

MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Thursday October 22, 2020 - 1:00 pm online

PRESENT:

James Grunau, Doug Peat (Journey Home Community)

Derek Chu, Moe Zaqout (Kinbrace)

Richard Belcham, Tammy Johnson, (inasmuch)

Jenny Lam (Options)

Marzieh Nezataf (MOSAIC)

Dustin Lupick (HSABC)

Mahi Khalaf (SOS-ISSofBC)

Jenny Moss (MAP)

Regrets: Joni Rose (MJEDC), Julia Wu 9bc211), Ryan Reid (Kinbrace)

- **Co-Chair: Doug Peat**

Welcome and Introductions

- The Meeting Minutes of Sept 24, 2020 were approved
- The agenda was reviewed and approved

Updates:

- **Report back on Infolink Article for BCNPHA** – Richard

Richard and Pier Daniel created a 400-word article for Info-Link: 'How discriminatory is the non-profit housing system towards asylum seekers?' Looked at current statistics, described MAP, RC situation, a story as an example and a call to action with request to open up housing to RC's.

Will go out through BCNPHA info-link soon.

As a MAP agency we can advocate strongly for an issue that the network feels strongly about.

Round the Table Agency (RC/Housing Related) short updates

Richard Belcham (inasmuch) – new intake – thanks to inter-agency care team the quarantine was provided, and testing will be done so she can move into shared accommodation. There are networks out there to help. Family moving out – so vacancy in November for a small family of 4 or single mom + kids or couples.

Dustin Lupick (HSABC) – please be aware that the oncoming winter + Covid 2nd wave puts pressure on shelter system that needs to uphold physical distancing, as well as provide more spaces for those who wish to come inside. Many of the Extreme Weather Response shelters are being used for Covid-related spaces. So shelter availability will be tighter.

Tammy Johnson (inasmuch) – Tip: some folks contacted building managers directly that are on BC Housing list contacts they know and were successful – so maybe use your contacts!

Mahi Khalaf (SOS) introduced herself as the new Settlement Manager at SOS-ISSofBC – her last position was Settlement Manager for Vancouver/Richmond Settlement Sites, and she was housing coordinator during the Syrian influx. Contact Mahi at: mahi.khalaf@issbc.org
They have had very few referrals beyond helping CBSA out with some arrivals and are using the time to update their new database to capture activities and services.

Question: Derek (Kinbrace) - Does your system capture RC's needing housing?

A: No, it captures actions done e.g. housing orientation, and if applicable, where housing found.

Derek: Does SOS track if people ask for housing at reception? YES

Marzieh (MOSAIC) –

Contacts: BCCHARMS@mosaicbc.org for CHARMS-related matters

mnezakat@mosaicbc.org for Marzieh's email as project coordinator.

Reviewed BC CHARMS purpose and so far have completed:

- setting up the Advisory Committee
- scoping exercise of needs and other systems locally, nationally and internationally
- Survey developed to:
 - look at current practices with referral for housing
 - what would the agencies want to provide a better system

Really wants everyone to complete the survey – and there will be in-depth interviews to learn more.

If you are interested in an interview, please get in touch.

→ Link will be sent out to everyone on HWG once survey is ready.

Q (Doug): Do you see your scope of work as tracking settlement services of other agency workers?

A: Only as long as they concern housing and making referrals.

Mahi – Do you want frontline workers or managers?

A: We have a list with 3 levels of stakeholders:

Settlement agencies, emergency housing providers, government reps

Also creating focus groups with RC's and other groups too

Doug: Are you working with shelter providers?

A: YES

Regarding the survey so more than one person per agency can respond please, and at interviews they can be joint with more than one person. on interview.

Jenny Lam (Options)

We are receiving a number of emails regarding housing from RC's.

Emergency weather shelters for Options will open up sometime in November – March during cold weather. They are located at the local shelter space in Surrey/White Rock/Cloverdale

James Grunau (Journey Home)

Has 2 2-bed units available for claimants: families/single moms + kids or even single women

Despite border restrictions they are getting same number of residents as last year.

Continuing to apply for funds for housing projects – more news when we get it.

Derek Chu (Kinbrace) referred to Mohammed

Mohammed Zaqout (Kinbrace) – There is no space right now but potential for a single male unit in a while. We are looking for affordable housing for 2 single moms with babies who are looking for housing together.

Business:

1) Discuss and Approve Updated **HWG Terms of Reference** - Second Discussion

(Please see attached Draft HWG Terms of Reference)

APPROVED by vote with following changes:

Governance dates of co-chair election and terms and times of meetings:

iii) The term of the appointment of the co-chairs will run on a 2-year alternating from September 1 to June 30 of each year. Elections will be held in the January meeting to ensure cross-over and coaching. The outgoing co-chair will remain on the Committee until August 30 of each year.

