

Family Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 9/8/20

In attendance: Melissa Blissett, Square One, Ellen Broadhurst, West Springfield Schools, Lynnanne Brown, Elizabeth Freeman Center, Hillary Cronin, HUD-VASH, Jen Dieringer, Community Legal Aid, Anthia Elliot, BHN, Domestic Violence, Rosemary Fiedler, HCC, Jill Fijal, Chicopee Schools, Anna Lavarreda, Safe Passage, Luz Marciano, Way Finders, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield, Donna Nadeau, DHCD, Monique Osbourne, YWCA, Steve Plummer, Springfield Partners for Community Action, Theresa Nicholson, CHD, Stacy Parsons, North Adams Schools, Pedro Rodriguez, CHD, Heather Roy, Elizabeth Freeman Center, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Rachel Trant, DCF, Lauren Voyer, Way Finders, Amanda Watson, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Melissa White, Valley Opportunity Council

Data review:

Please see attached. We agreed it would be useful to add to the data report the # of families entering shelter in a given month. Pamela will follow-up with DHCD about that. People are also interested in obtaining a more detailed look at exits. Donna suggested use of her template she uses for her providers. Pamela and Donna will talk more. We also agreed it would be useful to look at RAFT numbers: how many applications, how many approved, average dollars per family, etc.

Network Training Discussion: The group discussed possible trainings for the Network to offer this year.

- overview of EA/HomeBASE - repeat training from last year - Pamela will follow-up with Alvina Brevard and Amy Mullen at DHCD - good for new staff
- building connections between family providers and schools (secondary and community colleges) so each can support the other in access to services - will discuss and explore further is there any way to bring in a school/housing focus - bring it back to YHDP or housing outcomes
- overview of available rental assistance resources, how to apply, etc. - will talk more with RHAs about that

Program Updates/Observations:

- Seeing increase in DV incidents; increase in DV calls to DV shelters with no capacity; needing shelter space for individuals who must leave household (Pamela discussed the conversations happening around regional advocacy for Gov. Baker to seek expanded FEMA authorization to pay for hotel costs for COVID-negative individuals in need of shelter).
- Community Legal Aid has expanded their work in meeting educational needs; also expanded CORI and re-entry work for formerly incarcerated individuals; also taking

direct referrals from court re: eviction cases (that fall outside of the moratorium, for health and safety exceptions).

Advocacy Update:

Pamela encouraged organizations to consider joining the [Statewide Task Force on Coronavirus and Equity](#) to be connected to the broader statewide racial equity work (which directly connects to the impact we are striving for locally). Please see the [sign on form](#).

Next meeting date: Tuesday, October 13, 11 am - 12 noon.