

Youth and Young Adult Services Committee - 9/20/23

In attendance: Tanja Alessi, FOH/CSO, Matt Aronson, consultant on state youth homelessness, Olivia Bernstein, MHA, Pam Fitzpatrick, CHD, Keith Hedlund, CHD, Yeisi Mateo, My First Place, Declan Nolan, My First Place, Rosesmarie Oliveras, New North Citizen Council, Brianna Owen, Rise Up Foundation, Kayla Pulliam, Appleseed, Maddie Poage, Appleseed, Phil Ringwood, DIAL/SELF, Jarix Santiago, New North Citizen Council (FYI provider), Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Chelsea Taylor, Berkshire YMCA, Heather Warner, Collaborative for Educational Services, Mark Watkins, SHINE Program/Gandara Center, Tasia Williams, MILE/STCC, Kat Wong, Hampden YAB

Hampden County update:

In FY23:

- served 288 Youth and Young Adults (YYA) (via coordinated entry); 99 housed
- served 9 YYA in EOHHS funded college housing scholarship
- 8 YYA in Fostering Youth to Independence (FYI) leased up; 6 with vouchers looking for housing (many others with vouchers also looking for housing)
- 140 young adults on by-names list - demand for housing is far greater supply
- housing projects are all full - prospective openings are likely to be few
- Youth Action Board had 58 participants
- changing HMIS providers as of 10/1 - a big transition
- excellent collaboration across YYA partners, resulting in housing YYA!

Three County update:

EOHHS data for the last quarter:

- served 102 youth
- 19 YYA placed in emergency housing; 17 youth maintained housing for 3 months
- 30 referrals to services
- 51 YYA in case management
- 21 received flex funds
- Youth Action Board is meeting regularly, working on policies for feedback, a project focused on addressing adultism

With increase in FY24 state funding, there will be:

- increased funding for YAB and support staff
- increased landlord incentives

There is also on deck 5 new units of youth dedicated permanent supportive housing in North Adams.

In general, approaching winter and loss of YYA emergency hotel beds due to in-flux of EA families (migrant crisis). There is great concern about lack of sheltering capacity.

Special guest: Kayla Pulliam, MA Appleseed Center for Law and Social Justice

Kayla shared MA Appleseed's new youth homelessness handbook. The resource provides legal information around housing, education, consumer rights, as well as information pertaining to immigration issues. Find it all here: <https://www.homelessyouth.org/en/us/massachusetts>

Appleseed offers "know your rights training," working with pro bono attorneys to host legal clinics. To learn more about their offerings, contact Kayla at: kayla@massappleseed.org.

Appleseed is supporting a MA bill - H.192/S.94 that would allow youth ages 15-18 to consent to shelter and supportive services. See their factsheet [here](#). Please let Kayla know if interested in testifying or lending support in other ways to this effort.

Special guest: Matt Aronson, BAY-CASH

This is a 2 year pilot project that would provide direct cash transfer, with accompanying support services, for young people experiencing homelessness. Piloted in Boston but the goal is to create a success that will be replicated statewide. Read the [executive summary here](#).

The pilot would include 60 YYA participating in the program (and tracking a different 60 who are not for trial purposes). Thus far \$1 million has been raised from primarily private partners; \$6 million is needed; working with national youth program partners and researchers.

Western MA youth partners are welcome to participate in the pilot planning, etc. - if interested please contact Matt at aronson.matthew@gmail.com or baycashteam@gmail.com. The website is at <http://baycash.org>.

Network announcements, sign-on letters, and more:

Low-Income Tax Credit Increase sign-on

letter: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe5lhipztcDwxj3F6-gXIYIKfox_mJCTJtP9tajs_vfx0APw/viewform

Federal funding sign-on:

<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/>

Housing Committee Hearing - Sept. 27 - Access to Counsel, MRVP, RAFT

<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: Wed., Dec. 6, 11 am