

**MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
CONTINUUM OF CARE REGIONAL COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS  
MAY 16, 2011 MEETING MINUTES**

MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Shana Ellis, City of Tempe, Councilmember,  
Chair  
Bob Duvall for Roberto Armijo, Community  
Information & Referral Services  
\*Karia Basta, Arizona Department of Housing  
\*Kathryn Brown, Arizona Department of  
Corrections  
Kendra Cea, APS  
+Krista Cornish, Town of Buckeye  
Tim Cole for JoAnn Del-Colle, Phoenix Family  
Advocacy Center  
\*Steve Frate, City of Glendale, Vice Mayor  
Kevin Hartke, City of Chandler, Councilmember  
Theresa James, City of Tempe  
Michael Johnson, City of Phoenix,  
Councilmember  
\*Don Keuth, Phoenix Community Alliance  
Stephanie Knox, Magellan Health Services of  
Arizona  
Donna Bleyle for Judith Fritsch for Arizona  
Department of Economic Security  
\*Nick Margiotta, Phoenix Police Department  
Michael McQuaid, Human Services Campus  
Frank Migali, Arizona Department of Education  
Linda Mushkatel, Maricopa County  
Darlene Newsom, UMOM New Day Centers  
Joanne Osborne, City of Goodyear,  
Councilmember, Vice Chair  
Gina Ramos Montes, City of Avondale  
Brenda Robbins, Arizona Department of Health  
Services  
Amy Schwabenlender, Valley of the Sun United  
Way  
+Joan Serviss, Arizona Coalition to End  
Homelessness  
\*Christina Soto, Catholic Charities  
Jacki Taylor, Save the Family  
Trish Georgeoff for Margaret Trujillo, MG  
Trujillo Associates  
\*Mary Rose Wilcox, Maricopa County,  
Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT

Jessica Berg, Lodestar Day Resource Center  
Libby Bissa, City of Phoenix  
Greg Boone, Labor's Community Service Agency  
David Bridge, Human Services Campus  
Brad Bridwell, Arizona Department of Veteran  
Services  
Cynthia Brooks, NOVA Safe Haven  
Cheryl Brunton, City of Phoenix  
Jenny Day, Basic Mission  
Jennifer Davie, Mesa Public Schools  
Esther Emadi, Southwest Behavioral Health Haven  
Rebecca Flanagan, U.S. Department of Housing and  
Urban Development  
Dick Geasland, Tumbleweed Center for Youth  
Development  
Anthony Irby, Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Jeffrey Jamison, City of Phoenix  
Gilbert Lopez, City of Glendale  
Joyce Lopez-Powell, Valley of the Sun United Way  
Mattie Lord, UMOM, New Day Centers  
Ted Mabie, Arizona Organizing Project  
Karen McLaughlin, Children's Action Alliance  
Mary Murphy, Governor's Office  
Dottie O'Connell, Chicanos por la Causa  
Greg Pereiru, Central Arizona Shelter Services  
Connie Phillips, Sojourner Center  
Marlena Pina, The Salvation Army  
Milon Pitts, Homeward Bound  
Parrish Spisz, City of Goodyear  
Ursula Strepfans, Maricopa County  
Katy Szapa, Valley of the Sun United Way  
Keith Thompson, Phoenix Shanti  
Elizabeth Venable, Arizona Organizing Project  
Amber Wakeman, City of Tempe  
John Wall, Arizona Housing, Inc.  
Runningdeer, Capitol Mall Fellows  
Kim Van Nimwegan, Urban Outreach  
T. Haskins, Care Directions  
Michelle Lee, Arizona Republic  
  
Rachel Brito, MAG

Ted Williams, Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation  
Diana Yazzie Devine, Native American Connections, Inc.

Brandee Mead, MAG

Amy St. Peter, MAG

\*Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

+Those members present by audio or videoconference.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Shana Ellis, City of Tempe, called the meeting to order at 2:14 p.m. Introductions ensued.

