

Washtenaw Equity Partnership (WEP) Prevention & Front End Subcommittee Meeting

September 14, 2022 5:00-6:30 pm

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Dez Simmons (Co-Chair)
Kevin Karpiak
Ashley Shukait
Aubrey Patino
Reverend Jefferey Harrold
Vonnie McLoyd
Tara Dhanraj Roden (Vera)
Angie Carpio (Vera)

Notes

- Subcommittee member suggested the group revisits the monthly meeting time to improve attendance/engagement.
- Vera staff member highlighted upcoming Vera site visit and requested members complete the survey with availability if they have not yet. Vera will send out a calendar invite with the meeting date and time for the in-person meeting in October later this week.
- Goal for meeting is to go over high-level summaries that were sent out last week. Vera staff have compiled information into a short slide deck to review this evening. Vera is winding down research but seeks feedback from subcommittee members if there are any glaring issues or gaps in what has been done to date.
- Next steps
 - During in-person meeting in October, subcommittee will develop recommendations.
 - October workgroup meeting will include reviewing recommendations that subcommittees have developed and seeking feedback.
 - During the November subcommittee meeting, this group will finalize recommendations.
- Subcommittee member question about findings from the focus groups and interviews.
 - Vera staff member shared that qualitative work is underway. Vera plans to share complete summaries and qualitative findings before the in-person site visit in October, allowing subcommittee members time to sit with materials before meeting to start developing recommendations.
 - Vera will start to develop recommendations based on findings and subcommittee discussions to help the subcommittee have a jumping off point for discussions in October.
- Research update slide deck
 - Priority area 1: Impact of system involvement on housing and other needs
 - Recap of research questions, research methods and emerging themes.
 - Subcommittee member questions and comments
 - Question about look back policies.
 - Michigan Works! Business Resource Network – is this specifically for people who have system involvement/been incarcerated. Is this specifically geared towards employers who hire people who were incarcerated before?

- Recommendation to include MSHDA in local look back policy section. MSHDA has a lot of housing choice vouchers, and their housing admin plan can have other practices.
- To find Ypsi housing commission, need to find administrative plan that should be publicly available.
- Regarding surveillance, curious to know more about camera feeds at Ann Arbor and Ypsi public housing sites. Understanding is that police have access to this footage. Would like to confirm whether this is the case. Wondering if this will be addressed?
 - Vera staff asked if subcommittee members have ideas on how to confirm this information.
 - Subcommittee members recommended reaching out to Jennifer Hall, director of Ann Arbor Housing Commission and Zac Fosler, Director of Ypsilanti Housing Commission.
- Subcommittee member shared that their understanding is that if someone has interactions with law enforcement, that gets reported to property managers who take section 8 vouchers and that can lead to property managers evicting people.
 - Another subcommittee member believes it is happening at Sycamore Meadows and has been told that residents have requested this to happen.
- Smaller landlords will have questions on applications about criminal background. Subcommittee member shared that this becomes a deterrent if people see this question on an application. Question about adding this topic to research. What is percentage of landlords that have a question about criminal background on applications? This would be helpful to understand.
 - Another subcommittee member mentioned in Ann Arbor there are some landlords trying to wrestle with this question.
- Backlog and underreported data of houseless people. People on MOUD or limited on how much they can take, a lot of housing won't take them.
- Priority area 2: Lack of community alternatives to police
 - Recap of research questions, research methods and emerging themes.
 - Vera staff member noted that the team will not research the second question (What is the perception of local politicians, administrators, policy and decision makers to alternatives to police?) due to capacity.
 - Subcommittee member questions and comments
 - Another emerging theme a subcommittee member saw from summaries sent last week is how many calls for 911 could happen outside of the police.
 - Pittsfield policing dashboard is very useful and could expand to other townships/cities within Washtenaw County.
 - Question about dispatchers – does Pittsfield use same dispatcher as County? Subcommittee member said yes, all the same office. But uncertain where the priority areas are coming from – is this from Pittsfield or is this Washtenaw based?

- Vera question for CROS group about process.
 - City of Ann Arbor is working with a consultant to seek community/key stakeholder input to help develop the RFP. Hope is that RFP will be released later this year, early next year.
 - Care Based Safety team is helping build out what the design of this alternative could look like. This will be a community driven process.
 - Care Based Safety team developed out of CROS. CROS is focusing on advocacy now. Care Based Safety is focusing on developing alternative to law enforcement.
 - Priority area 3: High police presence in specific neighborhoods and harms caused?
 - Recap of research questions, research methods and emerging themes.
 - Vera question about County wide consortium for oversight commissions.
 - Received National Science Foundation grant to study oversight bodies in Washtenaw County (believes it is the biggest funded project on oversight commissions).
 - Consortium is part of NSF grant. Team behind it wrote an article recently about the grant.
 - Karpiak, K.G., Mulla, S. and Pérez, R.L. (2022), "The plurality of police oversight: a method for building upon lessons learned for understanding an evolving strategy", Policing: An International Journal, Vol. 45 No. 4, pp. 648-661. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-08-2021-0117>
 - SMART at EMU improvised monthly meeting of heads of chairs of different oversight boards in the region, mostly Washtenaw County.
 - 5 mentioned plus representative of Chelsea (don't have official oversight body but in the process of rethinking public safety practices).
 - Another body to add to list, parallel to CABLE, also through the Sheriff's Office. CABLE is the after the fact incident review board. The front-end form of civilian oversight is 21st Policing Compliance Commission This is modeled after Obama era report. Broke into subcommittees based on 6 pillars in report. One of the subcommittees is oversight and policy and they are charged with reviewing Sheriff's Office practices based on report. This subcommittee has made a series of recommendations but not clear what the Sheriff's Office will do with the recommendations. It is a version of civilian oversight.
 - Entire Commission is comprised of half community members and half law enforcement.
 - Recommendations the subcommittee has created and provided are not public per a subcommittee member's knowledge. They have been developed and provided over the last two years. Committee members had to sign nondisclosure agreements and cannot share recommendations.
 - Insight on CABLE:

- CABLE, at one point, was subcommittee of Washtenaw County Commissioners, then got move to Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office but now it is not part of either. They are not subject to open meetings, there are no meeting minutes/notes shared. Have not met since April.
 - They have no resources or power.
 - Priority area 4: Need for more culturally responsive services that address basic needs.
 - Recap of research questions, research methods and emerging themes.
- Next steps
 - Vera reminded subcommittee members to complete availability survey for in person October meeting.
 - Vera will provide updated summaries to subcommittee members as they are complete.
- Subcommittee member stated when developing recommendations and writing report, it will be helpful to have recommendations with concrete action steps on how to implement.