

Systems Change Collaborative
Meeting #2
April 6th, 2022
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Welcome

Sydney Edmonds, Program Manager at Illinois Public Health Institute, begins the second Systems Change Collaborative Meeting by introducing the topic of the meeting's session: Comprehensive Approaches to Health in Shelters. Edmonds goes through the planned agenda for the meeting.

Level-setting on Systems Change Collaborative

Edmond then introduces Colleen Mahoney from CDPH who reviews the purpose and call-to-action for this collaborative. As mentioned in the last meeting, this Collaborative will convene over the course of 2022, with a total of five meetings. Mahoney emphasizes how this Collaborative is an opportunity to create change in infrastructure and guide CDPH to areas in which an active role is needed.

Afterward, Edmonds briefly goes over the Group Norms that were introduced in the previous meeting.

Mission Moment

Sydney Edmonds then led the group through a Mission Moment. This segment is a grounding effort that is part of every meeting. It is a tool for members to reconnect with the work about to begin, the people being served, and to build collaborations between partners.

For this session's mission moment, Edmonds introduces a project by the Figueroa Wu Family Foundation. This project showcases a photography gallery of COVID-19 survivors at the Pacific Garden Mission Homeless Shelter. The webpage highlights how people experiencing homelessness were uniquely impacted by the pandemic, as well as showing appreciation to students, clinicians, and staff that worked tirelessly to address the isolation units during that time.

Edmonds poses the question: *What is one thing you wish was better understood about homelessness?*

Comprehensive Approach to Health in Shelters –

Presentation - DFSS

Sydney Edmonds introduces the first presenters of the meeting: Christine Riley, Director of Homeless Prevention, Policy & Planning at DFSS, alongside Kimberly Howard, Director of the Homeless Services Division at DFSS.

Kimberly Howard begins the presentation by giving an overview of the Chicago Shelter System and the current priorities for improvement. The goal of the shelter system is to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness in moving to appropriate and stable permanent housing while providing them a safe, accessible place to stay. DFSS funding supports roughly 75% of shelter beds in Chicago, and in recent years has supported two types of shelter: "Emergency Shelter" and "Interim Housing". The latter is a local Chicago program model, and DFSS has transitioned to support these programs under a single "Shelter" program model.

Howard shares the 2021 Housing Inventory Count (HIC) and Point-In-Time Count (PIT). The number of active shelter beds has fluctuated over the last two years based on public health guidance, and within this context, the number of people residing in each of the programs combined was 3,023 people. In addition, there are beds dedicated to specific household types, with 56% for households without children, 44% for households with children. There are also dedicated beds by specializations, with 7% of beds dedicated to survivors of domestic violence, 6% for youth, 6% for veterans, and 1% for those living with HIV.

Howard then transitions the presentation to Christine Riley. Riley talks through DFSS priorities for improvement.

- i. **Improving Rehousing Outcomes** – DFSS seeks to continue working with shelter providers to reduce the average length of stay in shelters and increase the percentage of households moving to a housing destination
 - a. DFSS is interested in working with partners in a variety of ways. This interest ranges from investing in case management, staff, and services towards housing, to tracking client outcomes and focusing on continuous improvement.
- ii. **Expand Access to Shelter** – DFSS seeks to work with shelter providers to further reduce barriers to entry into the shelter system. This includes removing curfews, accommodating pets, accommodating couples staying together, and improving access for transgender clients and people with disabilities.
- iii. **Move Toward a Non-Congregate Shelter System** – Pre-COVID, one third of all shelter beds in the DFSS-funded systems were in shared rooms with over 20 people and shared bathrooms, and COVID-19 has highlighted the positive outcomes of client health and safety outcomes when being served in non-congregate settings.

Presentation - Franciscan Outreach

Sydney Edmond then introduces the third presenter for this meeting, Luwana Johnson, Director of Shelter Operations from Franciscan Outreach. Johnson begins by giving an overview of Franciscan Outreach. Franciscan Outreach is a leading provider of homeless services in Chicago, and operates through four service sites with a diverse array of programs and services. Johnson also highlights key partnerships that are crucial to the services Franciscan Outreach provides. These services range from Primary Care and Mental Health, Substance Use Treatment, ENT telehealth, and more.

Franciscan Outreach has outgrown their primary facility located in Chicago's North Lawndale Community. This facility was built in early 1900's, and cannot support additional floors being added to the original building. Therefore, learning from lessons learned during the pandemic, Franciscan Outreach worked with a team of architects and engineers to expand their largest shelter. This shelter will be well-spaced, and will provide non-congregate sleeping areas to provide clients with spaces to safeguard their health and increase their privacy.

Franciscan Outreach believes in partnerships, and particularly acknowledges its partnership with DFSS.

Johnson finishes her presentation by reminding everyone, "System-wide changes rely on a critical mass of interested parties, agencies with the client's best interest at heart, and all willing to enter into a deep partnership and collaboration, one that is founded on new levels of trust and a commitment to action, not debate".

Breakout Rooms

Sydney Edmonds introduces the group to the following breakout room topics. Members choose the group they believe they have the most expertise or interest in.

- i. Non-Congregate Shelter Settings
- ii. Mental Health and Substance Use Services
- iii. Medical Respite

The session members reconvene after about 30 minutes to talk about their individual group discussions with the main session.

Next Steps

Following the discussion, Sydney Edmonds asks the participants to fill out a short survey. The next meeting for the Systems Change Collaborative will meet next on May 25th on the topic of Housing Models and Care Continuity.

