November 9, 2023 Continuum of Care meeting minutes

The November 2023 meeting, which took place virtually, via a Zoom conference call, was called to order and began at 11:01 am. The minutes from the September meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

The guest speaker for the meeting was Victor Flores-Lopez, the new Community Police Alliance Coordinator (CPAC) for Bound Brook. He is a licensed social worker and is an advocate for – and member of – the LGBTQ+ community. He has worked for both profit and non-profit organizations, and in individual and family therapy. Before starting with CPAC, he worked for Catholic Charities.

While he now works directly with the Bound Brook police department, his previous experience with law enforcement was not ideal. He faced discrimination due to his race, LGBTQ+, and substance use. However, now he helps out the community, while also helping with police department resources.

He started work about a month ago, but is only in his 2nd week of working directly with the police department. So far, people have been very receptive. He has received lots of callbacks from residents, along with referrals from officers. Many referrals have been for domestic violence, housing, mental health, and substance use. Bound Brook has a large Hispanic community, so being bi-lingual has been helpful.

Victor’s goal is to link individuals with resources in their community, even if those resources are outside of Bound Brook. The idea is to lessen – or even eliminate – interactions with the police department, by helping people directly so they don’t need to call the police.

Katelyn from Monarch provided information and an update on the upcoming Point in Time Count (PITC). The PITC is a HUD-mandated count of sheltered and unsheltered residents in the County. It will be held on January 24, 2024, and ask people where they resided on the night of January 23. There are not many changes in the survey from last year. Monarch will hold virtual trainings every Tuesday and Thursday in January. Information and registration for the trainings will be available on Monarch’s website.

Agency announcements will be sent via e-mail after the meeting and, as such, are incorporated as part of the minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:56 am.

Attendees:

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| Jeremy Hirsch | Joanne Hala |
| Kim Cowart  Ed Prior  Mike Kane  Ana Diaz Lopez | Heather Pullen  Meg Isbitski  Linda Rapacki  Derek Smith |
| Zack Berliner  Paul Grzella  Cynthia Ramsey | Erica Schiffman  Mike Frost  Stephanie Billitz |
| Ola Olorode | Jay Weintraub |
| Susie Suter | Hector Herrera |
| Carl Myricks | Lashonda Dumas |
| Jillian Cullen | Vanessa Brown |
| Jeff Phillips  Jen Butzgy | Maria Marnell  Ihinosen Akhagba |
| Victor Flores | Monica Mulligan |
| Janet Boetticher | Carrie Ferraro |
| Corey Panati  Katelyn Ravensbergen  Keisha Graham | Antoinette Ray  Brenda Gonzalez |
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