2. Call to the Audience

Audience members were given an opportunity to address the Committee. Chair Ellis reviewed guidelines for the public comment period. Vice Chair JoAnne Osborne acknowledged Chair Ellis for her service on the Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness. Chair Ellis has been a champion and strong advocate for the Continuum and for many projects and programs aimed at ending homelessness. In the City of Tempe, Chair Ellis has supported the Tempe Permanent Supportive Housing Pilot Project, Project Homeless Connect, and other permanent supportive housing efforts. Chair Ellis is also a member of the Valley of the Sun United Way Advisory Committee and has addressed ending homelessness at numerous events. Vice Chair Osborne expressed appreciation for the leadership with which Chair Ellis has led the Committee.

3. Approval of the March 21, 2011 Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness Meeting Minutes

Chair Ellis requested a motion to approve the March 21, 2011 meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Kendra Cea, Arizona Public Service. The motion was seconded by Brenda Robbins, Arizona Department of Health Services. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Continuum of Care Planning Subcommittee Report

Chair Ellis invited Theresa James, City of Tempe, to provide an update on activities of the Planning Subcommittee. Ms. James advised the Planning Subcommittee discussed the HEARTH Act and received an update from MAG staff on the Continuum of Care Check-up and Assessment process. The Planning Subcommittee recommended that a Stakeholder's Group form to work on next steps for implementation of HEARTH. The Stakeholder's group will have a recommendation for the Continuum on next steps at the next meeting that will include feedback on the assessment process.

In addition to the HEARTH Act discussion, Ms. James advised the Subcommittee focused the majority of the April meeting on the gaps analysis for the 2011 HUD application. The Subcommittee recommended using the unmet need formula suggested by HUD. She noted however, this year there is a new tool available to help with calculating the unmet need. The new tool was helpful to the process as it allowed the Subcommittee to put data into a spreadsheet and directly see how it impacted the unmet need. Ms. James said at the time of the meeting, there was some outstanding data needed to finalize the unmet numbers.

Outstanding data included data from HMIS to determine the percent of people in shelter with a disability, as well as average family size and percent of families coming from doubled up situations. The HMIS data has since been sent to MAG staff but still requires input from the technical group as to what numbers are used in the calculation of unmet need.

Ms. James recommended that a working group meet the following week to review the additional data that has been received for the formula and to determine the final unmet need numbers for the Housing Inventory Chart portion of the HUD application. Ms. James concluded her report. Chair Ellis provided an opportunity for questions. Having none, she requested a motion from the Committee. Ted Williams, Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation, motioned to approve the Planning Subcommittee report. Jacki Taylor, Save the Family, seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5. Permanent Supportive Housing and Arizona Street Outreach Collaborative Forum Update

Chair Ellis invited Mike McQuaid, Human Services Campus and Katie Szapa, to provide an update of the Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative and the Outreach Forum. Mr. McQuaid recalled that through the Valley of the Sun United Way's (VSUW) leadership, a goal was set to create 1,000 units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals in five years. He advised several projects are currently underway towards this goal including the following:

- The Tempe pilot project: thirty-five units of which 34 are currently filled. The project has had a 94 percent retention rate and is just past its first year of individuals moving in. Lessons learned from this project are being used as other projects move forward.
- A collaborative at Human Service Campus with Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation (ABC), has 50 units to house SMI individuals who are Title Nineteen eligible. Forty-eight of 50 units are currently filled. The project has had a 92 percent retention rate and is also nearing its first year of people moving in.
- Encanto Point is in progress. Diana Yazzie-Devine, Native American Connections Inc. (NACI), advised the City of Phoenix put out a Request for Proposal for Housing First. Native American Connections was awarded the contract for 54 units of Housing First on 9<sup>th</sup> street North of Indian school. Much work has been done on admission and operating agreements, design elements, and safety and security. NACI will be closing on the property soon and beginning construction in July. The facility opening is planned for fall 2012.
- The Greenwood Apartments in Goodyear is the first project in the West Valley. It provides 10 units which are currently being moved into. Ms. Schwabendlender acknowledged Maricopa County for contributing Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) dollars, the County Housing Authority for working on Section Eight, and Valle Del Sol for adding case management supportive services.
- The Campaigne Place, located in downtown Phoenix, is the latest success. The Board of Supervisors has allowed use of \$1.5 million dollars of Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds to acquire property. Additionally, the Department of Housing has

