

Shelter Accessibility Advisory Board Minutes

May 29th, 2026

11:00am - 1:00pm

Attendees: Jennifer Shaoul, Crystal Rivera, Lisanne Anderson, Mbacke Thiam, Cynthia English, Beth Diesch, Erica Strang, Asa Johnson, Absent: Charisma White.

Guests:

Allison Gill-Lambert, DSS General Counsel

Christine Fellini, Acting Administrator, DHS

Craig Brennan, Executive Director, Office of Constituent Services

Committee began review of report recommendations with the following feedback from guests:

1. ADA Accessible Units

- a. Christine agrees that development of more units would be beneficial and that this is progress being made on this topic.
- b. Cynthia requested data regarding current units and # in development, which Christine agreed to send.
- c. When a provider brings a site to DHS one of the primary questions is typically around accessibility
- d. Jen clarified that this was specifically about placing people without needs in accessibility units. While understood that this is necessary at times, would like to make it clear in writing to the person(s) who are placed there that they will be moved if someone with access needs is identified for that unit.
- e. Christine will get back to the committee regarding putting these notifications in writing. Understands the need to be transparent with folks placed in accessible units who don't specifically need the accommodations.

2. Recreational spaces

- a. Christine appreciates that we said "where possible". It can be a challenge but really important. Agree, when feasible.
- b. Allison : easier to do this with purpose-built shelters or when we are doing major renovations.
- c. Christine: would appreciate more detailed recommendations re: how we can provide recreation in different ways.
- d. Asa suggested a survey, asking people directly what they might want
- e. Beth used Blondell as a good example of space
- f. It was raised that there are real limitations from outside people coming in to do programming
- g. Allison explained NDAs and privacy issues. Have to balance concerns. Can see how NA, or AA might work in certain shelters, e.g. substance use shelters. Can incorporate NDAs into agreements.

3. Units that are identified as fully-compliant that are not.
 - a. Allison- Steven Winter Assoc is independently certifying all the sites that we are developing.
 - b. Jen – My Unit is updating as we do certified visits going forward. Cross-checking what BCS has and requesting corrections as needed.
4. Fire Safety
 - a. Discussion re: signage v. staff and clients understanding what to do in an emergency.
 - b. Christine: will take this back.
 - c. We also clarified that the positioning of the signage in some rooms we observed was not at eye-level for folks in wheelchairs
5. Suggestions for reduced-density MH shelters
 - a. Christine: “I hear your recommendation”
 - b. Cynthia shared that a smaller MH shelter saved her life.
6. Self-Advocacy training pilot
 - a. Jen shared that we are working with CUCS and have prepared a concept paper with them. Looking for funding. CUCS Development person is currently on maternity leave.
7. Changing Ombudsman’s name:
 - a. Craig: is in full agreement. Has to work with his leadership. Open to suggestions. Is thinking of Office of Shelter Client Advocacy. Group liked it. He explained that a lot of work goes in to changing a name: policies, documents, internet, signage.

Did not finish review. Will meet again in July and invite leadership back to review more.