



## Meeting Notes - COVID-19 Regional Response Team (RRT) Call #9

Thursday, May 28, 2020

3:00-4:00 pm

### *Facilitated by:*

Jason Purnell, Washington University in St. Louis

Rebecca Bennett, Emerging Wisdom LLC

### **WELCOME – JASON PURNELL**

We hope you enjoyed the Memorial Day holiday weekend, and found a chance to relax. Thank you to everyone for your work.

### **AGENDA REVIEW – REBECCA BENNETT**

Our goal is clear: Focus on that which is urgent or requires our attention, and do what we determine is emergent. We are going to locate where we are as a region within a historical perspective. For many of us this is our first pandemic, but it is not the first. Our look back will reflect on what we know from 1918 flu. The majority of what we will do today is to participate in facilitated small groups with the RRT Coordination team. Rebecca walked through the questions on the agenda. We need our partners to help us think through things together with us, and we look forward to your input.

### **TIME FOR REFLECTION AND PIVOT – JASON PURNELL**

It is worth taking the time to reflect. We started the RRT with areas and organizations focused around critical needs, then focused on clustered approach. Based on ongoing feedback we pivoted to the current strike team structure. Some of you have been on calls with us for 11 weeks, now. Others are new to the RRT. We value each of you. We do want to highlight our successes. We have assembled nearly 80 nonprofit partners across 5 counties. Jason reviewed the success document that can be found [HERE](#), or on our [C19RRT.org](#) website under Resources – General – RRT Successes through May 2020.

Historical comparisons can be tricky, but there are lessons to learn. We know many more people died in the second surge that happened in the 1918 flu pandemic. Our intent at sharing this visual is to remind all of us that the pandemic is not over. The immediate response to very real conditions on the ground still include the idea of “returning to normal”, when experts anticipate we are facing this for years. The RRT intends to focus on the immediate needs as well as the long-term needs. And we need the wisdom and knowledge of the people on this call and the members of the RRT to help generate the path forward.

### **SMALL GROUP REFLECTIONS – REBECCA BENNETT AND FACILITATORS**

What has been your experience with RRT?

What do you see on the horizon?

How do you want to be involved?

Our Coordination Team has some ideas, yet we want to include your thinking as this is your RRT.

Small group breakout-sessions were facilitated, notes are below.

#### **Process**

Our RRT CT will meet directly after this call. As we have in the past, we will take our direction based on the deep listening that we will apply to these brainstorm sessions. Preserving regional coordination is top of mind.

### **OTHER UPDATES – RRT MEMBERS**

Bethany Johnson-Javois: Disconnect between community, what they understand, what is happening, and what people are doing. We need a conceptual framework. How do we begin a dynamic communications effort to have an aligned voice: say the same thing, set expectations, and define things consistently, and we have a baseline of what we mean? E.G. Contact tracing, vaccine.

### **CONCLUSION – JASON PURNELL**

Thank you for your work and wishing you all the best.

### **ADJOURN**

## **May 28, 2020 RRT Small Group Session**

### **Group Welcome + Check-In Individual Brainstorm**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Mute your microphone, but leave your speakers on so we can call you back together.
2. Take 5 minutes to brainstorm answers to the questions.
3. You can [copy the brainstorming document by clicking here](#). (Or you can use any tool of preference) Questions are below.

### **Questions:**

#### **REFLECTION**

Share your thoughts on COVID-19 Regional Response Team (RRT) efforts so far answered to the best of your experience. We recognize that experiences and involvement levels vary per individual.

- What went well?
- What could have been better?

## DIRECTION

The RRT is interested in how to move forward as it seeks to build on the learnings and experiences of organizations skilled in crisis response to create a centralized, regional system of response to meet these social needs for the bi-state area.

- What should be the RRT priorities going forward?

## INVOLVEMENT

The RRT is interested in how to best engage you and your organization in this process as we center the critical needs of vulnerable communities as priorities for response efforts.

- How would you like to continue to be involved?
- What frequency of meeting and interaction would best suit your interests?

## Small Group Discussion

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a moment, we will put you in small groups in random breakout rooms.
2. In your room, take turns to share your brainstorm to Reflection, Direction, and Involvement.
3. As a group, summarize your thoughts to share with the larger group.
4. **Write each idea in a separate box in your group's grid, summarizing each idea.**

### Room 1: Katie Kaufmann

#### As a group:

- Share thoughts on Reflection, Direction, and Involvement
- Summarize the ideas below.