also contributed NSP dollars to help acquire and rehab the site. The project is 297 units of which 97 are targeted for the chronically homeless population.

Mr. McQuaid said it has been very gratifying to see such collaboration as it embodies what the Committee and United Way are all about – working together to achieve common goals. All together, the projects create 296 of 1,000 units. Of the 296 units, 119 are occupied.

Additional projects identified that are in various stages of completion are the Arizona Housing Inc. which has acquired two sites using NSP dollars for 35 units combined. Other projects through Supportive Housing Institute include: Native American Connections (38 units); UMOM (64 units); Save the Family (30 units); and Marc Center (20 units). These add another potential 187 units to what was accomplished. Amy Schwabenlender, Valley of the Sun United Way, advised the goal is in the second year of a five year process. Conversations first began with the City of Tempe, in April 2009; individuals were first housed in 2010. The completion of these additional projects is planned for December 2015.

Ms. Schwabenlender reported she and Tim Cole, City of Phoenix, were assigned to work with street outreach teams on improving coordination and collaboration. Teams began meeting six to eight months prior with a goal of planning a forum focused on street outreach. Ms. Schwabenlender acknowledged AmeriCorps week for sending Katy Szapa of Public Allies to assist with these efforts. Ms. Szapa advised the Arizona Street Outreach Collaborative (AZ SOC) is a group of 15 agencies that conduct outreach in Maricopa County. They meet monthly to address goals such as networking; understanding community resources; working towards collaborative services, and greater coordination among outreach teams. Early on, one of their goals was to organize and convene a day-long outreach summit or forum. The Reaching Out Together forum was held on May 6, 2011, at Arizona State University's downtown Phoenix campus.

The Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy partnered with the Arizona Street Outreach Collaborative and Valley of the Sun United Way to coordinate this event. The planning committee included members of Basic Mission, Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development, Home Base Youth Services, VSUW, the Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy, and Brande Mead, MAG. The primary objective was to provide common training, give agencies the chance to share about outreach programs, as well as to get discussion flowing around collaboration and partnerships. With the help of the Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy, the forum offered a morning of motivational interview training followed by an encouraging keynote address by Councilmember Shana Ellis, Chair of the Continuum of Care Committee. The afternoon offered breakout sessions on topics such as peer support; youth development; partnering with law enforcement; community action resources; advocacy; and best practices in outreach. Presenters included representatives from five of the Arizona Street Outreach Collaborative organizations. Approximately 55 individuals attended the first-time event. With generous support from the Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy, costs were kept low for participants. The event was open to members of the collaborative as well as other agencies conducting outreach in the valley.

Ms. Devine noted Native American Connections is now operating Home Base Youth Services. Beginning June 1, 2011, Home Base Youth Services and Tumbleweed will begin a

combined street outreach team on Monday and Wednesday nights. Ms. Devine said they look forward to the cross-training and how to better leverage resources to help youth.

6. Continuum of Care Checkup and Assessment Update

Chair Ellis invited Brande Mead, MAG, to update the Committee on the Continuum of Care Checkup and Assessment process. Ms. Mead advised in March, the Continuum received a letter from the federal United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office, inviting the Continuum to participate in a Continuum of Care checkup and assessment process; to have a consultant offer technical assistance to the Continuum; and to determine the Continuum's readiness to implement the HEARTH Act. The Continuum agreed they would like to participate in the checkup and assessment process and is one of nine participating Continuums across the Country.

