



Tuesday, May 10, 2022

11:00AM

*Location: Zoom Teleconference*

***Our Mission:***

*“A community working together to achieve access to safe and affordable housing for all residents of Genesee County.”*

**I. Welcome and Introduction – Travis Buckley**

**II. Engaging--Stan Page, Street Outreach**

Homeless verification—Stan stated that we should be creative but be careful of just writing letters because a client is at a certain place at a particular time. Some clients ask, when will you be here, and the excuse is because it's cold. However, if living in a car it will be cold whatever time the verification is done.

**Lori Davis—Life Challenge:** Asked for a contact number to be used when her organization encounters homeless people that need assistance.

**Stan Page** replied in the chat SOP (810) 449-3667 or (810) 553-0056. The hours of operation are approximately 9am to 10pm.

**Tracey Hurd**—Stated that she recently learned that if a person is homeless and lives in their car, Street Outreach helps provide gas if they don't have enough to keep warm in the Winter.

**Stan Page**—Stan replied that Tracey was correct. He stated that Street Outreach provides gas, food products, and they even offer fresh water and food for pets. The Street Outreach team encounters many people that will not go to a shelter because they do not want to part ways with their pet. Stan informed the community that the Street Outreach team will pretty much help with anything a homeless person may need. (Shoes, Coats, Socks). Street Outreach does the best they can to support other agencies in whatever they may be doing to Prevent homelessness.

These are just temporary fixes. The services that the Street Outreach team provides should be used as a bridge. It's not feasible to help the same individual every month. The first distribution of food or supplies usually Takes place with no questions asked but we must be mindful of how much support we give people in the community.

Stan informed the community that when encountering homeless individuals that say they live in their car when offering assistance, we should be asking: **Have they been calling the shelters?**

Also, if you have someone that's displaced or homeless but has family but has family members in another and they need transportation, the Street Outreach Program does have a small amount of money to provide bus passes to get them to their out-of-state family members. The referring agency just needs to validate that they are homeless and need help to get to where they are going.

**Travis Buckley**—What do we do when we have client's that do not want to go into the homeless shelter?

**Stan Page**—Stan replied that first we must understand what being homeless is. For example, we may get a call that an individual is staying with someone, but they no longer want to live with that person. **That is not considered homeless!** Since our resources are limited all we can do is give them the available resources such as the homeless shelters, if they are full, the Street Outreach Program can temporarily help them out while on the street, but we have to inform them that if they are not willing to go into a shelter there is not a lot that can be done for them, outside of gas cards, food, or things of that nature if they are living in their car or an abandoned house. We don't have hotel dollars. We should not be talking about hotels or hotel dollars. There are many reasons or excuses that people use in order to not go into a shelter.

Stan stated that another common issue when it comes to homeless verification is someone saying they are sleeping in their car. A big red flag is when they give you an address, after you pull up to the house you notice that the house is lived in and there are cars in the driveway. Many times, the person claiming to be homeless is not in the car. They will say they went in the house to use the bathroom.

### III. **H.A.R.A (Housing Assessment and Resource Agency)--Misty Bowers, Catholic Charities**

A Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) provides centralized intake and housing assessment, thereby assuring a comprehensive communitywide service and housing delivery system. The HARA programs at Catholic Charities One Stop Housing include:

- COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA)
- Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV): the section 8 homeless preference waitlist
- Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)
- Moving Up Vouchers
- Rapid Re-Housing Vouchers
- Homeless Prevention
- Outreach

**CERA**—The CERA program was over 30 million dollars that came into our community to help renters that are behind on their rent. It can help up to 12 months of back rent. Three months of future rent as long as they are living in the home. CERA also pays utilities such as Consumers Energy, water, and a \$300 cap on internet. CERA does not assist homeowners.

**HCV**—The HCV is for anybody that is currently verified as homeless. Client's get verified by being in a shelter for five consecutive days or they can be verified by street outreach.