#### Reflection

What went well?

- When we were in the height of crisis mode things were working well, moving to the strike teams worked well
- Having people come together, learning posture
- Glad it's not just the regional COADs doing this because it's brought more people together. The big collection of people involved is impressive. Solutions have been worked toward quickly. +1

What could have been better? (learning)

- Have folks been feeling left out if they aren't part of the strike teams.
- No clear goal originally. There was a delay in getting to action. What this is and how it responds will be a question. In a targeted crisis some people/orgs do get left out.

- Building plane as we fly it. COAD and SLARC had capacity to do stuff immediately. Disaster is their focus with relationships there so things can quickly roll out. RRT could have leaned into the COADs more. Different structures in the COAD created confusion/possible recreation of process.
- Clearly define the timelines and targets. Has quickly been able to identify projects. Are we putting our efforts toward what is most important? Health Care structure originally abandoned and potentially didn't utilize the existing resources.

### **Direction**

- What should be the RRT priorities going forward?

Re-employment region wide look/help, upskilling,

Structure and communication of the larger group. What the real purpose of this outside crisis. Any real work will happen in small groups and big group is report out.

Not just the structure for this body but the infrastructure we need and are building in this period of crisis for systems change for the nonprofit sector going forward. Never let a good crisis go to waste. How do we leave something/create something better than what was? What role do the RRT/RRF work together to leave a different/greater impact? How do we keep equity at the center?

Anything we do now should be about Systems Change. And can't let the systems paralyse us as we need to move as best we can with our crisis response.

Everything doesn't always require a regional response, when do we come here?

### **Involvement** **We didn't get to this one.**

- How would you like to continue to be involved?
- What frequency of meeting and interaction would best suit your interests?

## **Room 2: Grace Kyung**

**As a group:**

- **Share thoughts on Reflection, Direction, and Involvement**
- **Summarize the ideas below.**

### **Reflection**

**What went well?**

- PF shared that they've been impressed with the amount of coordination and getting to see what has been done instead of focusing on what is needed to be done. Accomplishments and minutes have been helpful.

- KS appreciates collaboration and getting things done and not focusing on the same problems and helpful for action and coordination within the group
- YS helpful to address things in real time and its happening on a lot of fronts has been helpful
- TF appreciate the teams leadership and second to none in the amount of knowledge and experience in this group
- SM It seemed that people were able to make on the spot connections from updates which is great.

**What could have been better?**

- PF not sure where to get involved and been observing to get involved more
- KS shared that we were focused too much on process at one point instead of focusing on getting the work done but readjusted itself
- YS continue to focus on emerging issues due to COVID - need a larger weight to push forward to max speed as lives are depending on it
- TF we've been going up and down in how fast we move and could improve to get started to move faster. There is an opportunity for smaller focus groups to bring together larger groups to help agencies that aren't sure where to fit to fit a little better and bring agencies on to have the opportunity to respond and have not responded prior and could be beneficial to take advantage of this opportunity when we have the call participants we are having
- SM I thought some of the updates were easily shared and almost more digestible via meeting minutes.

**Direction**

What should be the RRT priorities going forward?

- Survey - reflect on this as an opportunity to set priorities going forward. Homebound was a successful to determine next steps and priorities going forward and using this to guide next steps
- Maintaining the success of the cross-disciplinary approaches are helpful and smaller focus groups could be a barrier (grace note not the best word for barrier) - focusing on continuing these cross-disciplinary approaches is helpful
  - Suggesting not to separate the group and how do we get messages out when there are 75 people on the calls
  - Cross-disciplinary is very helpful and recognizing how for example basic needs touches all the different sectors
- "Start with the end in mind"
  - Remembering the reactionary nature of the work and putting forth a proactive agenda
  - There are 1000 of research papers that demonstrate the disparate outcomes and structural issues and would like to see this in a framework from a reactionary basis to a proactive stance and see that the next generation has a different outlook on this word because of the realities on the ground and not just based on the hopes and desires
  - Changing the structural elements of these small activities and they have an impact and pose really hindrance in achieving what we'd like to achieve

- Continuing to connect resources. Maybe reaching out directly to the community in regards to their changing needs.

### **Involvement**

- How would you like to continue to be involved?
- What frequency of meeting and interaction would best suit your interests?
  - Weekly is necessary as so much is happening quickly and difficult to keep up
  - I think once a week is too often. Once every two weeks would be good.

