

**Recommendations for  
Western Mass Network to End Homelessness  
February 28, 2018**

*Prepared by Joyce Tavon, consultant, based on:*

- *24 phone interviews (and some written input) from 47 stakeholders*
- *Input at Feb 12, 2018 Network meeting from nearly 60 attendees*
- *Input by Network Director*

**Summary:**

Continue the Network as a loose affiliation of stakeholders committed to ending homelessness in Western Mass. Become committee-driven, with committees defining the goals, priorities, and advocacy projects. Prioritize and target limited resources for greatest impact. Remain open to four counties, but concentrate where there is interest, stakeholders and Network funding.

**Recommendations re: Network Scope** *(Voted to accept)*

**1. Define and empower the committees to drive the work of the Network**

- Have each committee:
  - Set goals and priorities
  - Select chair/co-chairs as advisors to Director
  - Report back to SC
  - Decide on meeting frequency or consolidation – reduce duplication with CoCs
  - Decide on video conferencing

**2. Organize two-to-three regional events per year, to be determined by Steering/committees**

- Resource fair
- Visibility event with legislators, homeless consumers, larger community – present data, big picture themes, outcomes
- Events on emerging topics, guest speakers

**3. Convene stakeholders and help plan state shelter procurement response**

- DHCD expects this and has funded the Network to assist
- Foster collaboration
- Highlight best practice expectations
- Seek to increase resources for Western Mass

**4. Conduct legislative advocacy only as needed for priority committee projects – *to be decided later given recent changing landscape of Western MA legislators***

- Eliminate annual legislative advocacy already covered by the Network members and other advocacy groups
- Make decision about earmark strategy – allow it to be requested, but don't actively advocate on its behalf?
- Empower Director to submit support letters and facilitate advocacy by committees *(agreed on this portion)*

## **Recommendations re: Network Decision Making**

### **5. Redefine the Leadership Council as advisors, not decision making group (*Voted to accept*)**

- a. End the quarterly LC meetings
- b. End the expectation that LC oversees the Network
- c. Keep the LC membership for Network visibility and as advisors and resources to call upon as needed
- d. Possibly convene LC annually as part of a Network visibility/progress report event

### **6. Create a small Steering Committee for oversight and decisions (*Agreed on*)**

- a. Have SC do three things:
  - i. Supervise Director
  - ii. Make funding decisions– what to pursue/not pursue, how to allocate or target resources if must downsize or expand due to significant funding changes
  - iii. Ideally, decide on major priorities – top annual goals and projects (based on committee recommendations of priorities) and any targeting given funding realities
    1. SC will need to decide what level of priority-setting it is prepared to take on vs. have this decided by the committees.
- b. Meet quarterly (possibly two in-person, *two online*) and as-needed
- c. Limit to *15* members – large enough for range, small enough to make decisions
- d. Select 2 members as co-chairs to provide time-sensitive supervision to Director and ideally to chair meetings
- e. *Establish time-limited terms of 1-2 years*
- f. Include all 4 counties
- g. *Rather than seats filled by senior leaders of provider agencies only – Fill SC seats based on categories that represent Network subpopulations and needs (see below)*
- h. Given Network doesn't have resources to have Director recruit broader representation – LC members will do this in order to achieve representation by diversity, lived experience, and inclusion of other broader stakeholders
- i. *Revised SC slate of potential seats:*
  1. *Hampden CoC*
  2. *Three County CoC*
  3. *Youth*
  4. *Veterans*
  5. *Family*
  6. *Individuals*
  7. *Domestic violence*
  8. *Mental health*
  9. *Hospital*
  10. *Regional housing authority*
  11. *Municipal rep*
  12. *Community action agency*
  13. *Employment*
  14. *Lived experience*
  15. *Law enforcement*
  16. *County jails*
  17. *Opioid task force and drug courts*