

Quarterly Youth and Young Adult Services Committee - 3/6/24

In Attendance: Stefan Daviss, I Found Light Against All Odds, Pam Fitzpatrick, CHD, Lynn Guertin, Lisa Lombardi, I Found Light Against All Odds, Yeisie Mateo, My First Place, Declan Nolan, My First Place, Rosemarie Oliveras, New North Citizen Council, Stacy Parsons, North Berkshire School Partnership Coordinator/ DESE Regional Liaison, Phil Ringwood, DIAL/SELF, Erika Rosario, Westover Job Corps, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Chelsea Taylor, Berkshire Family YMCA, Herlinda Tuesca, Young Parents Program, Community Action, Kat Wong, Hampden YHDP

Hampden CoC YHDP Update

Thus far in FY24:

- 361 youth and young adult served
- 138 young adults now on wait list seeking housing assistance
- 51 young adults experiencing literal homelessness; 8 of them are living outdoors (improvement since last meeting was 14)
- 40 pregnant and parenting individuals are on the by-names list - this speaks to the continuing challenges with family shelter (note: all but 2 are in some form of transitional housing)
- housing scholarship program is serving 7 college students across HCC and Westfield, and all housed at Westfield State
- Transition Age Youth Program serving 11 young adults
- New pregnant and parenting program that just started in December (funded in part by CoC and EOHHS funds) - managed by Gandara - funding for 18 families; has been able to house 8 families thus far (seeking more units) All projects are full - no current openings.
- Foster Youth to Independence - section 8 type vouchers for YYA who have aged out - 7 YYA with vouchers in hand; 25 others on the wait list - will request more vouchers later this month (via Springfield Housing Authority)
- All projects are full. Some young adults will be moving into community-based housing soon which will free up slots.
- Hampden Youth Action Board has 39 participants and is hiring for a program manager.
- New North Citizens Council has been funded with EOHHS funds to open a new youth shelter in Springfield that will serve 20 young adults ages 16-24 - called Joshua House - aiming for a summer opening.

Three County CoC YHDP Update

- Estimated total of 90-100 YYA are being served in housing support and housing search
- Mental Health Association PSH program with 8 slots is full; rapid rehousing navigation program has 4 open slots to assist youth
- DIAL/SELF has 4 rapid rehousing slots - 3 are housed and now pausing on filling the 4th due to federal funding gap; its PSH program is full
- Gandara's rapid housing and transitional housing programs are full

- Berkshire County Regional Housing and Louison House via EOHHS funds are providing permanent supportive housing in Berkshire County
- Working in partnership with Berkshire Community College - 5 YYA enrolled to provide both housing and services, hoping to expand
- Working with HLC to open up 4 2 BR units for pregnant and parenting young adults (with project based MRVPs) - hoping to work with Gandara or MHA to pair housing with services
- Noting the increase in pregnant and parenting youth in general
- Noting more movement into housing creating more turnover
- seeing a positive trend with staffing - getting positions filled
- Youth Action Board is meeting regularly, meeting bi-monthly in their Building Bridges group - great work happening

2024 Youth Count

The MA youth count (organized across 10 regions by EOHHS) will take place during the month of April (this is distinct from the HUD mandated point in time count for all populations that takes place in January). The definition of homelessness is broader than the HUD count. Youth will be asked to complete a survey. Various providers across the region will do the outreach. See the [2022 Youth Count Report here](#).

Funding opportunities via US Health and Human Services: Phil noted the Runaway Homeless Youth funding opportunity is coming up in April and May - suggested providers keep each other posted on possible ways to collaborate.

Network Budget and Policy Updates:

- Governor Healey's FY25 budget proposed a \$500,000 cut in the youth homelessness line item from \$11m to \$10.5m. The Network is advocating for level funding at minimum, along with other priorities - see more detail on [budget priorities and legislative meetings here](#). The House is now crafting its budget that will be out in April
- The Housing Bond Bill - otherwise known as the Affordable Homes Act - received a favorable report from the Housing Committee earlier this week. It made no changes to the bill, unfortunately. [Read more detail on the Network blog here](#). We will continue to advocate!
- **Network Annual Gathering on May 31: see [Save the Date and register here!](#)**

Other announcements:

Three County CoC trainings: [racial equity training series here](#) and [Attorney General's training series here](#).

Check-in on Committee meeting frequency and content:

The group affirmed that quarterly meetings and the information shared is very useful. Onward to our next **quarterly meeting date: Wed., June 5, 11 am - 12 noon**