

Career Services Committee minutes - 12/25/25

In attendance: Nathan Adary, STCC, Shawntsi Baret, Springfield Works, John Bidwell, Way Finders, Jeff Hayden, Holyoke Community College, Keith Peters, Stone Soup, Gerry McCafferty, Hampden CoC, Eneida Molina, Springfield Works, Ben Ostiguy, Holyoke Community College, Judy Raper, GCC, Cindy Ray, MassHire Franklin Hampshire, Elizabeth Veillette, CHD

Housing/Homelessness Updates

- **Family Homelessness and consequence to employment support:** The Governor (with Legislative support) passed more restrictive EA requirements in this year's budget, eliminating "presumptive eligibility" (the option to be sheltered prior to providing all documentation because the family is clearly facing homelessness) and reducing the time limit for shelter from 9 months to 6 months. These two rule changes, among others, are having a significant impact on families' ability to access shelter and to get housed (more families sleeping in cars, emergency rooms). The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (HLC) has dramatically reduced the number of contracted beds in the system, including a dramatic reduction here in western MA. As a result of this reduction at Center for Human Development (CHD), Elizabeth Veillette's position as employment navigator is being eliminated and her last day is this Friday. We are sorry for this news! Elizabeth will hopefully find another position eventually at CHD but our partners expressed their support as she searches out other opportunities. In the meanwhile, the Network is continuing to join with statewide partners to push on EA system improvements to protect the right to shelter for children in the Commonwealth.
- **HUD Threatens Housing for Hundreds in Western MA; Thousands statewide:** HUD is attempting to upend decades of supportive housing funding through a new funding notice. This would have an extremely dramatic impact on housing for our most vulnerable residents (over 400 housing units for previously chronically homeless individuals and some families as well). Read more on the [background here](#) from the MA Housing and Shelter Alliance and [take action here](#). Lawsuits are pending and the next hearing is this Friday, Dec. 19.

Program Updates

- **Center for Human Development:** Elizabeth Veillette's position as employment navigator is being eliminated due to family shelter budget cuts. CHD may start a program with a general navigator (housing/employment) but too soon to know what's possible. The group expressed its support for Elizabeth as she navigates this time.
- **Holyoke Community College (HCC):** See new [offerings here](#).
- Thrive Center at HCC: noted nearly doubling in demand for food pantry resources and other basic needs.
- Jeff noted that HCC is part of a pilot that is increasing data collection on workforce development, i.e., moving beyond data on enrollment in programs but focusing also on program completion, job placement, etc.
- **Greenfield Community College (GCC):** See new [offerings here](#).

- **Springfield Technical Community College (STCC):** See new [offerings here](#). Noted STCC President leaving this Spring, new search underway.
- **Workforce Pell Grants:** noted significance in this new federal policy that allows Pell funds to be utilized for trainings, e.g., EMT programs. [Read more here](#).
- **Franklin/Hampshire MassHire Career Center:** See [new offerings here](#). Noted increased efforts on seeking private grants to support new employment programs. Also offering employment support such as resume and cover letter writing.
- **Springfield Works:** Cliff Effect pilot currently has 18 people enrolled, planning for 30 soon (and 100 eventually). Goal is two-fold to provide the individual with immediate support and to demonstrate the long-term positive impact that a sustained livable wage can provide. Springfield Works is also providing outreach and recruitment support to HCC; also launching a new program called Leap into Law - providing a pathway to careers in the legal profession
- **Veterans Employment Support Program:** See the schedule for the program on the [flyer here](#). Contact Linda Candage at linda.candage@va.gov with any questions.

Next steps:

In view of the HUD funding uncertainty (and the consequences that impact every part of our community, including employment), we agreed that while we will still meet quarterly, Pamela will reach out by email to our core group in mid-January to check-in and provide an opportunity for email updates.

Also, Pamela reminded everyone to [subscribe to the Network blog](#) to stay in the loop.

Next meeting date: Monday, March 23, 11 am