

**MERCED CONTINUUM OF CARE  
GENERAL COLLABORATIVE MEETING  
MERCED COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
632 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced, *Building M*  
Wednesday, August 19, 2009  
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Oral Communications**
  - At this time any person may comment on any item that is not on the Agenda. Comments are limited to three minutes per person.
  - Please state your name and address for record.
  - Action will not be taken on an item that is not on the agenda. If it requires action, it will be referred to staff and/or placed on the next agenda.
- 3. Minutes of the General Collaborative Meeting**

*For information only.*
- 4. Reports**
  - Grantee Progress Reports
    - ❖ *Community Action Agency – HMIS*
    - ❖ *Merced County Mental Health – Project Home Start*
  - Homeless Management Information Systems Report
- 5. Award of Education for Homeless Children and Youth Grant**

*Kelly Bentz – Information only.*
- 6. Homeless Encampments**
  - *What is going on in Merced?*
  - *Gregory Barfield, Homeless Prevention and Policy Manager from the City of Fresno, will share his experiences with Fresno's encampments.*
  - *Discussion*
- 7. Informational Items**
  - *Grant Opportunities*
  - *News Articles*
  - *Status of 2009 CoC Application*
- 8. Announcements from group?**
- 9. Adjourn**

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Wednesday, August 19, 2009  
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Robin Adam, Galgianai's Office  
Gregory Barfield, City of Fresno  
Kelly Bentz, Merced Union High School District  
Su Briggs, Community Action Agency  
Jim Bunnel, Human Services Agency Adult Services  
Kathleen Cadden, Human Services Agency  
John Carlisle, City of Merced  
Mike Conway, City of Merced  
Marcia Dailey, Challenged FRC  
Renee Davenport, Homeless Advocate  
Patti Dossetti, Grant Writer  
Liz Freitas, Mental Health  
Stephen Hunt, JMJ Maternity Homes  
Dave Gonzalves, City of Merced  
Carl Joachim, Merced Parole  
Roberta Medina, City of Merced Code Enforcement  
Renee Mounce, Community Action Agency  
Terry Nichols, Department of Rehabilitation  
Masoud Niroumand, City of Merced  
Saundra Reeves, Turning Point  
Audrey Slocum, Mental Health  
Bill Spriggs, City of Merced  
Georgene Tarbox, Employment Development Dept.  
Louise Tilston, Merced County Public Health  
Daniel Varela, City of Livingston

**STAFF PRESENT**

Lori Flanders, Assistant Planner

**1. Welcome**

Vice Chair Nichols called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

**2. Oral Communications**

Kathleen Cadden asked the group to assist her with completion of a document for the 2010 U.S. Census. The Census Bureau is requesting jurisdictions outline the location of encampments. Data is due by August 31, 2009.

Renee Davenport commented that the Merced City Council denied Mayor Pro-tem Carlisle's proposal to provide emergency shelter at an apartment complex owned by the city. She asked what the council plans to do now.

### **3. Minutes of the June 24, 2009 General Collaborative Meeting**

So noted.

### **4. Reports**

Lori Flanders provided an overview of the HMIS and Project Home Start Quarterly Progress Reports and the HMIS System-Wide Report. She requested the group contact her if they had any questions, concerns, or would like to have additional information.

### **5. Award of Education for Homeless Children and Youth Grant**

Kelly Bentz announced that the Merced Union High School District (MUHSD) was awarded \$50,000 per year for the next three years (\$150,000 total) in American Recovery-and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding plus \$8,050 for one time start-up. Objectives include hiring a part-time homeless liaison and:

- Improving identification of tracking of homeless youth and their families
- Increasing student access to in-school, after school, and summer school academic support
- Increasing coordination among schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youth
- Increasing referral services for students and families to medical, dental, vision, mental and other health services
- Increasing school staff awareness of the needs of students of poverty and homelessness.

Vice Chair Nichols inquired to how many youth are considered homeless?

Kelly stated she was unsure but the estimate is 200-300 district wide. She further commented that MUHSD would be pursuing the Mercy Medical Center grant to provide health services for homeless youth and their families.

Patti Dossetti asked if MUHSD had plans to align their program with the CoC Annual Street Count and if they had an interest to enter their data into HMIS.

Kelly commented that her first step is to hire a part-time liaison.

Patti also commented that foster youth programs should also be utilized as a resource.

### **6. Homeless Encampments**

Lori provided the group a brief overview of the activity that has been occurring surrounding the Black Rascal Creek encampment. She explained that the Merced Irrigation District (MID) “evicted” all occupants effective August 3<sup>rd</sup> and that the occupants had moved to a nearby location owned by the City of Merced.

She further explained that a group had been meeting every Monday since mid-July to come up with alternatives to the current encampment situation but that no alternative had come to fruition.

Although no alternatives have been identified, a discussion of the population resulted in the Human Services Agency (HSA) visiting the encampment twice with a laptop to assess if any of the occupants qualify for existing services. As a result, one individual has been placed into housing. HSA will visit the encampment again on August 20<sup>th</sup>.

Jim Bunnel provided the group an overview of his experience when visiting the encampment. He commented that based on his conversations with the occupants, having the One Stop Shop visit the encampment (opposed to requiring the encampment to go to the shelter) or developing a One Stop Shop phone number or website, may be a first step in providing the homeless population the basics they will need to become self-sufficient.

Vice Chair Nichols introduced Gregory Barfield, who is the Homeless Prevention and Policy Manager for the City of Fresno to share his experiences with recent closures of their local encampments.

Highlights from Mr. Barfield's presentation include:

- The homeless population sued the City of Fresno for destroying their property during the closure of an encampment.
- The importance of a 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness was stressed throughout his presentation, which includes a commitment from both the City and County.
- Mr. Barfield explained that a Plan must be supported and lead by both the City and County to have success. Although it took five years for the City/County to partner, they were able to develop a plan within 8 months which was fully funded by the City. Their Plan was adopted in September 2008. Plan still states "draft" due to several components are missing, including a cost benefit analysis.
- Plan emphasizes Housing First Model – no mention of tent cities or encampments.
- The City of Fresno had set aside money for the lawsuit filed by the homeless population for destroying their property. \$700,000 remained in the fund once the lawsuit was closed, which the City used to survey the encampments over a 3-week period. Over 300 surveys were returned and the data was entered into HMIS. Results of the survey showed that many respondents did not require a full range program, and 35 were linked to existing services.
- The City and County have a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with their Housing Authority that allowed them the opportunity to allocate \$550,000 (of the \$700,000) to the Housing Authority to provide housing for the homeless population.
- Housing is paid for up to four months, and the individual/family chooses their own housing. Allowing them to choose their own housing means they will not have to move with the city funding has ceased.
- Fresno City and County combined their Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) dollars to create one seamless program. \$1 million dollars will be allocated to the Housing Authority and \$2.6 million will be shared among several non-profits.

Mr. Barfield has offered to attend a follow-up meeting along with other Fresno City staff to help Merced in their efforts.

**7. Informational Items**

- Grant Opportunities
- New Articles

So noted.

- Status of 2009 CoC Application

Lori commented that staff has registered the Merced CoC to apply for funding, but the NOFA has not yet been released to begin working on Exhibit 1 or 2.

**8. Announcements from group?**

Jim Bunnel from HSA announced that he would be going out to the encampments, Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. to discuss services with the occupants. He requested other agencies join him.

Georgene asked if there is yet a location for the homeless to receive their mail.

Jim Bunnel commented that HSA has offered their P.O. Box for HSA related mail, Social Security related, and is waiting on approval for DMV related mail.

**9. Adjourned at 3:40 p.m.**