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REACHING HOME UPDATE SET FOR JAN. 29

A year in review and looking ahead

The City of Missoula will present a public update on Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness on Tuesday, Jan. 29, 4-6 p.m. in City Council Chambers at 140 W. Pine St.

The plan just wrapped up its second phase, Building a Coordinated System to End Homelessness, and is embarking on its third and final phase, Making Adjustments to Ensure Sustainability. During the past year, Reaching Home coordinator Theresa Williams continued to lead the effort to build out and implement Missoula's Coordinated Entry System, a "no wrong door" single point of entry for people experiencing homelessness. The access points include Salvation Army, YWCA, the Poverello Center and the Human Resource Council's 2-1-1 Program. The results are already showing in chronically homeless people finding housing. The update will feature some of these success stories.

In November, Coordinated Entry System providers began using the same software and technology to track characteristics and service needs of people experiencing homelessness. To date, 55 users from 12 different agencies are using this Homeless Management Information System, and it is beginning to provide some real-time data in Missoula and across the state.

Missoula's Homeless Coordinated Outreach Team will represent nine of the 13 panelists. This community team meets monthly to brainstorm and discuss outreach approaches and to collaborate to make sure efforts are spread equally throughout the city. The group also staffs

weekly drop-in hours at multiple locations around town, and they serve as access points for people they encounter in the field.

Missoula's 10-Year Plan launched in 2012 after more than a year and a half of work by a working group appointed by Mayor John Engen and Missoula County commissioner Jean Curtiss. Its work was based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, which has advised communities across the nation that have built 10-year plans to end homelessness. The plans help communities lay the foundation of what it means to end homelessness, not merely manage it.

Tuesday's presentation will open with Mayor John Engen and Commissioner Cola Rowley. Coordinator Theresa Williams will present an overview of the strategies being implemented and include highlights from the previous year. Susan Hay Patrick, CEO of United Way of Missoula County, where Reaching Home was housed before moving to the City of Missoula, will moderate a panel of representatives of collaborating agencies. The panelists will be:

Theresa Williams, Reaching Home Coordinator, City of Missoula
Dacia Griego, Emergency Housing Program Coordinator, YWCA
Hannah Higgins, Homeless Outreach Team, Poverello Center
Laurie Pope, Peer Support Recovery Specialist & Project Coordinator, Open Aid Alliance
Kristy Pszanowski, Homeless Outreach Team, Poverello Center
Jake Lapke, PATH Outreach, Western Montana Mental Health Center
Yvonne Cooper, Housing Navigator, Partnership Health Center
April Seat, Director of Outreach, Union Gospel Mission of Missoula
Melissa Brooks, Off Site Services Coordinator, Open Aid Alliance
Kimberly Bell, Service Coordinator, Volunteers of America
Matt Hendry, PATH Coordinator, Western Montana Mental Health Center
Randy Krastel, Downtown Business Improvement District of Missoula Police Officer, Missoula Police Department
Sue Ellerman, Housing Retention Specialist, Poverello Center

The update will be televised live on MCAT Channel 190 and streamed live at www.mcat.org/local-live.