Noted: Nominations for co-chairs must be MAP members at Partner level

Co-chairs can run again with a gap between service

Co-chairs of MAP should not stand to be co-chairs of working groups

2) Setting **Criteria for MAP HWG Members to Receive a Letter of Endorsement/Support for their Project**- Second Discussion

(A letter describing the criteria and application procedure was circulated before the meeting)

Criteria for a letter were reviewed:

Question: James asked about Item (3) – if we should use the word ‘MUST’ comply with Housing Report criteria

Doug said that the criteria sit on the shoulders of the report that was clear about needs for refugee claimant housing.

Richard: if you want MAP support then you must ally with this being the goals agreed to by MAP.

The CHARMS project will not include case management as that is much wider than housing

The alignment is in the spirit of collaboration so does not need to spell out every possibility.

Procedure for applying for a letter:

- Need to add in the Process of how letters can be requested and decisions to support are made.
- Requests for a letter of support to be sent to Jenny who will forward to co-chairs for dispersal
- Requests will be kept to an email chain.
- Approval of the request – this needs to be the HWG as a whole
- Timing – requests must be received by 15th month. In the situation where there is no monthly meeting the process can include voting by email.
- Jenny to come up with templates and circulate

Committee agreed to support the Letter of Support process with the above modifications.

3) **Determine whether to go forward with a roundtable meeting with BCNPHA**

The possible roundtable is part of the Action Plan between MAP and BCNPHA to address some important issues when it comes to renting to RC's.

- Richard's article in the InfoTalk is the first stage of an education plan
- The next stage is to hold a roundtable with both sides to educate each other about refugee claimants and their housing needs, and the questions housing providers have about renting to RC's.
- This might feed into cross-collaboration in the future once the education is in place. The goal of that collaboration is how best to work together at present and on housing projects.

We are seeking HWG members to form a planning working group, *The proposal was:*

A Joint Roundtable Meeting online between MAP HWG and BCNPHA

- Part 1 - Cross Education Refugee Claimants needs and Challenges. The Needs and Expectation of Property Managers. 2 hrs
- Lunch break 1/2 hr
- Part 2 - Working Groups break out rooms - on how to work together to plan around what has been identified in Part 1. 2 hrs

Questions & Comments:

James: Who is the target at BCNPHA?

Response: Housing Societies and NPH managers

Richard and Tammy both concerned about 4 hours – suggested 2 hours sufficient.

Dustin: proposed we educate but also have some action takeaways that will be meaningful for housing managers. So what? What's in it for me?

AGREED to plan a 2-hour program which

- involves the voices of both MAP and BCNPHA
- What's in it for me? - Some take away actions
- possible opening for future meetings.

Volunteers: Jenny, someone from Kinbrace, someone from CHARMS because part of their mandate is to expand housing stock and teaching BCNPHA about the new referral system will be a plus.

TO DO: Jenny to send out a promotion to create a group to meet soon – they would meet and develop a plan before next meeting.

Time Requirement: 1 hour a week + tasks. Short term.

Question:

Tammy – is this a conversation rather than a presentation –

YES – 2-way information exchange – motivation on both sides to learn.

- **Presentation by Gaston postponed**

Other Business

Question from Richard to housing providers:

How many refugee claimants are around who need housing? and what demographics does this represent?

Derek (Kinbrace): getting lots of referrals for single men, and a few for others. Just received an elderly couple. Have refused about 4-5 single men

Mohammed added that there are more – almost daily request for single men.

Caro at Belkin House was mentioning to **Derek** they had space for single men.

Mahi: There are new arrivals for short term housing – on average 2 a week since last month.
Some are long-time claimants who wish to change housing

James: JHC has expanded its criteria during this period to include those with precarious housing and need some help, and next stage would be to help sponsored and assisted refugees. No-one wants empty spaces so we are doing everything we can to respond to need of whatever category of refugees.

Richard: We have a mandate to help vulnerable populations – so having an understanding of who is requesting housing is helpful since borders will stay closed for the foreseeable future.

Derek: Kinbrace has successfully placed single males into permanent housing faster than families. Kinbrace helps them get their work permits and search for work, and once they have a job they are fairly successful at securing housing – usually a room in a shared house.

Richard: And there is a need for bodies to fill entry level jobs in Abbotsford so for single males it's looking better. MAP HWG is very useful for sharing this information about needs for housing.

Derek: There have been some border crossings recently too.

Doug: In closing – possible next meeting topics:

- Should we be preparing for a spike in arrivals once border opens, and if so how?
- Can we prepare to work with CCR to push Housing Resolution that was passed in 2019?
- How can we strengthen working with municipalities around refugee housing needs?

ADJOURNED: Next Meeting Nov 26 at 1pm