

## **Family Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 1/14/25**

*In attendance: approximately 20 providers*

### **Family shelter updates:**

- All family shelters received another reduction in their number of contracted beds in January. Way Finders noted that most of their EA families have received length of stay extensions (from 6 to 9 months) which has relieved some pressure; they are also placing families faster than they are entering (because of the curtailment of access)
- HLC issued a new procurement, due in March. The total # of beds expected are 3,000-3,200 - Western MA apportionment will be 10% of the total, down from 15% (raises questions - why is that??) The model has also shifted with greater emphasis on congregate and lesser emphasis on scattered site.
- VOC noted an influx of calls from families seeking assistance, although no referrals from HLC, noting the barriers posed by more extensive and stricter documentation requirements.

**RAFT update:** Way Finders: 865 applications this past week; some days close to 200 people seeking in-person assistance; Franklin County: proportionally as high

**Western MA Family Homelessness Pilot:** Pamela shared that the Network was included in a legislative earmark to advance a pilot program addressing family homelessness (along with Central MA Housing Alliance in Worcester and Father Bill's and Mainspring in the South Shore). After consulting with our region's family providers, it was decided that the funds (\$150K) would be divided between ServiceNet to address families who are homeless but unable to access EA (case management, emergency hotel stays) and Way Finders to support an ongoing pilot to strengthen HomeBASE outcomes through more intensive case management and support services. The contracting process is underway now. We will keep you posted on the implementation and outcomes from this resource.

**HUD/COC NOFO Update:** The federal District Court issued a preliminary injunction stopping HUD from imposing a new NOFO that would have resulted in a dramatic loss to permanent supportive housing (see [this blog post here](#) for more details). There is a push to ensure a final resolution of the case on an expedited timeline, hopefully in February. In the meanwhile, advocacy continues on a Congressional level to add language into the appropriations bill that would require HUD to maintain the 2024-2025 NOFO (which would give the COCs stability for this year). Stay tuned on the Network blog for updates.

**State budget update:** Gov. Healey will be releasing her FY27 budget on Jan. 28. The Network's advocacy for its FY27 budget priorities is getting underway at the end of this month. Stay tuned for advocacy opportunities via the Network blog.

### **Program Updates:**

- BHN - Ware DV program: Anthia noted that due to no capacity at DV shelters or anywhere else, she is seeing more people making the painful decision to stay with their abusers.
- Catholic Charities is offering case management services and other support services. More detailed information to come.
- Community Legal Aid represents folks who are at risk of eviction and also those seeking family shelter (we will assist at the application stage and also when a family has been denied or is in shelter and is at risk of being removed). Apply online at [www.communitylegal.org](http://www.communitylegal.org). Feel free to call or email me with questions: [jdieringer@cla-ma.org](mailto:jdieringer@cla-ma.org); 413 686-9013.

Next meeting: due to a conflict for February's meeting, the group decided to meet next at our regular March date - Tuesday, March 10, 11 am.