

Youth and Young Adult Services Committee Meeting Minutes May 26, 2021

In attendance: Ellen Broadhurst, West Springfield Schools, Shaundell Diaz, Three County CoC, Rosemary Fiedler, HCC, Pam Fitzpatrick, CHD, Janice Humason, FOH, Amanda Koch, BCRHA, Yvonna Lomax, Westover JCC, Jordana O'Connell, CHD, Keleigh Pereira, Three County Coc, Kim Puffer, Domus, Walter Rice, Westover Job Corps, Jennifer Sunderland, Springfield Public Schools, Kelsey Wessels, DIAL/SELF

Youth Homelessness Program Updates

Three County CoC:

- currently hiring for new youth program director – see job listing here: <https://www.communityaction.us/job-openings>
- Gandara: transitional housing is now furnished, dealing with small pre-occupancy details and young adults will be moving in soon
- MHA: 1 move-in for PSH program, more afoot
- DIAL/SELF: accepted referrals for long-term rapid rehousing (for 4 individuals) - the persistent challenge is in finding units to rent
- The CoC is undertaking landlord engagement initiatives
- Youth Action Board is in process - outreach efforts for more youth involvement are underway
- Berkshire County Regional Housing is continuing its partnership with Stockbridge Housing Authority with the Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) - providing 3 year vouchers to young adults who have experienced foster care. 2 are currently housed and 2 new referrals underway. Very successful program.

Hampden County CoC:

- City of Springfield is currently hiring new youth program manager
- Coordinated entry system is going very well - word is out in the community on housing crisis hotline
- Also facing the challenge of finding available units - undertaking landlord incentive programs
- Hiring staff in various areas - for coordinated entry program and transitional housing/rapid rehousing programs
- FYI partnership is happening with Springfield Housing Authority - people have been approved for voucher; it is a slow process but it is happening
- YAB management is happening through Gandara/CHD until City hires new program coordinator

HOUSING VOUCHERS AVAILABLE THROUGH HCC: Rosemary Fiedler announced this:

HHA/HCC MTW Voucher Program: Currently have open spots!!!

This program is a partnership between Holyoke Community College and Holyoke Housing Authority and falls under the Section 8 Move to Work Voucher Program eligibility. It has all the

requirements of a section 8 voucher however it has a time limit of eligibility of 3 years while the individual is in a degree seeking program at HCC.

- must be 18 years or older
- must have an income because rent is based on 30% of income
- must be currently enrolled in Holyoke Community College in a degree program
- must be in good standing with a GPA of 2.0 or better
- The voucher can be used for up to 3 years while an individual is seeking an Associates Degree.
- The application process is a 2 step process where Holyoke Community College is the first approval step and then Holyoke Housing Authority.
- A CORI check will be run by Holyoke Housing Authority

Contact Rosemary Fiedler at rfiedler@hcc.edu if interested in applying or for more information.

FY22 State Budget Update:

- The Senate Ways and Means Committee (SWM) released its proposed budget last week and it is being debated this week. [Go here](#) for the comparative chart of Network priorities and SWM proposals (as well as final House numbers). The youth services line-item is being level funded at \$8 million across both Senate and House budgets, which is good news (the Gov. proposed a \$3 million cut to \$5 million). Overall, the SWM budget is very positive for housing and homelessness priorities.
- This week the Senate is debating amendments to the budget. [Go here](#) to see the Network's priority amendments. Top on our list is an amendment to protect tenants from the threat of eviction. With the Governor's ending of the state of emergency on 6/15, tenants are now at greater risk because various protections are tied to the existence of this emergency. For this reason, the Network's top priority is [Amendment #371](#) which would extend CDC protections on a state level.

New Federal Resources: Emergency Housing Vouchers

The American Rescue Plan Act includes new housing vouchers for certain housing authorities, including several in our region. Springfield, Holyoke, Greenfield, Franklin County Regional and Northampton all accepted these new vouchers. These vouchers are exceptional because they include flexible support dollars to help tenants with ancillary costs and they allow for higher rent levels than prescribed by MRVP and Section 8; they also require coordination with the CoC's coordinated entry system. Stay tuned for additional information on local distribution.

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

Next meeting date: Wed., July 28, 9:30-10:30 am