translated into various languages for the staff to access. Ms. Zylstra said the streamlining process includes an attempt to eliminate as much paperwork and forms to be filled out as possible. A new release of information form was recently created that will be paired with the homeless management information system (HMIS) consent form, yielding only one form for applicants to sign. That form has been translated into 13 different languages and will be translated into other languages as needed. The same goes for the assessment tool. The forms will not be posted on the website because they need to be filled out with an assessor.

Ms. Zylstra said prioritization, triage and referral is the role the county is playing. The referral specialists and the coordinated entry manager have that focus. As the assessors complete assessments out in the community, they will only ask information needed to connect someone with housing. The information will be entered into the HMIS database along with all of the housing information, making it easier to connect people to housing. The resources that are receiving referrals through the Coordinated Entry System are shelter programs, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent affordable housing dedicated to homeless populations, and permanent supportive housing.

The triage tool is intended to be very quick. It is intended to provide a score associated with one's vulnerability. It assesses the number of times people have been homeless, the number of persons in the family, the place they are currently

residing, and any physical, mental or substance abuse experiences they have had. There are assessments that are tailored for families and for transition age to youth, thus the vulnerability scores can differ by population. Once in the HMIS system, the eligibility engine kicks in and connects people with housing. Currently, those who score the lowest are not prioritized for housing because there are so many with higher priorities in terms of vulnerability, but they are offered flexible funding and diversion support. The model is truly person centered rather than unit focused.

In addition to the assessors, housing navigators serve at the regional access points. Their function is to make sure the needs of people are met while they are waiting for housing. Coordinated entry does not create more housing and there will inevitably be time periods between intake and placement. There will not be enough housing navigators for every single person waiting for housing to be connected with someone, so they will need to prioritize their time to serving those with the most vulnerability and the highest needs.

Mr. Franklin asked if people will be bumped from the medium intervention list if the list of people in the high housing intervention category grows too large. Ms. Zylstra said how people in need of housing should be prioritized was a difficult decision to make in the planning of the Coordinated Entry System. After a lot of input from the community, the decision was made to approach prioritization with a banding approach. The triage tool has recommended interventions based on the score and people are only being connected with resources for the band in which they scored. No one will be bumped down to the next level, though it could mean highly vulnerable people will need to wait for housing. In time it may be that the bands will shift, or overlaps will be created, or some specific resources will need to be made available to those who are the most vulnerable.

Ms. Jimenez-Inman asked how the intake persons will navigate the big puzzle elements that often go along with homelessness, including personal histories of mental health and drug and alcohol abuse. Ms. Zylstra said that is the reason behind the “no wrong door” approach. Those in the fields doing assessments and talking through coordinated entry and housing resources will need to be skilled and come at their work from a trauma-informed perspective. All coordinated entry assessors will be required to undergo training. The training will include a full day that focuses on domestic violence competency, LGBTQ competency, veteran competency, and overall cultural humility. Mr. Ellerbrook added that work that is already being done in the communities will be tied to coordinated entry, but no one will be forced to fill out the forms or even have conversations about their situations. The outreach workers will be the first to say it is a continual process of engaging with folks and it may take four visits or more before someone is willing to engage in a discussion.

Mr. Ellerbrook said one of the key components of coordinated entry throughout King County will be the regional access points. The county has been divided into five regions: Seattle, North Seattle, North King County, South King County and East King County. Each location will serve as the focal point for organizing, planning and

providing people who are experiencing homelessness access to the homeless system. An RFP process was used to select four of the five entities to serve the regional access points. Each of the regional access points will serve as a locus for all kinds of services the homeless can access, including employment services, health needs, education resources and family resources. Because not everyone will be able or willing to hop on a bus and visit a regional access location, outreach will be carried out in each area. Diversion services will also be offered to assist homeless persons in connecting with family members with whom they might be able to live. Not all of the services will be available at all of the locations on the day they open; they will be layered in over time.

When the RFP was released, no proposals were received from non-profits interested in serving as the regional access point in East King County. The RFP has since been reissued and the second round has generated some interest but the delay means it will not be coming online at the same time as the other regional access points. It is possible the service will be sited at the public health clinic in Bellevue.

Ms. Zylstra stressed that the various system components will not all launch in one day. Each element will come on board as it is ready. The King County team has taken over the family and young adult referrals after spending a month conducting site visits and getting to know the system well. Assessment training is under way for those who will conduct assessments in the community. Once folks are trained and logged in as users, they will start making assessments. In July the focus will be on getting the regional access points up and running and on conducting more training sessions. Referrals for the single adult population will begin in August, starting with permanent supportive housing units for single adults. The rest of the single adult housing system and resources, such as transitional housing and rapid re-housing, will continue to receive referrals and work off their existing wait lists while those resources are brought into the Coordinated Entry System on a quarterly basis. Everything will be launched by September. The four regional access points providers are meeting weekly with the King County team to make sure they are learning from each other, asking questions, and are focused on creating a fully aligned process so that each will offer the same experience.

