

## **Family Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 9/9/25**

*In attendance: Martha Aviles, Christina's House, Tamicha Colon, Alianza, Joscelyn de Tajada, New North Citizens Council, Luray Fladd, YWCA, Erin Forbush, ServiceNet, Darcy Gauthier, BHN, Melissa Marlowe, DPH FOR Families, Victoria Martin, Franklin County Regional Housing Authority, Lizzy Ortiz, ACO C3, Tina Rockwood, Salasin Project, Brett Rogers, Headstart, Khelsey Smith, YWCA, Melissa White, VOC*

### **Family shelter updates/exchange**

We discussed these issues:

- concerns about immigration status - families are worried about ICE - scared to go out, to work, to school - very tense time
- ServiceNet noted a low census - that in addition to the reduced units (from 61 to 52), EOHLHC is also not filling beds. These empty beds exist while more families are reaching out who have been denied EA eligibility but have nowhere to go (they are tracking numbers on this).
- the 6 month shelter stay limit is creating great pressure; FOR Families can get referrals with only a couple months remaining which limits support options

Gerry McCafferty relayed **new contacts at EOHLHC for outreach in the event providers are faced with families who are at risk of living unsheltered and have been denied**

**EA.** Providers should email: Darnell Joseph at [darnell.joseph@mass.gov](mailto:darnell.joseph@mass.gov) and Joseph Degrace at [joseph.degrace@mass.gov](mailto:joseph.degrace@mass.gov), and copy Tyler Newhall at [tyler.newhall@mass.gov](mailto:tyler.newhall@mass.gov). These contacts are for providers' use only.

### **Network Advocacy and Policy Updates**

- Rent Control is on the statewide ballot (for Nov. 2026). Signature collecting is starting now! [Go here](#) to read more and get connected.
- HUD is attacking supportive housing programs. [Read more and take action here.](#)
- Pamela testified on behalf of the Network at the legislative hearing this week for the real estate transfer fee for affordable housing. The turn-out in support of the transfer fee was great from across the state. Check out the [Network's testimony here.](#)
- NEW housing study shows affordable housing gap and more: check out this new study by UMassDonahue Institute (in partnership with Way Finders and others) that shows the affordable housing gap in western MA and why we need to take action now.

**Next meeting date: Tuesday, October 14** - also at 1 pm due to a conflict at our usual 11 am time (we shall return to 11 am in November!).