

Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP)

Minutes of the HOUSING WORKING GROUP Meeting on Thursday November 22, 1:00pm – 3:00pm

MOSAIC: 5575 Boundary Way, Vancouver

Attended: James Grunau (Journey Home)
Loren Balisky (Kinbrace)
Doug Peat (Journey Home)
Patricia Mahecha (former Inland Refugee Society)
Theresa Harding (Metro Vancouver HPS)
Raul Gatica (Kinbrace)
Celine Mauboules (HSA of BC)
Nathan Wright (bc211)
Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC)
Peter Prediger (Inasmuch)
Tammy Johnson (Inasmuch)
Barry Growe (former Canadian Red Cross)
Alice Sundberg (MAP HWG Housing Liaison)
Louisa Brett (Covenant House)
Cherie White (Kingston Investments)
Jenny Moss (MAP)

Apologies: Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC, MAP Co-chair), Khim Tan (Options)

CHAIR: James Grunau

James welcomed everyone, and introductions were made. New attendees were:

- Louisa Brett from Covenant House who works especially with Youth and housing issues.
- Cherie White who owns her company Kingston Investments that specializes in creating housing opportunities for the hard-to-house.

James remarked that a good update had been presented at the main MAP meeting – concerning the project's growth over the last year. We received lots of valuable feedback to the 'dream' of a welcoming centre that will be shared soon.

- The amended Agenda was approved
- The Minutes of the last month's meeting: October 25 were approved.

1. REPORTS:

Housing Solutions - update - Alice Sundberg

Alice summarized her job as one where she primarily listens to hear the gaps/needs for claimants in terms of housing; in order to create a referral procedure that is smoother and eliminates duplication. The focus has been on

more immediate housing – not long-term

- So far she has interviewed 12 agencies, and has 4 more to meet.
- She uses a standardized questionnaire – takes approximately 1 hour
- She is learning what the different agencies do and how they manage at the moment – and as a result she is developing some ideas on how to create a referral procedure.

- Next she will compile data – and make it available to the group.
- Recommendations will come out of the data based on: What's working well – and the need to build on what's working well.

Some of what she has learned includes answers to the question:

What would you do to improve on the situation at the moment?

- referral process centralized
- a consistent checklist so claimants are not going from one to another.
- ideas like a Welcome Center for RC's.

She also asks agencies *How would you be involved in the solution?*

Draft recommendations will come to co-chairs soon (early December)

They will send out to HWG for feedback

There should be a report ready for discussion and strategizing at Jan HWG.

Questions:

Raul – do you have any idea about referrals?

Answer: Alice is hearing lots that isn't working well – too much duplication – housing agencies getting calls even from claimants themselves.

Settlement agencies need to be doing this so claimants aren't making all the calls.

The shift away when Inland Refugee Society had to close caused most of this.

Doug: have you spoken to BC Housing?

Alice - didn't think they worked with RC's

Doug - Yes, they can – but need to find out who to talk to (in Operations) – they have a quick referral strategy for high need folks (addicts) but need to get claimants on the list.

ACTION: Theresa will introduce Doug to Nicole Stinson from BC Housing who sits on the Asset Mapping Committee for a possible referral.

2.CURRENT REFERRAL PATHWAYS FOR HOUSING – Peter Prediger

At inasmuch we have a new house, but it needs the right referrals (*warm hand-off*) – so far they received an unsuitable family of claimants who had means so didn't need this space.

The inasmuch connection is with MOSAIC through Stream B funding – and so the connection is with MOSAIC for referrals

Comments:

Nathan – just started with Raul (Kinbrace) to complete a Vulnerability Form – bc211 will be

notified about changes in availability so that referrals are successful.

Alexandra: said she can meet with Nathan and Raul to build upon what has already been done to support MOSAIC's Stream B Partners in the FV

Nathan: Preferably the process should be done via bc211 for consistency.

Alexandra: face-to-face meeting is important to gain important information from claimants. The Education piece is important too – we need to tell claimants about the FV – where they are going and what services are available/the process to access these services, that it's farther out.

Raul – had a good meeting with bc211 – they are very capable of referring according to need and qualifications: they developed a 2-step system: screening by bc211 and then by Kinbrace.

Alexandra – wants to meet with Nathan to see how they can extend the system to FV.

James – but there will always be some people who don't come through bc211 – folks inland, extended visas – also bc211 isn't responsible for follow up or support.

Question to **Alice:** is **SOS** able to provide this service?

Alice: They certainly want to fill that role as being the intermediary – but needs to be done in a continuity – so available housing is identified by bc211, and then passed along to SOS.

James – maybe SOS can fill in a little more the ongoing work?

ACTION: Can **Nathan** have this conversation with SOS?

Alexandra: Can MOSAIC Stream B be a leader in inter-agency referral processes in the FV in relation to housing? There is currently much inter-agency referral in FV, although everyone is in close contact with MOSAIC

Peter – this makes a lot of sense – to have referral agency out there through MOSAIC Stream B

Patricia – with a criteria form and knowledge of availability bc211 can refer and tell other agencies what needs are still out there.

Nathan – so long as we are all doing the same thing, we will have the procedures in place.

Doug commented that some claimants go to bc211 because they run out of money and need help NOW. **Nathan** agreed; that's what bc211 does – Red Cross will help in an emergency if the criteria for them are met.

Alice – need to educate claimants about the FV shelters need to know the options of Metro Vancouver/FV shelters for where to refer.

