

Hampden Individual Services Committee - 5/23/23

In attendance: Tanja Alessi, FOH/CSO, Jake Ferrara, Hampden Sheriff Dept., Kim Fontaine, Eliot Services, Monique Gondik-Ashe, BHN, Janice Humason, FOH/CSO, Mark Jachym, Springfield CTC, Jay Levy, Eliot Services, Sara Lopes, FOH-CSO, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield/Hampden CoC, Bill Miller, FOH/CSO, Anna Mitkevicius, FOH/CSO, Lizzy Ortiz, Health Care for the Homeless, Christina Ruest, FOH/CSO, Jess Salvas, Eliot Services, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Kaitlyn Small, Open Pantry Open Door, Edgar Vaskanyan, FOH/CSO, Kathy West, Eliot Services, Chris Zabik, DMH

Catholic Charities hotel shelter update: The program ended on 5/20, requiring relocation of many individuals and an extraordinary effort on the part of housing and shelter providers. Kudos to all!! CHD received its Certificate of Occupancy for its low-threshold housing in Holyoke the week the hotel was closing (A long and hard road to get here and we are here in a stroke of good luck timing!). So some individuals moved directly into the new housing; others into the Motel 6 shelter beds that were made available through the move-outs into housing. Fantastic coordination overall with a few gaps to be managed (CHD and Network funds assisted with some hotel extensions where necessary).

On a larger level, we took note that the covid-funded non-congregate shelter program is over. This leaves a gap in that type of shelter. The City of Springfield has set aside some funds for providers interested in developing non-congregate shelter (through purchase or rehab). No takers yet but the resource is there (and Gerry will remind all of that fact).

Friends of the Homeless/CSO update: Shelter capacity is consistently high. Now with affiliated shelter programs in Northampton and Greenfield, there is flexibility around availability of space, best match for guests, etc. Continuing to build coordination around that.

CHD's new Diversion and Triage Program: The group discussed interest in learning more about this program as it's starting up (it will cover all 4 counties and CHD is currently staffing up). Pamela will reach out to invite Theresa Nicholson, the CHD Shelter and Housing Director, to provide an update at our June meeting.

Low-Threshold Housing Program Update: Pamela reported out on the regional Individual Services meeting held last month which hosted Jennifer Halstrom of the MA Dept. of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (DPH BSAS) who oversees the Low-Threshold housing program. Please see her [powerpoint here](#). A couple of western MA data points: this program has funded 195 units in western ma; and thus far housed 168; CSO has housed 114 so far (thank you, CSO!). [See the referral form here](#). CSO is especially looking for referrals for Hampshire and Franklin Counties.

HMIS Update: Gerry provided updates on the changes afoot with HMIS. Working with a consultant to update policies and procedures; reviewing them next Wed., 5/31 at 3 pm (please contact Gerry if you would like to join - all are welcome). Reviewing a change in providers, looking closely at Green River - a clear advantage is that they already have the CoC's data. Working on hiring an HMIS director soon.

Network Updates:

- The Senate budget is being debated today. Stay tuned for outcomes by the end of the week.
- The Network's Annual Gathering was a great success - thanks to the many of you who attended. And to those who couldn't make it, you can read all about it [here!](#)

Announcement: Jay Levy will be leaving his current position and entering semi-retirement on July 7 (and will return on a very limited consultant basis in September). Congratulations, Jay, and thank goodness we don't have to miss you entirely!!

Next meeting date: Tuesday, June 13, 1 pm