

Youth and Young Adult Meeting Minutes – 12/14/22

In attendance: Farida Bature, WMMNEH, Olivia Bernstein, MHA, Ellen Broadhurst, Karina Castro, Admissions Counselor Westover Job Corps Center, Shaundell Diaz, three county COC, , Pam Fitzpatrick, CHD, CARS Program Keith Hedlund, CHD Program Director, Luis, STCC Center Access Services, Stacy Parsons, North Berkshire School Housing Partnership Coordinator/DESE McKinney Vento Regional Liaison, , Phil Ringwood, DIAL/SELF Youth & Community services, Nyesha Santa, Transition Facilitator Gandara Impact Center, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Kat Wong, City of Springfield Office of Housing

Hampden County CoC Updates (thanks to Kat Wong, Hampden County YHDP):

- In FY23 Q1 July-Sept 2023, 139 youth and young adults (YYA) served through coordinated entry; 21 YYA have been housed. Beds: Youth & Young Adult shelter is full, Transitional housing full, Rapid Re-housing full – a few waiting for apartments, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) full.
- Gandara & CHD considering roommate situations with 2-3 bedroom apartments since it is difficult to secure one bedroom apartment. 88 YYA were served and 5 moved on to PSH.
- College pilot program houses HCC and Westfield state college students in the dormitories. College pilot program at Westfield State has increased from 5 to 7 to serve more young adults.
- There is an uptick in pregnant young adults calling hotline. Statewide: uptick in undocumented, immigrants, refugees coming into the state. Springfield Youth Against Homelessness(YAH – their Youth Action Board) wants to create YYA participant feedback survey to help evaluate YYA projects.
- YAB is partnering with a local organization, Academic Leadership Association to start a 3 part monthly series: Intro to Financial Literacy, taxes, money management & credit Scores. These are some of the topics the young adults need to help them gain more independent living skills.
- HUD will be having the annual point-in-time count at the end of January – will focus on identifying unsheltered youth and unaccompanied youth under 25.
- CHD has filled several YYA case manager positions.
- Springfield Housing Authority was issued 15 more foster youth to independence vouchers and most have been distributed to eligible YYA; they are in apartment search
- **Hampden County CoC Updates (thanks to Kat Wong, Hampden County YHDP):**

Three County CoC Updates (thanks to Shaundell Diaz for Frankly County YHDP):

- YYA Action Board continues to meet on a weekly basis.
- YAB worked on writing an anti-retaliation policy; also working on a project to educate collaborators on adulthood.
- YAB members volunteered at a local food café as a way to get involved with the community and address the issue of food insecurity.

- YAB members are serving on a CoC Committee that includes people with lived experiences of homelessness to help plan the 2023 point-in-time count.
- Successfully housed 10 youth, and provided rapid re-housing and PSH. Providing PSH through Mental Health Association; rapid re-housing and transitional housing through Gandara and rapid re-housing through DIAL/SELF.
- The CoC has partnered with Wayfinders to provide financial literacy classes. Participants were paid a \$25.00 stipend for attending and received a certificate of completion. A great model.

Dial/Self Update:

- Per reporting to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), based on their funding of youth services: there have been 433 nights of stay recorded for youth shelter in the last quarter.
- They are finding more YYA opting to camp over shelter, especially in Hampshire county. Dial/Self has provided these youth with high quality camping gear.
- They are seeing an increase in covid cases.
- Dial/Self lost funding for their long-time youth transitional living program that was funded through the federal Department of Health and Human services (informed with only a week's notice). This is a significant loss. The building will be transitioned to an extended stay Transitional Housing emergency housing option through the winter.

Discussion Topic: Managing Roommates

Due to the difficulty in securing one bedroom apartments for YYA , the housing providers are looking at 2 or 3 bedroom and roommate possibilities. This poses the challenge of navigating different personalities and needs. The group brainstormed various strategies:

- Identify individuals' goals and align to the extent possible
- Use screening and needs assessments tools to facilitate the best match
- Create Roommate agreements
- Support a strong staff for case management and direct care to support individuals
- Provide extensive engagement and wrap-around-services to the extent possible
- Train case managers in mediation

YHDP expanding: In the latest round of funding, HUD awarded three more 3 YHDP grants in Massachusetts, this time to Worcester, Lynn and Barnstable. A total of 17 awards were made across the country, and 3 of them were in MA alone.

Network Policy Updates

Pamela noted the new Gov-Elect Maura Healey and Lt. Gov.-Elect Sharon Driscoll. Gov-Elect Healey appointed a Housing Transition Team, which includes Keith Fairey, CEO of Way Finders, as co-chair, as

well as South Hadley Town Manager Lisa Wong and Eileen Peltier, ED of Berkshire Housing Development Corp.

We also have new legislators in our region: Rep-Elect Aaron Saunders (replacing Rep. Oliveira), Rep - Elect Shirley Arriega (replacing Rep. Wagner); Senator -Elect Jake Oliviera (replacing Senator Lesser); Senator -Elect Paul Mark (replacing Senator Hinds). The Network will reach out to connect with our new members and will schedule countywide meetings to discuss our legislative and budget priorities in early February.

The Network's legislative priorities, including right to counsel, eviction record sealing, transfer fee for affordable housing and more, did not pass in the last session. The Network is working with its statewide partners to discuss the potential to develop a "housing justice platform" that we can unite behind and advocate for together.

Wayfinders is facilitating a convening of local communities, providers and advocates (including the Network) across the 4 western counties to focus on housing production and supply. The group is creating a legislative agenda that we will also be integrated into our work this session.

Network's Annual Event

This year's annual Network gathering will take place in person (with a zoom option for the speaking portion of the event). It will take place on Friday, May 12 between 10am-12pm at HCC People's Bank Room (space is available and reserved). Please mark your calendar now!

Announcements

MATCH program - go [HERE](#) to learn more about access to move-in costs for MassHealth members.

For youth looking at potential support with college scholarship information and application: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/edstability/mtc.html>

Stay connected to the Network blog! <https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org>

Next Meeting: March 8, 2023 at 11am