James – let's use the form bc211 has developed with Raul

Action: send to Jenny who will send out to housing providers, SOS & MOSAIC

3. RCAM Advisory Committee - update - Theresa Harding

The committee met to score the 2 applicants yesterday and it was very clear who should get the job – will send letter out Friday 23/11.

We will invite them to a scoping meeting hopefully next week, and launch the research project

James commented that he hoped the research team would work closely with Alice

Theresa: Yes, and they will talk to Information Working Group as well (public education)

4. Reimagining document – discussion – Loren/James

Loren and James reported from MAP meeting that morning – there had been discussion in small groups about the DREAM – and how the ideas informed the submission MAP is making to the Standing Committee

We are still searching for consensus on the DREAM idea – do we have it right?

Theresa – it is still an excellent idea and no matter what happens with research the results will probably point to the identical idea of a Welcome Center for claimants

Patricia – yes, we need a center like **ISS'**

Alice – in Europe housing is provided to claimants – we should try and copy their example.

Theresa – the word 'shelters' should not be in submission: use 'emergency housing', 'immediate short term' housing etc.

Loren – we need to look at models around the world – is there someone who wants to do that?

Rainer (MSD) commented that the idea of one center was very big – would several centers be feasible?

Alice – funding-wise may need to start with one place.

Jenny – mentioned that the **Dixon Society** in Burnaby have safe housing for women with/without children escaping violence. They are open to referrals providing the woman has experienced violence or threat of violence on Canadian soil. Jenny will follow up.

Raul – Doug and he are working on this – trying to find places who take on seniors/victims of violence – places which are not yet in a directory.

CONCLUSION: We agree with this idea – coordinated approach that is well-supported that we all agree to.

Cherie: asked for visual idea of centre – Loren described services, and short-term housing available.

Doug – like housing for other vulnerable groups (addicted) the housing is basic

5.SUBMISSION to the Standing Committee on Immigration & Citizenship

Jenny explained the opportunity to submit recommendations to the Standing Committee on Immigration and Citizenship. We have been encouraged by Hon Jenny Kwan, NDP Immigration Critic, to submit our ideas with the back-up of member agencies/individuals. **(Letter of Invitation attached)**

We have till Nov 30th – submissions should also be copied to Jenny Kwan.

Loren will edit the recommendation – please use your own stories e.g. Celine – could state that shelters are not appropriate for claimants.

If agencies could help that would be great – use your data. Theresa suggested we ask agencies to mention how many clients they served -
IRS/bc211/MOSAIC all show that claimant numbers are trending up.

6.DISCUSSION: End of March - how to prepare for what's next...

Submission may attract some interest

But March 31st marks the end of funding – we may approach MJTT in the new year for additional funds once we have some tangible outcomes to demonstrate.

Doug mentioned he has other funding possibilities - we should set up a meeting.

Additionally, there is a need to find more help – **James and Loren** feeling unable to continue and run their own projects – need a new champion.

Celine – we need to develop a business plan, so we can pursue funding

James – We need to find funding for a person. For sustainability the project needs a paid leader.

Tammy – is there more \$\$ from MJTT? – we believe the ministry will be interested.

James' suggestion: 4 MLA's in Burnaby – are encouraging local agencies to make submissions to get some of the funding available: Please write to the finance minister and your local MLA.

Loren – maybe first we need to discuss about the budget, so we know what we're asking for. So, we would not only ask for the Welcome Center but also paid staff person.

What's the big ask?

Theresa – Nicole Stinson does that at BC Housing. They can be co-development funding partners.

Celine – Alice (because of CMHC) could help with putting a business case together.

ACTION – first ask Nicole at Asset Mapping meeting (then maybe Alice)

Anything else on this topic?

Doug do we need a more formal approach to the ask?

James this formal ask should come from MAP co-chairs. We can bring this to Dec. 13 meeting planned.

HWG Member Updates

Housing conference - Celine

1500 delegates. Wide range from govt, different sectors; lots of mayors and councils in attendance.

Celine moderated 2 sessions. Themes such as:

- Reconciliation through housing – 'nimby to timby' movement – who hasn't been in a bad public process!

Can shelters work more closely with bc211 to refer correctly?

Doug – CHIMO and empty housing – new ED is great and asked to look at case for housing on a geographic basis – more an agreement of using their materials.

Frees us up to focus on empty houses which we will focus on in the next 2 weeks

Alexandra – next Tuesday is first Fraser Valley MAP meeting– if your services extend to FV

please attend.

We need to have a meeting to discuss referral process as it affects FV

Tammy (inasmuch) Made a presentation to Ridge Meadows LIP – it was good as the committee has very passionate members. Great opportunity for education on who is a claimant and the different types of refugees.

Jenny/Loren - Canadian Heritage Grants

Funds are available through Canadian Heritage and Loren, Mariana and Jenny went to visit Amy Huwang to propose a capacity building idea. However there are issues over overtly funding projects focused on claimants – the ask needs to be nuanced in terms of building integration and combatting racism.

However, Amy suggested MAP's IWG apply for Event funding (up to \$100,000) for public education concerning giving claimants a welcome to our communities, myth busting and education about types of refugees. Forms have been received so IWG will consider this.

Peter (inasmuch) – another new house will be coming on stream in December

Raul (Kinbrace) have placed the first family, but still have a room for up to 3 people.

Q: how long can claimants stay there? 1 – 2 months until can find affordable housing.

James (Journey Home) – with Doug he has someone who might provide some funding.

Who can help with this discussion?

Jenny mentioned she can support.

Next meeting? An ad hoc meeting for those who can attend on **December 13th at 10 – 11:45 at MOSAIC**

Adjournment: 3:05
