

## **Individual Services Committee Minutes - 11/28/29**

*In attendance: approx. 37 people, including providers and state agency staff*

### **Report out on Secretary Augustus meeting**

Gerry McCafferty reported out on a meeting with HLC Secretary Ed Augustus in Boston regarding individual homelessness. This is part of the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance's advocacy that includes representatives from each region of the state (this is the 3rd meeting). All regions reflected on the marked increase in the number of unsheltered individuals; that shelters are full to capacity, and the grave concern regarding keeping people safe during the winter months.

Secretary Augustus noted that the State Supplemental Budget - which is currently held up in Conference Committee due to unresolved differences between the House and Senate budgets - includes \$6 million for individual homelessness - \$1 million for ongoing projects and \$5 million specifically to address winter shelter needs. As soon as the budget is passed (unclear when precisely that will be), HLC is at the ready to issue an RFP for these funds. Providers should consider whether they are in a position to apply. There will be focus on areas of highest need. (a meeting on 11/27 with statewide advocacy partners re: individual homelessness). It was noted that providers may need help identifying locations and HLC is prepared to help in whatever way it can.

There was also discussion of the need for more permanent supportive housing and the potential the Housing Bond Bill holds to meet that need (the bill that was filed by the Administration includes an additional approx. \$200 million for this purpose). All agreed on the importance of keeping that advocacy front and center through the legislative process (hearings to start next year).

There was also agreement to focus on data collection around this population in order to make the strongest possible case for more PSH. Secretary Augustus is very committed to improving and utilizing data. Gerry will keep us posted as these discussions continue. Pamela noted the importance of being subscribed to the Network blog - [subscribe HERE](#) - in order to stay most up-to-date on developments regarding the budget and newly released RFPs.

### **Shelter and Outreach/Triage Updates**

- CSO Franklin County - preparing for 5 additional beds to utilize in the coldest weather; in conversations with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office regarding a warming space - should have details by next week
- CSO Springfield - at max capacity; still waiting to restart their low-threshold housing program (staffing issues)
- CHD - Outreach/triage program is down to 3 staff (should be 7) - receiving 30-50 calls/day and fielding as best as possible; trying to hire
- Holyoke pop-up shelter: unclear on its status this year (note: post meeting Gerry confirmed that there WILL be a very limited pop-up shelter - due to funding constraints - via Providence Ministries - it will be activated when temp goes below 10 degrees

### **Emergency Winter Hotel Overflow Shelter Update**

The Network is supporting our local providers in each county as coordination of emergency hotel resources is underway. HLC has funded Craig's Doors at \$20,000 to provide Hampshire County emergency hotel shelter; and CSO at \$25,000 to provide Franklin County/N. Quabbing emergency hotel shelter (CSO will be collaborating with Eliot Services for the outreach and placement).

The Network is filling the gaps in Hampden (via CHD) and Berkshire (via ServiceNet and Louison House) with initial funding of \$10,000 for each (to be determined as the season continues whether additional funding is necessary, subject to Network funding availability). The Network will be distributing a summary resource sheet with threshold criteria and contact names and numbers, hopefully by the end of this week. *Important note: this resource is intended to be used based on provider (or city/town) referral only, not for general public distribution (in view of limited resources and staff capacity).*

### **Hilltown Community Health Center Update**

Dr. Jess Bossie provided an update on the exciting partnership between Health Center and area housing authorities: working with senior patients to assist with applications through the CHAMP system (certain qualifications - e.g., must be able to navigate stairs) and through this partnership has housed many people. There was agreement to follow-up regarding enlisting Dr. Bossie for a training on how to assist people with the CHAMP system - she is happy to do it! Pamela will follow-up.

### **Three County CoC Update**

Shaundell reported the news that the 3 County CoC had an issue submitting the 2023 NOFO application this year and was not able to submit the entire application prior to the deadline. The CoC has been verbally notified by the HUD Field Office that they will not be eligible for funding for 2023 (first projects starting Feb. 2024). The CoC is still awaiting a written decision from HUD and sent a letter last week to the Director of the SNAPS office asking for written clarification, including clarification of the status of their YHDP projects. At this time, CAPV is working with each sub-recipient to identify the funding gaps. The CoC plans to appeal the decision to HUD and is also working to secure alternative funding. The CoC has been verbally notified that they can apply again for the 2024 NOFO next summer/fall.

In other news: the 3 County CoC secured 20 Domestic Violence Moving to Work (vouchers) vouchers and all are referred out; they have also secured additional Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV).

### **Hampden County CoC Update**

As follow-up to our discussion at our last committee meeting regarding the sudden take-down of an encampment, Gerry scheduled a meeting with the Springfield Police Department and other partners to strengthen collaboration. That meeting is tomorrow. Gerry will report back.

### **Elder Homelessness Update**

The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless is gearing up for the next fiscal year budget debate and is planning to increase its ask for elder homelessness support - from \$10 million and 1,000 subsidies to \$60 million and 6,000 subsidies. The Network is in support of this ask and will keep all our partners posted on advocacy opportunities.

### **Announcements:**

- **New Request for Proposals for Permanent Supportive Housing:** Mass. Housing and Shelter Alliance has issued an RFP for permanent supportive housing through its Home and Healthy For Good program - read all about it here: <https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/resources/2023/new-rfp-for-permanent-supportive-housing/>
- **Three County CoC is conducting a Diversity Survey** - to be completed by 11/30. Read all about it here: <https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/continuum-of-care/3-county-coc/2023/three-county-coc-diversity-survey-by-12-1/>
- **Enhancing Collaboration between Independent Living Centers and Housing Authorities**  
Providing an opportunity for ILC and Housing Authority staff to discuss ways to enhance collaboration and connection between entities. Both networks are intent on providing valuable, but differing types of housing assistance to the public. In this Think Tank, we will look for methods to bridge the gap and develop formalized partnerships that will benefit Housing Authorities and the disability community. We will discuss the feasibility of improved information sharing, contact lists, case conferencing, etc.  
Presenter: Jordan Stocker, ILC Housing Projects Coordinator  
Registration is free for MassNAHRO members, but pre-registration is required. <https://massnahro.org/page/ThinkTanks>

**Next meeting date: Tuesday, 12/19, 1 pm**