

## **Hampden County Individual Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 5/18/21**

*In attendance: Beveley Camacho, Catholic Charities, Lynn Conway, Eliot Services, Jay Levy, Eliot Services, Jenifer Lucca, Samaratin Inn, Kathy West, Eliot Services, Legheda LaPorte, Crossroads, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield, Van Nguyen, DMH, Kim Puffer, Domus, Keith Rhone, Friends of the Homeless, Stephanie Tonelli, Springfield PD, Kathy West, Eliot Services, Delphine Wray, Friends of the Homeless*

### **Shelter/hotel updates:**

- Catholic Charities reported they are housing many people out of the hotels (up to 20 so far). Taking stock of the implications of Gov. Baker's lifting of the state of emergency on 6/15 (the state of emergency is necessary to receive FEMA reimbursement for emergency shelter and hotels - see more below).
- Samaratin Inn - occupancy going up. Women's beds full.
- Friends of the Homeless - status quo on capacity
- Re: statewide isolation and quarantine hotel: - only one hotel is open in Everett, currently 2 people there are from Western MA.

### **Governor Baker's Ending State of Emergency 6/15**

Governor Baker announced yesterday that MA will lift its state of emergency on 6/15. This means that MA will no longer be eligible for FEMA reimbursement for emergency shelter or hotels. It also means that the eviction protections (Chapter 257) passed as part of the FY21 budget in Dec., 2020, which were predicated on the state of emergency, would cease to exist. This protection includes the continuance of an eviction if a rental assistance application is pending.

The CDC eviction moratorium is due to expire on 6/30 but it is currently facing court challenges (still in effect as an appeal is pending).

DHCD has previously made clear that no one should be discharged from a hotel to the street. Unclear how the end of FEMA reimbursement on 6/15 will bear on

The group acknowledged the significant impact the end of emergency status could have on the at-risk and homeless population. Rose Webster-Smith shared the pending amendment to the Senate budget - [#371](#) - that would extend CDC protections on a state level. **This week is the time to ask our senators to co-sponsor this amendment** (among others - see the complete list of Network priorities [here](#)). Find your legislator [here](#).

### **More on the FY22 State Budget:**

Pamela reported on the Senate Ways and Means budget and how it compares to Network priorities. [Go here for the comparative analysis](#). Overall, the Senate Ways and Means budget meets a lot of the Network priorities. Of note in particular is the additional \$1 million in funding for the Safe Havens program, an intensive shelter/housing program for long-time unsheltered people with multiple barriers. This funding would provide for 7 beds in Franklin/Hampshire

County (where there are currently no beds). Big thanks to our Senate delegation and to our House delegation for their advocacy on this issue.

This week is the time to ask senators to co-sponsor our [priority amendments](#); next week the budget will be debated and voted on; then the budget would go into Conference Committee to resolve differences between the House and Senate budgets, with a goal of completing the budget by the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

**Point in Time 2021 Report:** See the slides [here](#) or attached. These numbers are from the night of the count, Jan. 27, 2021 - mid-way through the pandemic. The most notable finding is the drop in the number of unsheltered people as a result of the increase in use of hotels. There is more analysis to do, along with consideration of future policy advocacy (e.g., the role of hotels in sheltering and rehousing).

### **Federal Emergency Housing Vouchers and ARPA**

Relevant to the rehousing needs: The federal American Rescue Plan Act includes significant increase in housing vouchers for certain housing authorities, including Springfield and Holyoke. Housing Authorities have until 5/24 to accept the offer of vouchers. Springfield has said yes (to 27). Holyoke has the opportunity to receive 40 new vouchers but they have not reported yet what they are going to do. Gerry and Pamela are continuing to try to make contact.

These vouchers provide an extraordinary opportunity, including flexible support dollars to help tenants with ancillary costs and support service needs, allowing for rents at higher than the usual fair market value prescribed by Section 8 and MRVP. They also require coordination with the CoCs so that they are incorporated in the coordinated entry system. These vouchers could play a meaningful role in addressing the time-sensitive exits from hotel shelter (if the vouchers are available quickly).

In general, the Treasury guidance around the new ARPA funds going to cities and towns creates a lot of flexibility to use these dollars to address homelessness. We have an opportunity to engage with our communities to support and push this opportunity.

**Network Annual Event June 4 - Be sure to register! [See flyer and link here.](#)**