

## **Youth and Young Adult Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 9/22/21**

*In attendance: Eloise Adegbola, Westover Job Corps, Shaundell Diaz, Three County CoC, Shelby Dempsey, Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority, Emily English, Gandara, Rosemary Fiedler, HCC, Lynn Guertin, Ware Family Resource Center, Patricia Julianelle, SchoolHouse Connection, Teri Koopman, 3 County CoC, Cheryl LaChance, Way Finders, Yvonne Lomax, Westover Job Corps, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield/Hampden CoC, Jordana O'Connell, Center for Human Development, Stacy Parsons, North Berkshire School Housing Partnership Coordinator/DESE Regional Liaison, Keleigh Pereira, Three County CoC/CAPV, Walter Rice, Westover Job Corps, Phil Ringwood, DIAL/SELF, Araceli Rivera, Way Finders, Jean Rogers, Center for Human Development, Addie Szczesiul, MA Dept of Higher Education, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Kat Wong, Hampden County CoC,*

### **Youth Program Updates:** **Hampden CoC:**

- Created 24/7 contact line for young adults: 413-316-4979; will connect to housing navigators to assess needs (e.g., financial assistance, connections to shelter, transitional housing, etc.).
- Bi-weekly providers meet across multiple agencies to match young people with appropriate services
- Through the federal funding (YHDP), 50 housing opportunities have been created (rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing). Units are filling.
- [Hampden County Youth Homelessness Strategic Plan](#) extends to a number of areas, including how to increase the number of housing units and how to track various outcomes, e.g., education and unemployment.
- Starting to examine the data. The intake line has received approx. 100 calls in first 8 months. The needs assessment indicated much higher numbers - unclear whether this points to the need for more outreach or whether the assessment over-estimated. Will know more over more time.
- Recovering planning group on 10/6 and 10/20 to revisit the youth plan and create a strategic plan for next year. All are welcome. Contact Gerry at [gmccafferty@springfieldcityhall.com](mailto:gmccafferty@springfieldcityhall.com) for additional details.

### **Three County CoC:**

- The Youth and Young Adult Committee meets monthly; starting to evaluate short term implementation goals.
- Engagement by young adults in Youth Action Board (YAB) is increasing, great to see.
- Increase in state funding has helped to meet the demands around emergency shelter for YYA.
- Staffing up YHDP programs through COVID has been a real challenge; also difficult to find landlords willing to participate in the programs but working on landlord outreach to address this.
- Created a YYA specific coordinated entry program.
- 69 people on by-names list

- 36 beds across the youth housing continuum (transitional housing, rapid re-housing, psh)
- 34 YYAs referred to programs since Jan. 2021
- See Franklin County Community plan [here](#).

**Youth Financial Literacy Program**: Araceli Rivera of Way Finders announced a new financial literacy program targeting youth and young adults is getting underway. It will provide a range of help, including assistance around establishing credit, opening bank accounts, balancing check books. Please contact Araceli to learn more or get connected: arivera@wayfinders.org, 413-426-3305

**Schoolhouse Connections**: Patricia Julianelle presented briefly on the group's work: School House Connections is a national group that works to assist local providers and coalitions to change state policies to address young adult's needs. She is reaching out to see if groups would be interested in partnering on state policy advocacy in the 2023 legislative session. The group helps in-state advocates pursue **their** state policy goals— they do **not** bring their own advocacy agenda, but rather like to spend time through surveys and focus groups understanding what our agenda is, and then help bring those goals to the legislature successfully. If people are interested in talking more, please contact Patricia at: patricia@schoolhouseconnection.org.

#### **Other updates:**

- The state's pilot program for young people who are aging out of foster care is now being expanded across the state (pilots conducted in Springfield and Worcester). Exciting news. Stay tuned for more info.
- HUD housing voucher program for youth aging out of foster care - Foster Youth Independence (FYI) - provides vouchers for up to 3 years - both CoCs have partnered with a housing authority.

**K-12 School update** (thanks to Stacy Parsons): the annual survey of students experiencing homelessness showed a significant drop in numbers this past year (approx. 20,000 instead of the more typical 25,000) - this is assumed to be an inaccurate measure due to covid factors. Many families are doubled up; seeing a lot of mental health issues. DCF hired 5 regional liaisons to support educational connections. Transportation continues to be a huge challenge (hiring the National Guard to provide transpo in certain areas of the state).

#### **State and regional policy updates (Pamela):**

- Eviction crisis continues to imperil many tenants in the region and across the state. Network is continuing to work on passage of the [COVID-19 Housing Equity bill](#).
- Upcoming legislative hearings on October 12 on Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) and other housing bills. Stay tuned via the blog for ways to connect. Be sure to subscribe: <http://westernmasshousingfirst.org>
- The Network is coordinating meetings of city/town officials and providers and legislators to discuss planning for the winter shelter needs and around engagement in the allocation

of the federal funds via the American Rescue Plan Act. Again, stay connected via the blog!

**Next meeting date: Wed., December 8, 9:30 am - 10:30 am**

(note: agreed to meet every 2 months - the interval here is longer due to the Thanksgiving holiday)