

Family Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 10/11/22

In attendance: Jennifer Aldrich, Valuing Our Children, Kevin Atkinson, BHN, Ruth Ayala, Melissa Blissett, Square One, Ellen Broadhurst, social worker, Mayra de Jesus, Shriners Hospital, Anthia Elliott, Behavioral Health Network, Brenda Garcia, BHN, Holyoke FIT, Lynn Guertin, Ware Family Resource Center, Jane Lindfors, DTA-DV unit, Matt Montanaro, Greenfield Family Inn, Carmen Nieves, Alianza, Halima Osman, YWCA, Stacy Parsons, Northern Berkshire liaison DESE, Omayra Quinones, Salasin Project, Sara Rivera, New North Citizens Council, Brett Rogers, Holyoke Chicopee Head Start, Jasmine Rojas, Way Finders, Heather Roy, DTA-DV unit, Jen Santos, Way Finders, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Carlton Smith, Jodi Smith, Way Finders, Rachel Trant, DCF

EA and DV shelter updates

- Greenfield: continuing to see influx of undocumented families, Haiti, DR, trying to match up with resources; seeing update
- Way Finders: influx of Haitian/Creole families
- Salasin Project - influx of refugees; difficult to find housing
- BHN - most DV shelters are at capacity - every day, 3 or 4 requests for rooms - finding space for people to leave is very difficult
- Alianza - seeing influx of Ukrainian families; having real trouble with DHCD referrals - so much slower than previously
- DTA-DV unit: experiencing the severe lack of available units through the lack of movement at DV shelters - no space anywhere

Re: EA phone access issue: Donna relayed via email that DHCD will be purchasing a new phone system and is hiring more coordinators. Steps are being taken to address this issue.

RAFT Updates:

Way Finders: DHCD is moving to a new statewide processing system and Way Finders will be one of the regions in the state to pilot it. That will happen in early November. As a result of the transition, all applications right now are being processed through the State's central processing agency run by the consultant company (Nan McKay). There are currently 2,000 applications in Way Finders' system and Nan McKay has roughly 1,500.

RAFT Action Alert: Go [HERE](#) to sign on to join the statewide advocacy action to restore access to RAFT (end the requirement of a Notice to Quit to become eligible).

Your Vote/Our Housing: online conversation Friday, 10/14: Go [HERE](#) to learn more about the Network's forum to discuss the upcoming ballot questions that pertain to housing/homelessness and more generally discuss engagement with the voting process.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, 11/18 (coincidentally: Election Day!), 11 am - 12 noon