

Family Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 5/13/25

In attendance: Martha Aviles, Christina House, Tana Bloom, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Sarah Cloutier, Way Finders, Mayra DeJesus, Shriner's, Jen Dieringer, CLA, Luray Fladd, YWCA, Ivelisse Gonzalez, New North Citizens Council, Lynn Guertin, BHN Family Resource Center, Nicky LaValley, Way Finders, Christy O'Brien, CHD, Dorothy Prieto, CAPV, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Stephanie Tonelli, Springfield Police, Melissa White, Valley Opportunity Council, Christine Zaskey, Holyoke Chicopee Family and Community Program

Shelter Updates:

- CHD: closing hotels - Northampton site is closed; West Springfield is down to 4 families, will be closed by end of May. Using HomeBASE to great effect (landlords like it for its payment security).
- VOC: hotel closing by 6/30, down to 20 families (previously at 90)

General comments across providers:

- With the rapid rehousing of so many families, the challenge increases around stabilization services. The ratio of case worker to families is 1 to 80 in many instances and "best case" is 1 to 50. Case workers are working extremely hard and there are simply not enough of them to give families the support they need to stabilize further and increase their chances of avoiding the "cliff" when HomeBASE runs out (which may be sooner than intended due to families' need to use HB to pay a higher proportion of their rent due to lack of income)
- Seeing a decrease in referrals from HLC - and a resulting increase in empty units in congregate/scattered site shelter - not getting filled by HLC - despite hearing of families who are sleeping in their car or otherwise experiencing homelessness - this is consistent with the Gov's goal to get the number of families in the system down to 4,000 (will be at roughly 5,300 once all hotels closed).

Federal Budget Update: President Trump released an initial federal budget for next fiscal year that would dramatically cut HUD - Section 8, and other crucial housing programs - by as much as 44%. This budget is a very first step in a long budget process (i.e., no cause for panic, but cause for alarm and activism). The Network is in close connection with the National Low Income Housing Coalition which is a source for analysis and action steps. Read the [Network's blog post](#) summarizing the federal budget proposal here.

The City of Boston joined a lawsuit to challenge restrictions on federal CoC funding. A temporary restraining order was granted and now the case proceeds with these requirements on pause. Read more at the [blog post here](#).

State Budget Update: The State Senate will be debating its budget next week. This week is the time to weigh in on amendments to the budget proposed by the Senate Ways and Means Committee. [Go here](#) to see the Network's priority amendments and take action this week!

Eviction Record Sealing: It became law in MA on May 5! It is now possible to seal an eviction record in certain types of cases. [Read more here](#) and check out the trainings on how to seal a record (please share!).

Network Annual Gathering - it's coming! Friday, May 30. In-person is full but [please register to attend on Zoom](#) - your presence counts!!

Announcements:

- Head Start & Early Learning Programs in Franklin, Hampshire, and Western Hampden Counties at low or no cost to families. Visit HSELP/CAPV for all program options To apply online <http://goengage.app> For a referral form (which gives clients priority) Downloadable Referral Form Fax or email completed referrals to hselpenrollment@communityaction.us or 413-387-1224. Please call 413-387-1250 Or email questions to hselpenrollment@communityaction.us
- Holyoke Chicopee Family and Community Program Nurturing Children program for families in Holyoke shelters begins May 22 at the Head Start on Maple St. Transportation provided. Please email me to register a family at zaskeyc@headstart.org

Next meeting date: we decided to shift our meeting time to 11 am - 12 noon, still on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Our next meeting will be **Tuesday, June 10, 11 am.**