### **Room 3: Monique Thomas**

#### **As a group:**

- **Share thoughts on Reflection, Direction, and Involvement**
- **Summarize the ideas below.**

#### **Reflection**

- What went well?
- What could have been better

Think this table is a great

#### **NEED**

- Two major issues of Medicaid expansion being related to the work and connected to the regional work
- Digital Divide and creating infrastructure as this is the new normal going forward and opportunity
- Some people hesitated to come into the work initially as a aid/relief organization

#### **Direction**

What should be the RRT priorities going forward?

- We were so fluid that we were able to go into places other orgs could not finish

#### **Involvement**

How would you like to continue to be involved?

What frequency of meeting and interaction would best suit your interests?

### **Room 4: Kelly Ferrara**

**As a group:**

- **Share thoughts on Reflection, Direction, and Involvement**
- **Summarize the ideas below.**

**Reflection**

**Well:**

- Good to get a wide array of orgs at table who may not participate in these tables already was really good; different industries and subject areas
- IL reports: Nice to be invited to be part of the process.
- St. Charles, Lincoln and Warren counties were glad to be involved. Relationships have been strengthened.
- Love breaking into more subgroups – nice to be able to focus on how the pandemic is impacting subgroups; as teams discussed other partners needed to further the conversation, they were able to join from the larger group.
- Great that this is an “all-come” option for guests; this isn’t always the case for multi-functional groups; this model should be continued; when this group disbands or evolves, we will still be able to reach out. Learning who was here and why they joined would be great.
- Most impressed by the way the funders backed the RRT. We hear that there is an amazing philanthropic network, yet it rarely unites behind a common cause. Interesting to work with people where we don’t usually interact with groups and organizations, which will benefit the safety net. Funders stepping out of their traditional role is useful.

**Better:**

- What groups existed that should have been involved from day 1 that we just may have missed; understanding the disaster response groups already in place would have been better.
- Still a bit remote as much of the focus is on the MO side of the river. Challenge may have been identifying the IL partners, and determining how to make that work when we cross jurisdictional boundaries. (e.g. resources dedicated to a specific geographic area). Goal is to blend value and resources to all of us.
- Glossary of who is “who” and does “what”, and where. We have opportunities with Compass and Preferred as partners, and see opps to collaborate; it isn’t scary to work together.
- Think through a better communications platform so we can send information out to the groups that we want to reach. Not everyone reads the minutes, and looking to share highlights would be helpful.
- A profile of each member would be helpful to determine the scope of who serves what population, in what way, and who is the contact person.
- Things have been done well, under the circumstances; core services and emergency services continue. Agree that a directory would be useful.
- Lot of people I didn’t know, and a directory would be great.

### **Direction**

- How would you like to continue to be involved?
- What frequency of meeting and interaction would best suit your interests?

What has been helpful is working toward systems change; navigating the different sectors and pulling organizations together has been impactful. Focus on equity, particularly racial equity. This speaks to the systems change. If this is truly centered, then the systems will need to change.

Parallel to this is a thoughtful marketing program discussing who the RRT is, lend credibility, cite the examples of successes.

### **Involvement**

How would you like to continue to be involved?

- Plug in the tri-county area where needed.
- Often find ourselves partnering and finding grant dollars that require partners to best reach the audiences. Understanding ongoing needs, and what groups are serving those needs would be helpful. Keeping abreast of what others are doing in their various spaces.
- Systems change from the point of view of St. Clair.
- Joining the unhoused strike team has been huge because we've been able to solve problems; and as we solve one we uncover new problems. There is plenty of opportunity.
- What frequency of meeting and interaction would best suit your interests?
- Monthly out of crisis; more frequency during a crisis
- Scaling involvement is good, based on outside needs.
- Email briefings or links to the new resources over time.
- Is there a way to memorialize what has been done in order to help for the next crisis? We've organized around this particular situation. How do we replicate this and capture the learning.

### **Room 5: Doneisha Bohannon**

**As a group:**

- Share thoughts on Reflection, Direction, and Involvement
- Summarize the ideas below.

### **Reflection**

Good connecting with new partners and some subgroups that were developed as a result of RRT and people working outside of the group and within the group to move the needle. Groups have been able to serve additional people that they may not have previously served. This group has been a beacon for funders and that something is worthy and justify funding requests and without this effort it'd be difficult to convey to

fundors. Enjoyed the PPE coordination and the coordination around behavioral health. Would like for us to do more and faster

Feedback around engagement and how do we know if we have the right people at the table and hard to know if people can attend or not and this group feels exclusive and how to get around that and how to actually engage with other partners with people not really knowing each other and having established relationships

If people knew some of our activities were happening much earlier then they could engage and insert themselves earlier and people felt things were already happening and adding in a particular piece where things could be better and the train had already left the station. Also missing some of the cross pollination across sectors.