Two consultants were assigned to the Continuum. A focus group was held in Phoenix on April 11, 2011, with representatives of the Continuum and surveys were sent out to stakeholders to gather additional input. The consultants are currently collecting feedback to assess the Continuum's readiness for HEARTH implementation. Ms. Mead advised the consultants will return on June 7, 2011, to report on their findings, offer recommendations, technical assistance and a written report. Ms. Mead noted HUD is currently working with nine Continuums however, if the process goes well, they may expand it on a larger scale.

The Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness has held meetings inviting all three Continuums together to look at next steps. The Continuums in the state are very interested in this process and seeing what next steps are recommended. An invitation will be distributed to the Committee for those wanting to attend the meeting. The meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held at the ASU Phoenix Urban Research Laboratory (PURL) building as the second floor MAG offices will be under construction throughout the summer.

Committee members questioned how many Continuums there are across the nation. Ms. Mead noted the letter received from HUD indicated this Continuum was chosen based on the size and the amount of funding received from HUD on an annual basis. In order to implement the process, HUD requires large Continuums to be able to make progress and implement HEARTH successfully. She was uncertain of the total number of Continuums across the nation.

7. Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) Update

Chair Ellis advised in 2009, Arizona was allocated more than \$22 million in Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) funding. More than \$11 million dollars went to municipalities in the Maricopa County area. The purpose of the funding is to provide financial assistance and services to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless, and to help those who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. She noted representatives would discuss the impact of the HPRP program in their part of the region.

Ms. James advised 35 units of permanent supportive housing are being created in the City of Tempe. HPRP funds are being used to create a bridge to those housing units. To date, 36

formerly chronically homeless individuals have been housed. As previously mentioned, in the first year, the project has seen a 100 percent retention rate. Since the one-year anniversary, there have been some households leave the program, but none have returned to homelessness. Tenants have also been placed on a Section 8 wait list which was recently reopened in the City of Tempe. The goal is for tenants to get a voucher before their time with the HPRP funds is expired. Through a partnership with the City of Phoenix and the Veterans' Administration, some tenants will be moving to Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. Another effort being worked on is through an RFP process, the City awarded a part of the HPRP funds to Tumbleweed to provide rapid re-housing to homeless young adults. At this point they are serving four young adults with three children among them. Ms. James said it is gratifying to know those children are not living on the streets homeless with their parents. She advised the adults are all going to school and working on employment opportunities. Vice Chair Osborne asked for clarification regarding the 1,000 unit goal being worked on with United Way and the 34 units reported on by Ms. James. Ms. James clarified the units reported on are the same as those discussed by the United Way.

Libby Bissa, City of Phoenix, advised the City received almost \$7 million in August 2009. Initial plans were to focus funds toward rapid re-housing and less on prevention efforts. However, it was determined that the program is aimed more at prevention. Therefore, the City recently completed an amendment to their plan with HUD to reallocate funds in the appropriate direction. Ms. Bissa said the program has worked with 911 clients thus far. There are currently 265 open cases. Initially, the program started with three case workers and has since grown to seven; each averaging 30-40 cases. The City is on track to spend down 60 percent of funding by the end of July and 100 percent by the end of next July.

Gilbert Lopez, City of Glendale, advised Glendale was awarded \$914,122. The City focused on prevention but also allocated funds for rapid re-housing. Mr. Lopez said the City partnered with Homeward Bound for rapid re-housing and St. Vincent de Paul for prevention. Mr. Lopez said the City expended the funds and helped 1,459 individuals. Recently, the State of Arizona awarded the City of Glendale an additional \$316,000 to continue moving forward in their efforts.

Ursula Strehans, Maricopa County, advised the County received almost \$900,000 in HPRP funds that have nearly been expended. They partnered with Valle del Sol who created a referral process and worked closely through the CAP network. This provided the first line of referrals. Ms. Strehans said the service area mostly falls within the Southwest Valley which was one of the areas hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis and other economic issues. As such, most of the funding was used on prevention. She reported the County received nearly \$100,000 from the State of Arizona to further assist in these efforts. Chair Ellis reported the Cities of Chandler, Mesa and the State of Arizona also received funding. Representatives from these locations were not available to offer an update.