**EHV**—The EHV is for category 1 and 4 of homelessness, which is literally homeless or fleeing domestic violence. There were 38 EHV's for Genesee County with only 3 currently left.

**Moving Up Vouchers**—Misty stated that we have not done anything with the Moving Up Vouchers in a couple years but between the shelters, MCD, and the HARA we are moving forward with those vouchers. We currently have 5 or 6 of these vouchers available. We have recently added two clients to the Moving Up Voucher waitlist and hoping to receive more vouchers once the waitlist is populated. These vouchers are for clients who are receiving Permanent Supportive Housing Vouchers but maybe don't need the case management services anymore, have had PSH for at least a year with no crisis and they pay their bills and their portion of the rent on-time. These clients are voted on in a closed meeting.

**Rapid Re-Housing**—The RRH program offers up to 9 months of rental assistance. RRH covers category 1 and category 4 of homelessness, which will be literally homeless and those fleeing domestic violence.

**Homeless Prevention**—This program covers category 2 and 4 of homelessness which is imminent risk of homelessness and fleeing domestic violence. Homeless prevention is support services that target low-income families or individuals that are at risk of homelessness. There is an AMI (Annual Median Income) requirement. When funding is available, homeless prevention can assist with rental application fees, security deposits, and arrearages. There is a cap on services we can provide. The client does need a SER (State Emergency Relief) letter from MDHHS before homeless prevention can help.

Misty can be reached at [mbowers@ccsgc.org](mailto:mbowers@ccsgc.org) or 810-600-4525 ext. 505

### IV. **PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness)—Emily Wheat, Shelter of Flint**

PATH services are for people with serious mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders, who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. Emily stated that PATH is a street outreach program that engages with homeless people out in the community. We ultimately try to build a rapport and trust with this clientele. Anytime we make contact with a homeless person we try to connect them to shelter services and reconnect them with mental health services.

The criteria to be enrolled in PATH is category 1 homeless or category 2 imminent risk. The client also has to be suffering from severe mental illness. Once the client is enrolled into PATH, we start building the rapport and trust then seek out shelter, then immediately get going with a referral to GHS for mental health services. We do referrals for substance abuse treatment; a housing referral goes out after the homeless verification is completed. Clients get screened for SOAR and we start the Social Security process. We are just knocking out barriers for homeless people that are outside and have burned a lot of bridges with people that could have helped them. The PATH program also helps with vital documents and supplying basic needs such as food and personal hygiene supplies. We help the client apply for food stamps, health benefits, and find a primary doctor.

**V. CEIS (Coordinated Entry Intake Specialist) Helpline—Verneda Burnett, MCD**

Verneda stated that when individuals or families are experiencing homelessness, usually the helpline is the first point of contact. The CEIS team starts off by gathering as much information as possible and ask if they would be willing to go into a shelter. If they are willing to go to the shelter, the CEIS team tries to make initial contact and get the process started. If the shelter is at capacity or does not have any open beds, Verneda stated that they then refer the client over to homeless prevention at Catholic Charities or one of the Street Outreach teams. The CEIS helpline team is in constant communication with case managers, CPS investigators, homeless shelters, and many more organizations in the community. The CEIS helpline answers anywhere from 800 to 1,000 calls a month.

The number to the helpline is: **810-544-HELP (4357)**

**VI. HCV (Housing Choice Voucher)—Lisa Gonzalez, Catholic Charities**

Lisa informed the community that 325 names have been pulled for HCV since September 2021. Lisa stated that clients only have 14 days to complete their packet and turn it back in. Clients without income are encouraged to start working on that because they won't always be able to get help with security deposits or first month's rent. HCV clients have to have ID's, birth certificates, social security cards, proof of income, SSA letters, bank statements, and food stamp case numbers. Lisa stated that she informs every client of this information at their intake appointment. A big barrier and common reason clients are denied HCV is because they don't have the proper documentation to be able to complete their applications.