

## **Family Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 10/17/23**

In attendance: approximately 36 Network providers and partners

### **Family Homelessness Shelter Update**

Kelly Turley of the MA Coalition of the Homeless and Andrea Park of Mass. Law Reform Institute summarized the Governor's latest announcement regarding capping family shelter at 7,500 beds (predicted to be reached by the end of this month). After that point, there will be a "wait list." We are awaiting more details about how this would be implemented and the Network will continue to collaborate with statewide partners to ensure a coordinated response.

More details on the announcement are available here:

- Governor's office: Governor Healey Announces State's Emergency Family Shelter System Will Reach Capacity by End of Month, <https://www.mass.gov/news/governor-healey-announces-states-emergency-family-shelter-system-will-reach-capacity-by-end-of-month>
- Boston Globe: Healey says Mass. can no longer guarantee room in shelter system, state on 'verge of reaching capacity', <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/10/16/metro/maura-healey-caps-capacity-mass-migrant-shelters>

Meanwhile, the Working Group to Protect Migrant Families has released these two sign-on letters to push, in concert with Governor Healey's efforts, the Biden Administration and Congress to take action to address this crisis. **Please see here the letters (virtually identical) to the [Administration](#) and the [MA Congressional delegation](#).**

The Working Group includes Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless as well as partners from business, philanthropy, immigration, health care housing and direct services. The Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA) is providing staffing for the Working Group. **Please find the [google form](#) to sign on here. The deadline is Thursday at 3 pm.**

### **Homelessness Prevention Updates**

Hampden/Hampshire Counties (Way Finders): in the last four weeks 700-750 RAFT applications came in, up from the approx 600 applications the previous month. Highest caseload in the state with 1,700 applications.

Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Berkshire Housing Development Corporation reported proportionally similar demand.

### **Lt. Gov. Driscoll and HLC Secretary Augustus Visited Western MA/Housing Bond Bill**

Anni Zhu of Way Finders reported out on Lt. Gov. and Secretary Augustus' visit to the Western MA Housing Coalition last Friday, 10/10. It was an excellent opportunity to present and discuss western MA' housing production needs, especially with regard to the Housing Bond Bill that will be released any day (note: it's just out now on Oct. 18!). Please see the [Housing Bond bill priorities discussed here](#).

### **Legislative Updates**

The Joint Revenue Committee held a hearing on the Real Estate Transfer Fee for Affordable Housing bill last week. Pamela testified on behalf of the Network ( [Network's testimony here](#)). Additionally, Pamela testified at the Joint Housing Committee hearing on 9/27 on a

number of Network priority bills, e.g., Access to Counsel in Evictions, MRVP strengthening, Healthy Homes and Fair Housing. See the [Network's testimony here](#).

**Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness Survey**

We want YOUR INPUT! As the Network approaches its 15th anniversary, we want your feedback on its activities and effectiveness. **The survey is anonymous and will take less than 15 minutes to complete:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LG8ZBRH>. **Responses due by November 3rd.** Please help us chart our future! Thank you for your partnership!