

## **Youth and Young Adult Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 2/9/22**

*In attendance: Olivia Bernstein, MHA, Ellen Broadhurst, former consu Shelby Dempsey, Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority, Emily English, Gandara, Pam Fitzpatrick CHD, Lynn Guertin, Ware Family Resource Center, Jancie Humason, Friends of the Homeless, Gretehen LaBonte, UMass, Cheryl LaChance, Way Finders, Jasmin Rojas, Way Finders, Stacy Parsons, North Adams Public School Liaison/DESE, Phil Ringwood, DIAL/SELF, Araceli Rivera, Way Finders, Tyrese Tillman, CHD, Georgia Welch, Three County YAB, Tasia Williams, STCC, Kat Wong, Hampden CoC Youth*

### **Hampden County Youth Program Update:**

- 197 YYA served in the first half of this fiscal year, with 17 transitioning into stable housing
- MHA PSH full
- Gandara joint TH-RRH full
- ID'd 5 YYA for open CHD RRH slots
- 87 YYA on BNL. Case conferencing bi-weekly to match YYA to appropriate services
- In the process of bringing on fifth Navigator for 24/7 Coordinated Entry Hotline to focus on more intensive case management
- Reconvened YHDP Executive Committee to work on action plan for the next 2 grant years. We spent the first year focused on getting new housing slots filled. Time to also prioritize goals around ed/emp, health & well-being, & permanent connections so that the YYA we've housed will be able to continue supporting themselves after RRH ends.
- Next quarterly YHDP Education Cohort convening is on 3/8 and will focus on high school students & job readiness
- Youth Action Board interviewed and selected 2 new YAB Executive Committee members
- Upcoming joint YAB meeting with Three County in which YYA will learn about legislative advocacy from Pamela Schwartz & decide if they want to move forward with training in the process
- State funded college pilot btwn Holyoke Community College, Westfield State, and Gandara had 2 YYA transition to their own apartments. One YYA has moved into the dorms and one more is being identified.
- State Foster Youth to Independence pilot currently leased up 1 YYA and requesting additional vouchers for 3 more YYA who have completed the initial paperwork. 2 more YYA recently referred. Bi-weekly meeting between providers, SHA, and DCF to assess progress and needs
- Point In Time Count coming up 2/23
- State Youth Count gearing up for April

### **Other Hampden County Updates:**

Brighter Futures Youth Shelter has done amazing work providing emergency shelter during inclement weather – stretching to be open, a fantastic team.

More general observations: experiencing the complexities of the rapid rehousing resource. Some young adults are best suited for transitional housing – not needing PSH, but also not yet ready to be entirely independent. Also experiencing both the pluses and minuses of shared living arrangements – sometimes great companionship; other times difficult to place to young adult strangers together.

### **Three County YHDP Update**

- 4 housing projects, 3 providers, covers 36 beds across the continuum, RRH, PSH, TH
- HMIS has migrated to a new system (called Clarity)
- Also using a new Coordinated Entry tool that incorporates the changes recommended by the CE Work Group
- Youth coordinated entry group meets weekly to review the by-names list (60 youth on it): 32 enrolled, 16 housed
- YYA committee meets monthly.
- Conducting youth surveys – 19 in so far – exploring their experience looking at youth surveys - identifying their experience with the CE system
- The YAB meets weekly – participating in Point in Time count planning meetings, revising the forms to count based on a broader definition than HUD's (which does not count couch surfing or doubled-up). The CoC will pull out HUD's definition for submission to HUD but rely on the broader definition for community analysis.
- The Three County CoC is participating in a statewide review of the coordinated entry system with a racial equity lens. The YAB has stepped up to participate in the listening session for this analysis.
- Continued hardship in finding apartments.
- The CoC is hiring a homelessness services coordinator for coordinated entry and a hiring an intake and referral specialist. Go to CoC website for more info.

EOHHS funds update via DIAL/SELF;

- 160 young people are working with EOHHS across a couple of providers
- Finding apartments continues to be the most difficult challenge – in Franklin/Hampshire county more apartments are coming on line but rents are much higher.

Shout-out to coordination between YHDP partners across the region

CoC hiring a homeless services coordinator for CE; hiring an intake and referral specialist

Question from UMass regarding how to access services. Phil will follow-up and coordinate a meeting with all providers and UMass.

Housing development: EOHHS funds are being utilized to conduct a feasibility study regarding purchase and development of a home in North Adams – roughly 3 new RRH units, 3 new SRO-style emergency shelter units and 1 or 2 bedrooms units for small families. Approx. \$800,000 cost. Very early stage but VERY hopeful!

Announcement: Way Finders is hiring a young adult employment specialist.

**FY23 Budget Update:** The Governor released his proposed FY23 budget last week. The Governor's Budget includes \$80 million for RAFT, which advocates immediately recognize will not be sufficient to meet the extraordinary demand as federal funds are depleted. The statewide advocacy request is likely to be \$250 million. The Network Steering Committee is meeting next week on its FY23 budget priorities and will bring these to our next meeting on 3/8. (and be sure you are subscribed to the [Network blog](#) to stay connected to related actions!).

**Legislation Update:** The Joint Rule 10 day was 2/2 - the date by which legislative committees needed to determine next steps of its bills - reported out favorably, extended, or "sent to study" (which means not in play for the remainder of this legislative session). [See here](#) for a quick snapshot of the Network priority bills and how they fared. Much more advocacy to come!

**Announcement:** The new Executive Director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness is Jeff Olivet, a person this region knows very well as he has consulted with our two CoC's and trained many of our partners around racial equity work over these past 3 years. Read all about it [here](#). Congratulations to Jeff, congratulations to all of us - he will serve our cause exceedingly well!

**Network Annual Event, May 6!** [Register HERE](#). DHCD Undersecretary Jennifer Maddox will be joining us, along with Jeff Olivet in his new capacity as Director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, and more. Please get it on your calendar now!

**Next meeting date: Wednesday, April 13, 9 am – 10 am**