

## **Week 3 Summary: What is “Shelter Better”?**

**Summary:** The focus for week 3 was *identifying principles for good shelter with regard to low-barrier, housing-first practices*. We heard from Mia Bryant from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) who covered best practices of an emergency shelter including housing-first principles, diversion, and low-barrier access.

### **Opening Business:**

*Warm-up.* An eight-week meeting outline was provided to all task force members that described the objectives for each meeting. The task force was asked to review each week’s objectives and determine which week each member was most looking forward to and which week each member was most concerned about. Many task force members were excited for week 4 where we will be diving into data-heavy topics such as a shelter needs analysis which will help us to understand the target number of beds and target populations of beds we will need. Many members were concerned about week 7 as we are tasked with landing on a shelter site.

*Partner Statement of Commitment:* The task force reviewed the updated “Partner Statement of Commitment” again and a temperature check was re-taken. Once again, nearly all task force members have the “thumbs-up” to the statement and those members were asked to sign the commitment statement at the end of the meeting. Those that did not sign the statement are encouraged to sign at the next meeting or contact the facilitator to discuss further feedback or hesitations.

*Shelter Feasibility Criteria:* The task force was informed that their questions to the feasibility criteria from the previous week were recorded and the City is working with external partners and experts on developing responses to each question. An additional 30 minute workshop has been added to the end of this and next week’s meetings to allow for task force members to discuss additional questions and/or concerns regarding the criteria with Casey and Racheal.

### **Presentation**

Mia Bryant from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) joined the call to present on “Understanding the Role of Emergency Shelter in Ending Homelessness” in which she discussed the best practices of an effective emergency shelter. Her presentation included the following key points:

- The goal of an effective homeless response system is to house people as quickly as possible, divert them away from homelessness whenever possible, and ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and occurs only one time.
- Emergency shelters should utilize a housing first approach that acts on the belief that *everyone* is ready for housing and addresses homelessness as a housing problem.

- Low-barrier emergency shelters are accessible to *anyone* that needs help, has few to no prerequisites (i.e. sobriety, background check, credit check) prior to entering, and prioritizes individuals and households with the most needs.

**Closing Activity and Announcements:**

- Mia presented task force members with various emergency shelter rules/procedures and were asked to determine which created the most access for shelter guests.
- Questions regarding the presentation were collected on index cards and will be referred to Mia for answers.
- Members were again invited to submit potential shelter sites they would like analyzed by the City as we move toward siting considerations and analysis. These can be emailed to Racheal while Jen is out through the next task force meeting.