

Quarterly Youth and Young Adult Services Committee Minutes - 12/6/23

Tanja Alessi, FOH, CSO, Olivia Bernstein, MHA, Ellen Broadhurst, CPCS, Keith Hedlund, CHD, Michele LaFleur, Three County CoC, Yeisie Mateo, My First Place, Tatiana Moore, Phoenix Charter, Declan Nolan, My First Place, Rosemarie Oliveria, New North Citizen Council, Stacy Parsons, DESE McKinney Vento regional liaison, Phil Ringwood, DIAL/SELF, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Teryl Smith, DDS, Herlina Tuesca, Community Action, Tasia Williams, STCC, Kat Wong, Hampden County Coc

Hampden County YHDP Update

FY24 #s and other updates:

- served 310 YYAs in all YYA programs;
- 46 exited to positive housing outcomes
- college housing scholarship program - served 7 YYA (HCC, STCC, Westfield)
- 1 YYA with FYI voucher - many others who have voucher but have not been able to lease up due to lack of available housing (and the housing authority cannot request more until 90% of vouchers have been used) - Pamela will follow-up with Mass Fair Housing about possible training and resources to respond to the discrimination
- By Names List (BNL) - 161 YYA - 15% higher than average (typically around 140)
- large number of pregnant and parenting YYA - 27 on list
- 14 YYA living outside
- All housing placements are full
- Good news: Gandara will be starting a transitional housing project for pregnant and parenting teens for 18 families - currently working on identifying units (will use BNL to identify program participants)
- Youth Action Board has had 34 participants this year; useful workshops lately (e.g., Way Finders on Housing Search; MA Appleseed Center on tenants rights)
- 2 YAB members have been selected to serve on the statewide Youth Advocacy Council and one on the MA Commission on Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness - great news!
- Starting to work on Point in Time Count in January

Three County CoC

FY24 #s and updates (note: Michele provided numbers since 7/1 in subsequent email - at meeting initial numbers were from 10/1):

On HUD funding:

- served 70 YYA since 7/1 (59 continuous enrollments and 11 new enrollments)
- 6 exits to permanent housing from YYA programs - out of 17 exits total (35%)
- 5 youth are pregnant; 7 are parenting; 22 youth are unsheltered

On EOHHS funding:

- 115 YYA supported
- MA EOHHS released additional funding, allowing for applicants to request up to \$200,000 (applications due 12/19). This resource will be used to fill some of the gaps in HUD funding, assuming YHDP funding is impacted, as well as to push forward some new projects.

Other updates:

- Starting to work on Point in Time count in January, involving youth
- Revisiting racial equity work plan that was initially created in 2020 - need to revisit post covid and update action steps
- Noted the challenge of 3 County CoC HUD funding this year - due to a problem with meeting the application deadline, the CoC has been notified that it will not be funded this year. The CoC is still trying to determine whether this includes YHDP funding (has not received official written notice yet). They are starting now on the planning to fill funding gaps while they await official word (and intend to appeal). They have been advised that they can apply next year as a "renewal project" so the programs can continue as currently structured. Some YHDP programs are holding off on accepting new participants until the funding situation is clear.
- YAB report (via Lydia Davis, YAB staff at CAPV): YAB began working on zines that reflect members' passions/knowledge, continued working on adultism video and hosted a Building Bridges meeting to discuss landlord-related barriers to YYA getting housed. Many members are aging out this year, so the YAB is working on finding ways to support them and find services they utilize post 25 years old. 14 different YAB members participated in programming this quarter!
- Noted the increase in the number of calls coming in from YYA across the state, seeking emergency shelter

Other news:

- The Network will be releasing a **winter weather emergency hotel shelter summary resource sheet** for the region in the coming week. Stay tuned for a list of lead providers in each county to contact in the event of extreme weather and the need for emergency hotel shelter.
- **The Housing Bond Bill** - also called the Affordable Homes Act - was filed by the Governor last month and will be going through legislative hearings beginning in January. This \$4.1 billion bill offers extremely significant investment in new affordable housing, public housing and supportive housing. Pamela expressed hope (and urgency!) for all of us in western MA to be engaged in this process and show our support for its passage when opportunities present. She will keep everyone posted on the hearing schedule via the Network blog - be sure you are [subscribed here](#). You can read more about what's in the bill [here](#).

- Channel 22 is doing a piece on youth homelessness - Phil Ringwood reached out for others to provide input on what to feature. Kat will follow-up with Phil.
- Phil attended a US Runaway Homeless Youth conference recently and put all the training slide decks into one google drive. Check them out [HERE](#). He raised the question of the "age range" for the definition of YYA - at the conference, the question of whether it should be raised to 27 or 28 came up repeatedly. More to possibly consider there.
- The MA Youth Count (specifically only YYA) is happening in April. Planning conversations are afoot.
- Update via email from the project director Shayla Fonfield on **Bay-CASH** - Boston Area Youth-Cash Assistance for Stable Housing or BAY-CASH. It is a pilot program that will test Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) plus key supportive services as a viable model for substantially impacting Young Adult (YA) homelessness in Massachusetts. Over the past several months, we have been working hard to raise money, build additional partnerships, and prepare to launch BAY-CASH as soon as we have completed our fund-raise. We launched a new website, www.baycah.org, that we are very proud of, developed a social-media presence (follow us at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/bay-cash/>), and added four significant donations to bring our current total to over \$1,000,000. The [CERES Institute at Boston University](#) joined our incredible project team as our local evaluation lead, and we are finalizing our recruitment strategy, "Plus" services request for proposals, and benefits mapping, so that we are truly ready to launch. If anyone is interested in further details, donating or has recommendations on who to connect with to push BAY-CASH as a budget item, feel free to email

BAY-CASH directly at Baycashteam@gmail.com.

Next quarterly meeting date: Wed., March 3, 2024, 11 am - 12 noon