

Eastside Human Services Forum Housing and Shelter Summit: Event Summary August 26, 2013

83 registered. Of the 83, approximately 30 (36%) were new to the Forum. 68 people attended. There were three session topics: Affordable Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Eastside Winter Shelter.

Overall Themes Across Topics

Messaging/Education

- Educate on what poverty looks like on the whole. Tell stories in full, dignified ways. This builds relationships.
- Although spending no more than 30% of income on housing is the ideal, the reality here is more like 50-80%; many more are impacted than just low-income people.
- We need to rebrand the discussion. Viable communities include diversity of affordable housing. Need to appeal to "our best self."
- How workers are impacted by the cost of living: for Chambers and other business-focused groups
- Who should be delivering the message?
- Our City Councils are the primary targets for education. Look to your commissions to help them be a voice. Prepare them with messaging.
- Focus on shelter as a public safety issue

Policy Issues

- Get affordable housing on the national agenda
- Use of impact fees and waivers
- How can we look to city regulations on building to share best practices?
- Living wage needs to be addressed

Supportive Services

- How can we strengthen community wide support for all other expenses, knowing that people are spending so much on housing?
- Resources are needed on a larger scale: language needs, landlord/tenant needs, life skills, etc.
- How can services help reduce family budget costs for other needs beyond housing like food and child care?

Affordable Housing: Ideas and Questions

- More public funding is needed
- Increase other types of affordable housing: accessory dwelling units. Find a way to match need with available housing, then train and support new landlords.
- Emphasize the importance of all services: ongoing and capital funding.
- Get planning teams to do outreach work with Arthur Sullivan
- What if each of us brought one new person to the next event? Not the choir. Especially electeds.
- Seniors (and others) experience a disparity of income vs. costs. Being able to stay in the community is ideal. Is there a less formal group home system?
- How do cities approach taxes/policies? Do they view by population (i.e., seniors)?
- Couch surfing for seniors?
- What is “affordable housing”? Are we calling it the right thing? People don't know what affordable housing means. How do policy makers look at it vs. how the general population sees it?
- More development that incorporates affordable housing.
- Your children will not be able to afford to move back to the community they grew up in.
- How do we ensure citizen responsibility for senior housing?
- Older apartments could be redeveloped.
- Build housing above municipal buildings.
- Add housing to transit center.
- All cities meet together to discuss innovative approaches: a planning commission summit.
- Onsite services
- Look to natural partners: parents of school age children (PTSAs), police, fire fighters, healthcare providers

Eastside Winter Shelter: Ideas and Questions

- City Hall for space?
- What do we deserve here on the Eastside and what's our responsibility?
- Ways to employ Eastside Pathways model -- collective impact.
- How might we reconfigure the current shelter system on Eastside?
- Need for more operating money: demonstrate to County that we're part of the regional efforts and system
- Get Chambers and hospitals involved.
- Have we reached critical mass in working with our electeds?
- Reach out to cities that are not yet contributing funds
- Long-term plan is getting traction.
- Short-term: can schools house winter shelter?
- There's an absence of the private sector in this conversation.
- We all have a role to play in advocacy for zoning

- We all know where the problems are; we need to move from assessment of the gaps and problems to problem-solving.

Update on Winter Shelter for 2013-2014 Season:

Women and children (served by The Sophia Way) have a location for winter shelter this year. At this time there is no location for men. Congregations for the Homeless continue to work with city staff, providers, and others to find a space in time.

Rapid ReHousing: Ideas and Questions

- Connect in a coordinated way with landlords, especially those near public transportation hubs.
- Continue to work to identify the right families.
- Programs need flexible financial resources to help families with their debt, costs of storing their belongings, etc.
- It's important to educate landlords on what families in the program may look like: history, criminal background, etc.
- Tools are needed for families like "financial bootcamp" -- families can then show landlords what courses they've completed.
- Bolster the Landlord Liaison program
- Partnerships with employers are needed. How can we work with businesses to support families?
- Flexible land use
- Make sure there are options for single adults as well.
- There's a possible need for additional rental assistance for longer terms (make it flexible).
- We need provider agencies to be open during evening hours.
- Home sharing? Different models, not just private sector.
- How can we motivate families to increase income and move out/up?

Immediate Next Steps for the Eastside Human Services Forum

- Our top priority is to help secure a location for the men's winter shelter.
- The Work Group will begin drafting our 2014 Work Plan and will review the above for specific action items to include. We will coordinate with our partners, such as EHAC (Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee), to see which action items are appropriate for each to pursue.
- Our membership will be encouraged to each bring a new person to our Annual Meeting—someone who is not part of the "choir."

EHSF Annual Meeting: Dec. 5th, 2-4pm
 North Bellevue Community Center
 4063 148th Ave NE, Bellevue WA
 RSVP: www.ehsf-annual.eventbrite.com