

### **Shelter Accessibility Advisory Board 7.9.25**

3:10pm - 5:00pm via Zoom

Attendance: Jennifer Shaoul, Asa Johnson, Beth Diesch, Lisanne Anderson, Erica Strang, Mbacke Thiam (4:05), Crystal Rivera (4:00pm)

Not in attendance: Cynthia English, Charisma White

Agenda for 7/9:

- Review of meeting minutes from 6/11 and implementation of any pertinent edits.
- Discussion on the minutes format—whether or not there is the potential of us also having audio-recorded minutes for our meetings.
- Discussion on the various modes/potential for self-advocacy and the best ways to implement strategies that help make this a goal within reach for individuals with disabilities who are navigating through the NYC shelter system. Is there literature or the appropriate signage posted in shelters and in shelter intake facilities that informs folks who may not necessarily be aware of their rights of what they are and what resources are available to them?
  - Discussion: A lot of self-advocacy information is available throughout intake and the shelter system, but the challenge is that residents are often overwhelmed by the amount of information that is provided at intake; “barrage of information/overwhelming packet”. Group discussed whether DHS could change the word “ombudsman” as that is difficult to understand.
- Continued discussion on and planning as pertains to board members visiting shelters.
  - Update from Jen: Permission has been provided for group to conduct the visits; committee members to sign NDA; need to identify which shelters or which types of shelters (MH, employment, family, intake)
  - Takeaways/goals: Walkthrough to see different physical layouts of shelters/general environment; speak with residents; revisited discussion about whether a “satisfaction survey” thing already exists within the shelter system that this committee can review; acknowledgement that this committee had also been formed with utilizing direct participant input from shelter residents (we would solicit unique feedback)
  - Planning for day/time: Committee has flexibility with advanced notice starting early September; group to split up to be able to visit more sites and report back to the group
  - Group would be limited to committee members
- Continued training module on Service Animals in shelter environments (slide 53) and subsequent training slides by Jennifer.
  - Service Animals (cont.)
  - Emotional Support Animals vs Service Animals
- Brief review of the minutes for the 7/9 meeting.

Next steps/follow-up items:

- Finalized June minutes sent to DSS for posting (completed by Jen 7.9.25)
- Jen will follow up to see if there is an audio recording option for committee members to review to ensure all information is accurately documented in the minutes. To also confirm that audio recordings aren’t part of the official record; if approved audio recording cannot be distributed outside of this committee. Confidentiality consideration. Will give consideration to transcript tools as a possible alternatives.
- Jen: Examination of what information is available regarding shelter staff turnover rates at the various tiers of management, both at the intake/assessment shelters and ideally at partnered provider shelter agencies. If data isn’t available to the city then this may be a possible recommendation from this committee: Provider agencies to submit regular reports regarding

staffing vacancies, with the idea that longer tenure of staff contributes to better engagement/more positive client outcomes.

- Beginning in the Fall, to possibly be assigned to incoming SWI: Grant writing project for self-advocacy Peer program for shelter inreach; possible collaboration with Ombudsman's office.
- Recommendation: Ensure that individuals have access to resources for advocacy
- Continued training slides by Jennifer (left off on slide 57)
- Next meeting: Thursday August 7th 9:30-11:30 via Zoom (will confirm with other committee members)

#### Agenda for 08/07/2025

- Review of meeting minutes from 7/9 and implementation of any pertinent edits.
- Follow up discussion on audio usage of minutes for committee members.
- Follow up discussion on whether or not the city has access to shelter staff turnover rate data and if so, whether or not our board has access to said data.
- Further planning as to the specific dates and shelters that committee members are to visit, as well as group assignation.
- Brainstorming and creation of a standardized set of questions to ask the constituents we are able to interact with at the shelters we visit about their shelter experience.
- Continued training slides by Jennifer.
- Review of meeting minutes for 8/7