Commissioner Villar asked if any priority will be given to hiring the workers at the non-profits who have been providing the services and who will be displaced by the transfer. Ms. Zylstra said some, like the Family Housing Connection staff, will be able to stay because Catholic Community Services is a regional access point. Some have been given other jobs in the Catholic Community Services system. Folks will also be able to apply at the regional access points as hiring is conducted.

Ms. Zylstra said the themes identified by funders, provider agencies and people experiencing homelessness largely align with the HUD guidance around what a Coordinated Entry System is supposed to look like. They include clear information about where to access resources, uniform instructions, transparency, reducing barriers to housing, and providing more resources for everyone. There is a one-list

process already in place for veterans and it will be integrated into the system, expanding options for veterans in the community.

Mr. Daschle asked how often those on the waiting list will be contacted. Ms. Zylstra said to date there has not been a waiting list that includes the entire community and the new roles at King County and the regional access points. The question will be key going forward as the various elements roll out, but the system will be made as widely accessible as possible so folks can call in to check on their status, but it will take some time to calculate average wait times for households with specific scores. Mr. Ellerbrook added that integration with the HMIS will allow for improved tracking, including how often people have been contacted or have contacted the system, allowing for improved customer service.

Mr. Wright asked what will happen if a person's circumstances change following their initial assessment and while they are on the wait list. Ms. Zylstra said there is still much to be decided in terms of what is most efficient and what is most mindful of household needs. Decisions have not yet been made as to whether or not in such cases a new assessment should be made or if the existing assessment should simply be updated, but there is a clear preference for the latter where there is a specific change in circumstance. The Downtown Emergency Service Center is very experienced in using vulnerability tools and their recommendation is avoid doing reassessments until a year has passed to allow circumstances to ebb and flow. The HMIS database will be used as a communication tool, making it possible to know where folks access services on a regular basis and which caseworkers they see regularly.

Ms. O'Reilly asked if the new HMIS database will have a housing units list coded to indicate what level of service is also provided to better improve matching. Ms. Zylstra said the issue is part of the banding prioritization process. Every housing provider has been contacted and the services they offer have been categorized into the high-intensive resource or medium-intensive resource bands.

Ms. Jimenez-Inman asked who will oversee making sure families receive the services they need once placed in housing. Ms. Zylstra said it will be the county and other funders that fund projects in the communities. Once folks are in housing, different service models will be utilized to support their needs. Where service needs are observed that are not being met, there will be both a system response and a funder-specific response. A mobility and transfer process has been built into the policies. In the housing first community, it must be assumed that the first place someone goes may not be the last, so the process has built into it that if the services are not right, the occupant can be prioritized for a transfer to another property.

Mr. Ellerbrook said the Coordinated Entry System provides access to housing, but it is the individual funders who create the housing needed in the system. Standards and evaluation criteria have been set up for the programs within the specific buildings or programs relative to returns to homelessness and exits to permanent housing.

Work is under way to beef those up and to establish methods for holding entities accountable to keep families from returning to homelessness.

Mr. Baker asked at what level will cities or entities have access to the rich data that will be generated. Mr. Ellerbrook said the communities have made it clear they want to see the information publicly available, in part to hold everyone accountable. Ms. Zylstra added that funders will be provided access to HMIS as well.

Chair McEachran suggested that early in the year it would be a good idea to initiate feedback from the various commissions and advisory groups. Ultimately, the outcomes will highlight the successes and failures.

Commissioner Villar asked if, once a person is determined to be in a particular band, their position on the wait list is based on the time they were put on it or on their score. Ms. Zylstra said placement is based on the score rather than the more arbitrary date someone was put on the list. Length of time homeless is one scoring factor. Additionally, many people will have identical scores so there will be a tiebreaker process put in place based on elements of risk and vulnerability. Mr. Ellerbrook added that the process was the subject of a large discussion with the funders and others. All Home and others pointed out that some in need of housing could be jumped over routinely. There are not presently enough units in the system to house everyone and it will be necessary to be selective in putting people into the available units. The argument that carried the day was making sure the service-enriched housing will go to those who have the most need for those services, which at its heart is the banding concept. While that puts those with lower scores in a place where they could be jumped over, it underscores the need to expand access to housing to the degree possible.

Ms. Zylstra said one key component of the Coordinated Entry System will be carrying forward a housing first approach. That will play out in terms of lowering barriers to programs and focusing on permanent housing.

Commissioner Kline said one issue being confronted by the Bellevue Human Services Commission is the desire to see Bellevue dollars go toward helping Bellevue residents. The Coordinated Entry System puts a monkey wrench in the ability to direct funds. With regard to diversion, she said Bellevue has seen requests for those types of services from several different agencies, and stories have been heard about clients having to go to two or three different agencies to piece together the amount of money they need. She asked how deep the state and federal mandates go as far as accessing diversion funds and if at some point in the future those funds might get pooled. Ms. Zylstra said the funds are already being pooled. Diversion is a term used differently by different jurisdictions. In King County, what is meant is flexible funding accompanied with support that can help folks identify any alternative to needing to enter a homeless resource or shelter. At one end of the spectrum there are prevention services aimed at allowing people to maintain their housing whenever possible. Diversion is an approach used at the time people are



seeking to access shelter and it is focused on connecting people to safe and stable solutions with family or others. It goes well beyond simply purchasing bus tickets and getting their identification and documentation needs met. Locally, the approach has primarily been used to identify private-market housing for people who have the resources to maintain it, with the funding used for deposits and move-in costs, but it could be used in more creative ways, such as assisting in reconciling with family or friends. Commissioner Kline said she understood the requirement for coordinated entry relative to housing but asked if the mandate extends to pooling funds from various agencies and to draw from them to effect diversion. Ms. Zylstra said there is no requirement. The effort is less about the mandate and more about ensuring seamless access to resources when and where people need them.

