

## **Western MA Task Force for Housing First Meeting Minutes - 6/25/26**

*In attendance: approximately 40 partners, including legislators, legislative aides, municipal staff and providers*

### **Rent Control Update:**

The MA Supreme Judicial Court ruled yesterday that the rent control ballot initiative could not appear on the November ballot due to a religious exemption (for housing units operated solely for religious institutions) which violated the state constitution. While acknowledging the shock and disappointment, Carolyn Chou, Executive Director of Homes for All MA, provided an update on next steps: to continue to pressure the Legislature to act on the pending bill and to build off of the momentum generated through the signature collecting campaign. **Read more on action steps [here](#).**

### **Shelter and Housing Updates**

#### **Clinical & Support Options (CSO):**

Big housing openings are happening! 36 units of Permanent Supportive Housing in both Springfield and Greenfield and a renovated shelter in Greenfield. Come to the grand openings:  
**Greenfield, July 29, 11:30 at 60 Wells St**  
**Springfield, July 31, 1:30 pm, 755 Worthington St**

Working closely with CoC's coordinated entry in filling the new housing slots. Shelters are currently still full, seeing good momentum in rehousing people out of shelter.

**Catholic Charities:** Recently started a new rapid rehousing program for people 62 and older in Hampden County. In the last 2 months, will house 20 seniors out of shelter. For more info or to provide a referral contact Jess Salvas at [jsalvas@springfieldcityhall.com](mailto:jsalvas@springfieldcityhall.com),

**Hearthway, Berkshire County:** 37 PSH units leased up in the last 3-4 months, going really well, great collaboration for service providers. Also starting to lease up a large mixed-income development in Pittsfield, 56 units. Working on 2 other projects with the promise of 100 more units - construction starts next year.

At the same time, also seeing more residents unable to pay the rent, even subsidized. Demands are too high with rising prices and other economic challenges. Facing a very difficult situation - committed to working with tenants and at the same time can't sustain non-payment for long periods of time.

**ServiceNet, Pittsfield** - Individual shelter is full. Seeing great utilization of the new community engagement center, The First. It's a very positive space where people are getting support and referrals.

On family side, seeing a very low census of occupied EA shelter beds while seeing intense need. Barriers to apply are too great, many are giving up on the process.

**Craig's Doors, Amherst** - shelter is full, seeing more new faces at their Resource Center, experiencing the same concerns as shared in Berkshire County - people are not able to afford their rent, facing the threat of homelessness.

**Louison House, Northern Berkshires:** Shelter is full. Still sheltering over 30 people, double plus what they are funded for. PSH housing is full as are apartments. Over 100 people are housed across all housing programs.

### **HUD NOFO release and consequences**

Thanks to the Caitlin Golden of the MA Housing and Shelter Alliance for this update:

HUD recently released its latest NOFO (for funding in 2027) - as expected it signals a significant cut to Permanent Supportive Housing with an estimated loss of 2,600 units in MA alone (97,000 nationwide).

HUD's emphasis is on self-sufficiency, calling Housing First a complete failure and defining success exclusively in terms of exits to unsubsidized housing and increased earned income. HUD is criticizing the retention rate for Permanent Supportive Housing, a data point that has until now been a demonstration point for the program's extraordinary success.

National Alliance to End Homelessness and other partners have filed a supplement to the ongoing lawsuit to challenge this NOFO. [Read more here.](#)

There are 10 Continuums of Care (CoC's) in MA and all are in the process of figuring out how to manage responding to this new NOFO (due end of August).

From Gerry McCafferty: Hampden County CoC reported out that due to their particular funding situation, it will likely be able to preserve its PSH in this application. It has issued its RFP for funding under the new NOFO; Three County CoC will issue its RFP on Monday - stay tuned for blog posting on Monday with RFPs posted.

**Opposing HUD's proposed change to Equal Access Rule:** This rule would change would strip LGBTQ+ people of protections against discrimination when they seek shelter or housing services. Comments in opposition to this rule are due by June 29. [Go here to get info on how to comment.](#) Every comment counts!

### **State budget updates**

Thanks to Kelly Turley of the MA Coalition for the Homeless for these updates:

Final stages of passing FY26 supplemental budget (Housed passed; Senate about to take it up) which currently includes an extension of length of stay for family shelter from 6 months to 9 months. For an overview of FY26 supplemental budget and homelessness amendments/provisions: <https://tinyurl.com/fy26supp>

On FY27 budget, Conference Committee budget will come out soon, hoping it includes the best of the House and Senate versions re: housing and homelessness.

For the Coalition's budget online action: <https://tinyurl.com/fy27confbudget>

**Also working to pass the MA ID Access bill** - both versions are in the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees - a real push is on to get them across the finish line. See this online action here: <https://tinyurl.com/massid2026> And op-ed on issue here: <https://tinyurl.com/massid-mchbt>

**Network Annual Event:** it happened on May 29! It was great. Check out the presentation, the video, the media coverage [here](#).

**Next meeting date: Thursday, July 30, 9 am**