

Notes from SAS 11-3-16

Danny Sheetz, Whitney Hamrick

RE: Housing – Barriers to Housing in Shenandoah County

Q what are barriers to housing for all? Fair Market rent.

Fair Market Rent is a phrase issued by HUD and it is a guideline, not a mandate. The SAS works with Land Lords network to find housing for their clients (homeless and at risk for homelessness). There are no financial incentives for the Land Lords except they are guaranteed monthly rent through the subsidized housing.

Per the HUD website (<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>): the Fair Market Rent Rate in Shenandoah County is

\$599/mo for 1 Bedroom

\$784/month for 2 Bedrooms

\$1,121 / mo for 3 bedrooms

\$1,197/mo for 4 bedrooms

What the land lords work out with SAS clients is out of the goodness of their hearts and they receive promised pay, known from granting agency. Most SAS grants combine rent and utilities in one payment and there are insufficient housing units at those rates.

Fair Market Rents are based on being a percentage below the median income (30%, 50% or 80%) of median income.

For SAS, about 80-85% of their clients who qualify for help receive assistance. SAS offers two programs: Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention Program.

The Rapid Rehousing will provide assistance for up to 2 years. This is for persons who are on the street, literally homeless and without shelter.

The Home Prevention Program is for clients who earn 30% of the median income and have received an eviction notice (i.e., they have a 14 day notice).

The Point in Time Count is a gross underestimate. This is due to it is a one day count, is during the coldest time of the year, and it is based on homeless folks coming out.

Question: What do you think are the biggest housing issues in Shenandoah County?

- 1- Transportation.
- 2- This is the single biggest issue, based on consensus of eight housing agencies in the region including:

Response, Family Promise, Free Clinic, North Western Community, Pregnancy Center, Family Youth Initiative, Strength & Peers, and Shenandoah Alliance for Shelter. (based on a multi-agency meeting 11-3-16).

SAS suggested that there be a transportation shuttle that runs along Rtes 11 and 42 with multiple stops for work, appointments, etc. There is a serious issue with getting employment based on lack of transportation. In order to have functionality and employment, there needs to be public (subsidized) transportation between towns. In addition, there are drug rehabilitation issues that require clients to go to Front Royal (the closest rehabilitation MD) and each visit costs \$200 out of pocket to get covered.

(Side note- Carla with DSS has a \$40 million budget and SAS suggested she needs to learn that transportation is an issue to see if she can help with resolution).

It might be that by coalescing each agency in the county with faith-based organizations, there could be a resolution in the homelessness.

The only employer willing to hire people with a felony, is George's which necessitates transportation.

2. Other key issue is to improve communication amongst agencies. For example, eight agencies met 11/3/16 and discussed how if they could collaborate on projects, they could leverage resources and increase requests for state and federal assistance. If there was better communication among all agencies and faith-based organizations, there could be financial efficacies realized through use of discretionary funds, use of volunteers, and increased grant eligibility.

3. Third big issue is permanent supportive housing. This is something that Harrisonburg offers (which exceeds the services offered through Massanutten Mountain, to ensure that elderly and others will not be evicted, no matter what. Budgeting is a big aspect to this and they work with people to have a set amount for the monthly rents.

4. Thermal shelters for homeless in the winter, even during evening and night hours, for use of vacant spaces is a 4th big issue.

Follow Up:

Other resources to talk with Carla from DSS

Pam Murray from Free Clinic

Sherri Arlie from ____

Ask Sheila Orndorff to come to a future CAC meeting to help answer questions

Arey