

Hampden Individual Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 8/24/21

In attendance: Yomaira Cabrera, FOH/CSO, Lynn Conway, Eliot Services, Dave Havens, MHA, Janice Humason, CSO/FOH, Mark Jachym, CSO/FOH, Jay Levy, Eliot Services, Jenifer Lucca, Samaratin Inn, Gerry McCafferty, Hampden CoC/City of Springfield, Bill Miller, CSO/FOH, Linsey Rettew, Highland Valley Elder Services, Keith Rhone, CSO/FOH, Kathy West, Eliot Services, Kennyetta Wilson, CSO/FOH, Delphine Wray, CSO/FOH, Chris Zabik, DMH

Review of By-Names List and EHV Allocation Vis-a-Vis Racial Equity Goals:

Gerry reviewed the process begun at the last meeting to revisit and determine a process for allocating the Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) that are new to the CoC via the Springfield Housing Authority and DHCD (approximately 70+) so that the process furthers racial equity goals. Specifically, right now, the disproportionate representation of people of color experiencing homelessness is not reflected in the distribution of permanent supportive housing resources (i.e., whites are disproportionately on the by-name list and therefore on the receiving end).

The group discussed how to expand the by-name list to close this gap, redefining "chronic homelessness" as HUD defines it so that it more closely reflects the people who are actually experiencing chronic homelessness. Under this definition of "chronic light," people would qualify if:

- time spent in institutional settings was allowed to count towards the time spent in homelessness
- presuming chronicity if a person spent more than 12 months in homelessness even if not continuous
- allowing someone who is currently homeless to qualify if they have experienced a total of one year of homelessness within the last 3 years

In terms of how to prioritize distribution of EHV's (once on the by-name list), it was agreed that people in hotels and shelters would be treated equally. Other criteria would include over 50 years old, an assessment score of 8 or higher, a designated high utilizer of emergency room services, people who have been on the by-name list for more than 6 months and score over 8 on the assessment tool.

See [these slides](#) for more on the criteria and on the current and projected breakdown of the by-names list. This change in qualifying criteria will reduce the racial disparity, making those eligible for the EHV's more closely track the proportion of the population in need of them.

Because some individuals do not disclose their condition, case-conferencing will be necessary to account for misleading low assessment scores.

Individuals would be matched with services, e.g., CSPECH, DMH as needed.

Gerry will bring these recommendations to the CoC Board for approval at the Board meeting this Friday.

Network announcement: [see recent blog post](#) on the COVID-19 Housing Equity bill hearing last week that included Network testimony and included a [legislative delegation letter](#) signed by 20 Western MA legislators and a [organizational letter](#) signed by over 50 Western MA organizations. Let's keep up the pressure! Make sure you're [subscribed to the blog](#).

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, 9/28, 1 pm - 2 pm.