Mr. Ellerbrook said the county will have the expectation that access to diversion resources will be through coordinated entry. That means the clients will have an assessment done and they will be scored. It can be expected that there will be different demands for different services at each of the access points and the desire is to see the diversion services dollars moved to where they are needed and where they will have the most impact. Whether or not cities should contribute dollars to a pool that may be used outside of their immediate jurisdictions gets to the bigger question of what the overall approach to homelessness should be in King County. The county will stress taking the wider view and the need to address homelessness regionally.

#### 4. REGIONAL APPROACH FOR HOUSING & SHELTER DISCUSSION

Leslie Miller with the city of Redmond allowed that local jurisdictions are used to making decisions and allocating dollars to aid local residents. The homeless system, however, is moving toward a regional approach. One example for how the approach is playing out is Hopelink's Housing and Shelter program. The agency has locations in Bellevue, Redmond, Duvall and Kenmore and when they seek funding they are looking for dollars to run their overall program; they are not asking Bellevue to fund Bellevue residents and so forth. Hopelink uses the flexibility to move resources around to where the needs are. Another example is Imagine Housing which envisions submitting a single application to provide supportive services for all of its properties regardless of the jurisdiction in which they are located to better serve the entire Eastside. Imagine Housing has asked Bellevue to help support its Bellevue property, and asked Issaquah to help support its Issaquah property. The ideal would be to ask Redmond for funding as well even though they do not have a property in Redmond.

Ms. Buckingham said things stand at a transitional point for both agencies and funders. It has not been possible to date to prep agencies with regard to the desired outcome. The hope is that the need to pool resources to focus on intervention based on the new coordinated entry data will be clear by the next funding cycle. Initially the desire is to seek a commitment to support the Eastside regional infrastructure for the current funding cycle.

Commissioner Kline asked how that might be reflected in the application for the next funding cycle. Ms. Buckingham said the cities will need to talk about how to reflect the new approach in the contracts given the current focus on the provision of service units to residents. Ms. Miller said right-sizing will be more of an issue in terms of demographics as the system moves away from transitional housing into permanent housing. With transitional housing it is easy for providers to keep track of where people come from; if the client's last address was Redmond, they are considered to be a resident of Redmond. That will be going away. For example, Family Village clients in Redmond when moved to permanent housing will become Redmond residents, making it far more challenging to report on service units.

Mr. Wright suggested the conversation will need to shift at the commission/advisory group level when it comes to allocating funds. Rather than funding units for residents, it will be necessary to think in a coordinated way so that investments in regional housing will be made equitably.

Ms. Jancoski asked if it can be assumed that the application questions will change. Ms. Miller said that certainly will need to be discussed. One of the challenges is that there are all kinds of programs using the application; there is no separate application just for homelessness.

Commissioner Villar commented that it is a challenge to review the applications. The amounts requested for programs that address homelessness total almost three times what is sought for programs that address other human service needs. It is disconcerting to suggest that more organizations should come seeking money when there are limited funds available. For the current funding cycle, agencies were directed to ask for what they really need. It has been illuminating to see what the funding needs really are, but at the same time there is no more money in the pot to allocate. She suggested a different model should be identified for allocating funds to homelessness. Ms. Miller said ARCH serves as a good model given that the funding is contributed by the member cities who are not guaranteed that their dollars will be used specifically to assist their residents.

Chair McEachran suggested the higher powers will need to have the discussion first. Each jurisdiction has its own agenda with regard to reaching those who are neighbors and to change the approach will require top-down direction.

Ms. Jimenez-Inman asked what will need to be done to get the various agencies to adopt a new regional approach given that for many years they have had a more jurisdictional focus based on their funding contracts. Ms. Miller said everyone recognizes that there will be certain challenges involved in serving folks who are not necessarily from the jurisdiction that provided the funding. Ms. Leslie added that what is being faced is a system change, not only for the agencies but for the funders. The changes have been in the works for the past two years or more and the dust still has not settled. The shift is coming in the way services are delivered to residents who are

experiencing homelessness. Agencies and their programs will need to change, as will the approach taken by funders.

5. APPLICATION & FUNDING DISCUSSION

Martha Sassorossi with the city of Issaquah provided the commissioners and advisory committees members to share with each other thoughts about how the process is playing out in their individual cities. The attendees broke into four groups and a city staff member took notes at each.

Following the individual discussions, Chair McEachran recognized the staff for their hard work and encouraged the commissioners and advisory committees members to work together collaboratively by visitor each other's meetings on occasion.

6. ADJOURN

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

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Secretary to the Human Services Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

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Date