

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes - 9/21/23

Linda Candage, Community Employment, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Steve Connor, Central Hampshire Veteran Services, Shaundell Diaz, Three County CoC, Patrick Gore, Veterans with Vision/NAACP; Dan Nye, Central Hampshire Veteran Services, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Uri Strauss, CLA, Bill St. Denis, Veterans Inc., Sue White, HUD/VASH, VA

Updates

Three County CoC

- Annual Meeting - 9/27, 12 pm - 2 pm - contact Shaundell to register - sdiaz@communityaction.us - everyone welcome!
- Shaundell is leading the work on "Reimagining Shelter Framework" - creating training platform that covers a broad range of areas
- Three County CoC convenes by-names veterans meeting the last Friday of every month (post meeting received this info: 8 people on the Three County CoC By Names List who have served in the military or armed forces. Estimated 50-70 veterans in emergency shelter
- obtained 20 DV specific vouchers - if working with a veteran or veteran spouse who is not eligible for veteran services, please contact Shaundell for a DV specific assessment, goal to refer all vouchers out by Feb/March

Community Legal Aid

Now 3 attorneys who focus on veterans work across the 5 counties - primarily focus on housing and benefits. Uri welcomes calls or emails from providers (no direct calls from clients) - 413-686-9027 or ustrauss@cla-ma.org. They do not cover estate planning; however, they are organizing a clinic in Worcester on 11/9 (by appointment) with pro bono attorneys to provide estate planning help. Will send flyer when out.

HUD-VASH - VA

New fully staffed outreach team - 3 people - covering all 4 counties. Seeing big response to the offering (over 200 people on the list).

Note: will connect the team to CHD Outreach/Triage. Will invite them to our next meeting in December. CHD outreach/triage number - 413-867-0398

Community Employment, Veterans Affairs

restarting Community Employment Resource Group - monthly gathering of employment partners to serve veterans. Will begin on October 20, 11:30 am - 1 pm - continue on the 3rd Fridays - at 25 Bond Street in Springfield. Will offer one-one-one counseling for employment support. veterans partner groups for veterans. Will send flyer for distribution when ready.

Veterans Inc

Received new funding that has them back in this space (welcome!). Wants to connect to Hampden County - Pamela will help connect.

Bi-Lingual Veterans Center

2 apartments open at Cass Street and openings in transitional housing at 52 Maple St. Contact Gumersindo Gomez at sgtgomez@aol.com.

Central Hampshire Veterans Services

Big challenge of housing people living outside; trying to connect them to services (and a willingness to be served). Pleased that the new outreach services exist!

For our next quarterly meeting:

- invite CHD Outreach/Triage to attend
- connect Sue to John Baker and Raul Matta (CHD program (done))
- Pamela reach out to 3 county and Hampden for data update in advance
- Sue will provide update on outreach team data

Network news - sign-on letters; legislative updates, etc.

Low-Income Tax Credit Increase organizational sign-on

letter: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe5lhipztwCdwj3F6-gXIYlKfox_mJCTJtP9tajs_vfx0APw/viewform

Act to override Governor's vetoes of housing/homelessness programs:

<https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/advocacy/2023/take-action-to-override-governors-vetoes/>

Federal funding for homelessness sign-on letter:

<https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/advocacy/2023/sign-on-letter-for-lihtc-by-fri-9-22/>
Federal Homelessness action:

<https://endhomelessness.org/actions/take-action-to-build-support-for-the-senate-fy24-thud-bill/>

MA Joint Housing Committee Hearing - Sept. 27 - Access to Counsel, MRVP, RAFT - please sign up to testify (remotely) or submit written testimony - stay tuned on the Network blog for more details

<https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/4692>

Senate Chair Lydia Edwards' tours Western MA:

<https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/advocacy/2023/senate-housing-committee-chair-lydia-edwards-tours-western-ma/>

New Yorker Article/Podcast by Jennifer Egan on Homelessness and Supportive Housing:

<https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/resources/2023/recommended-author-jennifer-egan-on-homelessness-and-supportive-housing/>

Next meeting date: Thursday, Dec. 14, 10 am