Vice Chair Osborne requested a brief synopsis of the kinds of services addressed through prevention. Ms. Strehans advised federal regulations did not allow for Maricopa County to provide mortgage assistance. Funds were used for eviction prevention, catching up on utility

payments, or moving costs associated with evictions. Mr. Lopez agreed, noting the City of Glendale used CDBG funds to assist with mortgages. HPRP were used for other assistance needed.

Brad Bridwell asked with regard to prevention, if there was any particular model used to measure the risk of homelessness. He noted consistent discussion about best practices on prevention. Ms. Strehlman advised Valley del Sol established a risk factor analyses for becoming homeless however, they have not had an opportunity to analyze the numbers to determine consistency. She noted the analysis was mostly used for eligibility purposes. Jacki Taylor, Save the Family, advised Save the Family contracted with the City of Chandler and the City of Mesa to administer some of the funding. A housing risk assessment was used to determine if they could effectively prevent an individual from becoming homeless. Recommended services were tailored to the client's needs. Mr. Lopez advised the CAP office in the City of Glendale had some established guidelines to analyze risk. In situations where they were not able to assist an individual, referrals were made to other resources.

Mr. McQuaid commented on the effectiveness of municipalities partnering with agencies and service providers for effective results. He noted the Campaign Place was an acquisition through HUD that required the City of Phoenix to work with county and state representatives to allow the acquisition to occur.

Mr. Runningdeer, Capital Mall Fellows, addressed the Committee regarding individuals released from prison. He noted parole officers, on a weekly basis, ask what to do with this clientele who are often labeled sex offenders. Mr. Runningdeer expressed concern over these individuals not receiving assistance. He asked for input on how best to provide assistance and opportunities for them to move forward. Chair Ellis asked for input from the Committee. Ms. Devine noted there are many requirements regarding certain types of felony convictions that prohibit a person from accessing some services. She expressed her preference to see this population housed with supportive services but noted funding dictates who can and cannot be housed. Ms. Devine said while this is a difficult situation that needs to be addressed, it does at times get pushed under the rug. She recommended addressing this important recurring topic in a separate meeting. Ms. Mead advised there is a public comment period when municipalities are writing their plans. She offered to provide Mr. Runningdeer with contact information and notice of public comment periods for each of the municipalities.

Brenda Robbins, Arizona Department of Health Services, said depending on some funding sources, at the State level, they are prohibited from not housing someone based on whether they are a sexual offender or not. She said there are housing opportunities for individuals enrolled in the regional behavioral health authority in Arizona, given the availability of funding. The Arizona Department of Corrections also provides training to parole and probation officers. She recommended partnering with these individuals noting they often have close relations with landlords. She suggested it may be a matter of training people on how to develop those resources in the community.

Vice Chair Osborne proposed having an update on release of prisoners into the system as a future agenda item. Stephanie Knox, Magellan Health Services of Arizona, advised of a law

enforcement coordinating council that addresses the issue of ex-offenders and offers recommendations for improvements. Councilmember Michael Johnson, City of Phoenix, noted this is a large part of the homeless population. He agreed on the need to address prisoner re-entry at a future meeting. He noted the Department of Labor and Department of Agriculture had funding to deal with these issues. Mike McQuaid offered to hold a meeting at the Human Services Campus to address this issue and could report back to the Continuum of Care Committee.

8. Update on the 2011 Homeless Street Count

Chair Ellis invited Brande Mead and Amy St. Peter to offer a joint report on the Homeless Street Count and next steps. She noted many Committee members previously participated in a meeting with providers to obtain input and generate discussion on possible next steps. She provided a brief overview of time limits for public comments for those wanting to address the Committee. She noted public comments are limited to three minutes per person and fifteen minutes per topic.