Competition in social service sectors and not sure what terms to use moving forward and lots of conversation about government participation should've been key here and health departments and emergency managers from early on and question in how is this group different from COAD and VOAD and people are attending multiple meetings to gather information. At some point some wondered why this group existed because it was duplicative of other efforts. Need to bring in emergency managers as well.

People do not feel like we're making a regional impact and collaborating across the region and dynamics within each county could be different and structures could be different and government people on the call would help talk about the challenges - we focus a lot on St. Louis City and County

A lot of tension between Sal Army and CC - we spent too much time working on this and tension is obvious for homebound folks

Request for us to focus on those in institutions such as nursing homes especially since that's where most of the deaths are occurring

**Direction**

- Scare for young children with families teaching them at home
- Mental health
- Digital Divide
- Early Childhood (beyond K-12 is important)
- Focus on more than just distance learning
- Vulnerable seniors safety
- Nursing homes

**Involvement**

**Room 6: Rebeccah Bennett**

**As a group:**

- Share thoughts on Reflection, Direction, and Involvement
- Summarize the ideas below.

**Reflection**

Needs to be multiple institutions partnering together and not just any or one institution doing the work

How to speak as one voice and looking down the road

***What went well?***

- Pandemic has opened opportunities to have better bi-state collaborations. The team is advocating for and getting more representation from Illinois. Having a foundational focus on both sides of the river will help save lives not just now but in the long-term. This will be helpful not only for Covid-related issues, but also for other issues of importance.
- RRT Coordinating Team is very responsive.
- All the relationships that RRT members have has advanced efficiency and effectiveness.
- Jason's vision.
- Rebecca's facilitation.
- RRT proves that we can mobilize quickly and effectively. Would love to see our regional community mobilize just as quickly when there is not a global pandemic at work.
- The RRT's ability to galvanize funding quickly, fast, and in trusted ways (with a voice that doesn't look like agencies are begging for money) has been beneficial. RRT is a neutral intermediary and this has been advantageous both in pivoting fast and in deploying solutions.
- RRT's bringing groups together, especially in the unhoused space, has resulted in uncomfortable, but necessary conversations that are helping to advance change.
- Including members of the COADs as part of the conversation was very beneficial. This helped us run faster. Having their knowledge and expertise at the table was very important and continues to be so.

***What could have been better?***

- Would love to see the 66+ people who come together for RRT calls talk about what equity means; how is this playing out; how they are disrupting oppression during this time of pandemic; and what policies can be collectively advanced to address racism and other forms of oppression.
- Make sure that RRT efforts are not one-offs, but help build infrastructure beyond Covid and are sustainable over time.
- Similar conversations are happening in different spaces, but they are not being strategically woven together. RRT is a neutral convener and can play this role with greater intentionality. The RRT has been effective, but can be even more so. We need to understand the RRT's secret sauce and replicate it.

- In some spaces, small achievements are a good start. Remember that we don't have to wait for perfection and absolute alignment in order to meet community needs.
- There have been delays in acceleration at times because of RRT consultants' learning. Where possible, the RRT needs to shorten its learning curve or figure out how to act / generate solutions while learning. The RRT can do a better job of connecting the dots for new organizations that join its community. The team can be more proactive about helping to onboard new agencies.

**Direction**

***What should be the RRT's priorities going forward?***

- Vaccine time will be coming and people who are most disadvantaged need to be prioritized in getting vaccines first.
- The move to virtual services and telehealth has saved lives and was only possible because of the loosening of regulations. Also, Medicaid approved telephone based medical service. The fear is that some of these restrictions will be put back into place once the urgency of Covid begins to subside. We need to continue to explore the ways in which technology can help close gaps, increase access and advance service delivery. This means advocating that states not re-institute restrictions too fast that will have an adverse consequence on clients and the organizations that serve them.
- During this period, we are becoming increasingly clear about people's housing vulnerabilities – needs for utility assistance, lack of affordable rental housing, looming eviction cliffs etc. This is a space that could use RRT involvement.

**Involvement**

***How would you like to continue to be involved?***

- Everyone would like to stay involved with the RRT

***What frequency of meeting and interaction would best suit your interests?***

We did not get to this question.