

Youth and Young Adult Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 12/8

In attendance: Olivia Bernstein, MHA, Ellen Broadhurst, community member, Shelby Dempsey, Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority, Emily English, Gandara Center, Rosemary Fiedler, HCC, Pam Fitzpatrick, CHD, Lynn Guertin, BHN, Terri Koopman, Three County CoC, Cheryl LaChance, Way Finders, Yvonne Lomax, Westover Job Corps, Gerry McCafferty, Walter Rice, Westover Job Corps, Phil Ringwood, DIAL/SELF, Omar Torres, Way Finders, Kat Wong, Hampden County CoC

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Updates:

Hampden County: Programs have been fully operational since August, 2020. Offering rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing for young people with disabilities. 24/7 navigation phone line is fully staffed by 5 people. Holding quarterly meetings of youth homelessness providers and K-12/college and other education providers to build linkages. Youth Action Board (YAB) continues to be active - a continual challenge to figure out how to feature youth voices in the evaluation process of what is working and what could work better. Also continuing to figure out how to integrate the racial equity work that has been done. Working on addressing youth isolation after being housed, needing to build connections. The state funded pilot between HCC and Westfield State (for housing) and Gandara is going well. Finding affordable housing continues to be a huge challenge. Holyoke Housing Authority has allocated 15 vouchers to HCC and only 5 are leased up right now. It's much to ask students who are juggling academics and life challenges to also apartment search when there are so few available and affordable apartments.

Three County: This YHDP project is Franklin County specific. There are 6 projects: extension of HMIS, increase of coordinated entry to serve youth, 4 housing projects - with 3 partner agencies - MHA, Gandara, DIAL/SELF; 36 total beds incl transitional housing, RRH and PSH; all projects have submitted applications to continue funding in October, 2022. Thus far, referred 45 people from Coordinated Entry to housing projects. 10 housed so far plus 4 in Transitional Housing . Finding units is extremely challenging.

3 County YYA homelessness committee meets monthly - includes providers and YAB and stakeholders - helps to move plan forward and oversee project evaluation. The YAB continues to meet. Working on a project for youth aging out of DCF. Experimenting with landlord incentive projects

EOHHS Capital Funds: EOHHS has made available \$1.2 to \$1.8 million to support capital projects related to youth housing. Hampden will be seeking funds to support Valley Opportunity Council 4 unit project in Chicopee; 3 County is looking at using the funds for Berkshire County. Requests need to be submitted by next week.

Discussion re: cultivating more housing developers in the region:

The group discussed inviting developers to a meeting to exchange about our needs and learn about their needs/challenges for developing more property. We brainstormed an initial list:

Way Finders

Home City Housing
Valley CDC
Berkshire Housing Development
Franklin Regional Housing
Domus

A small group - Gerry, Keleigh, Phil and Pamela - will meet to plan this meeting (likely across all sub-populations) and will report back.

Next meeting date: Wed., 2/9, 9 am