Ms. St. Peter expressed appreciation and respect for the passion, patience, and work by Committee members each day. She acknowledged the street count coordinators for their efforts in conducting the Homeless Street Count on January 25, 2011 with a greater number of volunteers that ever before. The street count is a very important function and is one of the reasons the Continuum is able to be awarded federal funding. The Continuum of Care, since becoming part of MAG, has been awarded more than \$219 million dollars. This funding supports more than 50 programs across the region.

A different methodology was used for the street count this year as HUD required the Continuum to report on the number of homeless veterans. The street count consisted of asking individuals if they were homeless, how long they had been homeless, and if they had served time in the military. The questioning created a significant change in the methodology. Ms. St. Peter said it is extremely possible that this contributed to the amount of decrease seen from the previous year count.

Ms. St. Peter acknowledged concern with the MAG press release noting it was never intended to contribute to uncomfortable discussions. MAG staff has engaged fully in discussions where privileged to participate. She advised an informal meeting was held with a group of people who contacted MAG staff wanting to address their concerns. The group spent two hours talking in depth about the street count, the important function it fulfills, and the challenges faced. Ms. St. Peter provided an overview of the concerns expressed:

- Misleading headline: because of the change in methodology, it is not appropriate to compare 2011 to 2010.
- The count is not to scale: this is critical because if differences in scale are not acknowledged, the reports leave a different impression than was intended.
- The full impact of new programs is not known. Therefore, to link the decrease of the street count to these new programs may not be appropriate.

- Many providers advise their needs have increased. The news release reported the street count is down, the headlines reported homelessness is down. The two are different. For providers, their experience was not in alignment with the street count results, or the way it was covered in the media.
- Concerns and support about the methodology: some individuals view this as baseline year given the fact that more data was received. However, there is concern about the way the questions might have been asked, what questions were asked, and training provided.
- Individuals want input on messaging to provide a clearer overall picture and to be able to provide input on front-end rather than the back-end.
- Ongoing concern on how the street count consistently undercounts homeless youth and families and the need to emphasize more the other pieces of data that address these issues.

Ms. St. Peter expressed appreciate all ongoing dialogue. She advised the first stakeholder meeting was held the prior week to discuss next steps to unify the message. She said it is imperative that each is able to tell their own story, but also speak with a collective voice with the goal of ending homelessness. A draft statement was created as a result of feedback. She invited Brande Mead to discuss next steps. Ms. Mead acknowledged the street count coordinators, volunteers and stakeholders. She expressing her appreciation for the opportunity to address concerns as a committee and move forward with unified voice.

Ms. Mead referred to the municipal summary data and additional information collected from the street count. She noted even though the street count presented some challenges, staff was able to glean some important information from the count. Moving forward recommendations resulting from the meeting include:

- Bring street count coordinators and members of the Continuum together to assess the street count methodology and to plan for future counts.
- Form a stakeholder group to provide feedback on messaging of street count.
- Develop a stakeholder group that would develop a regional data overview with many different data sources and feedback from stakeholders to develop a more complete picture of homelessness in the region.
- Recommendation to approve the statement presented in draft form.

Ms. Mead asked for discussion noting through partnerships, the Continuum can move forward with a constructive role for the street count. Amy Schwabenlender acknowledged Ms. Mead and Ms. St. Peter for their patience and diligence in trying to capture everyone's concerns. She inquired about the purpose for the statement and how it would be used. Ms. St. Peter said to date, what has been discussed, is a desire to provide closure and clarity on

the unified statement on the street count. The statement is on agenda for action. If approved, it would remain part of public record and groups could use it as needed.

Darlene Newsome, UMOM, said for many years, she has expressed concern that the street count does not accurately count homeless families and youth. Releasing this information to the media causes concern because it is not an accurate count. The street count is a sliver of a snapshot of the chronically homeless individual population. She noted the press release was released to the media with concerns not only brought up by herself, but also from representatives from Save the Family and others. Ms. Newsome acknowledged the efforts of Ms. Mead and Ms. St. Peter to develop the statement, however, she noted the same concerns are brought up every year. Ms. Newsome noted UMOM's fund raising efforts have been affected as a result of the news release.

Donna Bleyle, Arizona Department of Economic Security, suggested learning from this process as the Continuum moves forward. She said there is excitement to release information, but only part of the story is told, noting the street count was never intended to be separate from the shelter count. She said, in the future, the results have to be analyzed before information is released. Ms. Taylor agreed with Ms. Newsom's comments stressing the critical need to vet any press release among stakeholders. She said the Continuum loves to celebrate a reduction in homelessness, but when in fact that is not the reality, the public is being lied to. She stressed the importance of getting feedback from stakeholders on a potential press release to ensure it is offered in the most effective manner.

Mr. Cole asked for clarification that the point in time survey per HUD's requirement is only for the street count and shelter count. He noted the data provided to HUD will not change therefore, the Continuum's concern is how data is presented to the media. Mr. Williams said part of the issue is the consistency of the methodology used. He commented information released year to year based on different methodology is not helpful to HUD. He asked if the Continuum has the ability to use same methodology for the next few years. Mr. Cole advised HUD requirements were shared late in the process. Coordinators already had a methodology in place but had to backtrack to incorporate HUD's requirements. He again noted the concern is what information was released. Ms. Robbins expressed agreement with the methodology used stating MAG released the numbers as they were.

Councilmember Michael Johnson, City of Phoenix, agreed the numbers are the numbers. He expressed concerns over results based on the methodology used not coinciding with the overall picture. He recommended including additional information to reflect the status of shelters and increased need and presenting a clearer picture, not just releasing the numbers. Chair Ellis noted the street count was publicized in January to gather participation. As such, media was inquiring about the street count numbers in efforts to get the word out. She acknowledged the Continuum's concerns about how information is released. Councilman Johnson noted homelessness has now become a more regional issue.

Vice Chair Osborne said there are two aspects being discussed; the first being HUD; and the second being the Continuum's message. She recommended, as a Committee, to implement a policy that requires data on the shelter count and data from the Department of Education be

included with the street count data. Additionally she recommended submitting a letter to HUD expressing the Continuum's understanding of the methodology but stressing the need to include additional data. Chair Ellis said it is noted in the draft statement that others communities are having same issue with the numbers.

Kendra Cea, Arizona Public Service, noted the problem is how the message was delivered and the media stating homelessness is down 36 percent. She recommended also reporting on the good things the Continuum has accomplished. She said it is typical for the media to use the headline of a press release and a quote. In this case, the headline and quotes conveyed a message that does not convey the full picture.

Councilmember Kevin Hartke, City of Chandler, acknowledged and thanked Ms. Mead. He noted the City of Chandler, for the first time, probably has a more accurate count. Mr. McQuaid noted the real issue is how the message is framed. The headlines in the news said homeless street count, however, the problem is that people do not know what that means and think it means homelessness in general has decreased by 36 percent. The question becomes how best to communicate that information. He said the more detailed the message, the bigger the issue becomes. He recommended keeping the message simple that homelessness is not down. Additionally, there is a need to clarify and work on the methodology and how to frame and communicate the message going forward. Ms. Bleyle said it is important to collect the information required from HUD, but noted more data can also be collected. She expressed her opinion that a letter to HUD is not needed. Ms. Bleyle advised she is attempting to form a group of stakeholders from among the Continuums. Ms. Taylor commented the question of whether or not someone is homeless is degrading. She said while HUD mandates a street count, they do not mandate how the information is released.

Karen McLaughlin, Children's Action Alliance, expressed concern over how the information was conveyed. She said the Continuum has worked through the concerns and have reached a good conclusion that more data should be gathered to tell the full story. She applauded the Continuum's effort and said she looks forward to seeing good data and good information next year.

Elizabeth Venable, Arizona Organizing Project, gave a brief overview of her work with chronically homeless individuals. Arizona Organizing Project works to create and foster peer groups and give people who have been on the streets for an extremely long time access to advocates and help to create better lives. Ms. Venable said she is hopeful that MAG will release the statement as it addresses many of the concerns that people in community had and addresses some problems in the methodology. She also expressed her belief that the question of being homeless is invasive and that the number of volunteers is less important than the training of volunteers. She said training should focus on cultural competency, and in developing a methodology, efforts should be made to engage those who have experienced homeless and ask their input on how they would recommend asking someone if they are homeless. She expressed support for the statement but expressed concern that the decision to not include a comparison of the results from 2011 to 2010. She noted that the significant decreases in the numbers indicate flaws in the methodology. She said using percentages highlights this issue.

Dick Geasland, Tumbleweed Center for Youth, addressed the Continuum regarding youth. He noted the numbers for schools are also increasing. He said a good indicator of the numbers is based on a pilot project that will end next year. In terms of housing for 18 to 25 year olds, Tumbleweed tripled their numbers from 9 to 12 beds to 33 to 36 beds for this age population. Previously, Tumbleweed had a regular waiting list of 25 to 30, however in the last two years, the list has grown closer to 100. The number of beds and the number on the waiting list have tripled. Councilmember Johnson noted the majority of the decreases based on the numbers were in Phoenix and Mesa, reflecting a good job of addressing the issue regionally. Chair Ellis agreed noting it is the cities who conduct the count. She said cities like Chandler may choose to do their own press release on their homeless numbers, but the Continuum can speak with a collective voice.

Frank Migali, Department of Education, said they are not confident their numbers will increase this year. The last 18 to 24 months has seen a significant drop in enrollment in Arizona public schools. However, the percentage of homeless kids in schools will increase. Mr. Migali noted the population of Arizona has also decreased. Councilmember Johnson asked if the numbers include charter schools. Mr. Migali said they include all public local education agencies and all school districts as well as charter holders, which could have multiple schools.

Chair Ellis asked for input on the draft statement and whether or not it should be released and made available and, if so, in what manner. Ms. Devine noted the importance of highlighting some of the good things that have been done such as the United Way efforts. She said discussing efforts with prevention and rapid re-housing is a nice way to begin before discussing the complicated issue of the street count. She said it is important to tell the public of all the resources being utilized. Ms. Schwabenlender expressed disagreement noting part of the confusion in the street count is that the numbers do not add up. She recommended clarifying the street count and talking about successes in a separate story. Mr. Migali questioned whether additional data sources should be included in the statement. Robert Duvall, Community Information and Referral, disagreed, expressing the need to keep the message very clear and very simple. Mr. Williams commented the second paragraph of the statement may be misleading. Mr. Lopez said it is important to tell the public of the successes yet balancing the message.

Chair Ellis asked if there was consensus to discuss both as separate items. She noted the statement is not an official press release but a document that providers may use to provide background. It is not intended to be published. Chair Ellis asked for a review of recommended next steps. Ms. Mead provided a brief overview of next steps recommended. Mr. Duvall made a motion to approve the next steps as presented and discussed. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

9. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chair Ellis asked for input from the Committee on any requested topics or issues of interest to consider for future agendas. Councilmember Osborne requested a report on the release of prisoners into the system.

10. Announcements

Chair Ellis asked for announcements from Committee members. She explained that announcements are for information only.

The next Project Connect will be held in Glendale on May 26, 2011.

MAG offices will be undergoing construction over the summer months. All Committee meetings will be scheduled at alternate locations.

Mr. Bridwell advised the next Project H3 will be at the nursing innovations building. Additionally, he announced the RFP for the Annual Coalition to End Homelessness conference was released.

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness is scheduled for July 25, 2011, at 2:00 p.m.; location to be determined.