

# Family Services Meeting Minutes – 12/11/18

*In attendance: Ashley Brehm, Way Finders, Ellen Broadhurst, West Springfield Schools, Joel Cox, NEFWC, Hillary Cronin, VA, Anthia Elliott, BHN, Waleska Estrada, NEFWC, Rosemary Fiedler, HCC, Lisa Goldsmith, DIAL/SELF, Libby Hayes, Homes for Families, Steve Huntley, VOC, Fran Lemay, ServiceNet, Jane Lindfors, DTA/DV, Andrea Marion, VOC, Heather Marshall, Elizabeth Freeman Center, Rebecca Muller, Gandara, Theresa Nicholson, CHD, Lizzy Ortiz, Mercy Medical, Aisha Pizarro, YWCA, Jenni Pothier, TPP, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Janna Tetrault, Community Action, Janette Vigo, Way Finders, Lauren Voyer, Way Finders, Melissa White, VOC, Erica Zayas, VOC*

## **Discussion of Shelter Re-Procurement with guest Libby Hayes, Executive Director, Homes for Families**

Libby summarized the main discussion points thus far based on DHCD's listening sessions and ongoing discussions with providers statewide (click [here](#) for summary of procurement discussions and [here](#) for a summary of the Listening Sessions).

Feedback included:

- When considering extending HomeBASE, look at criteria forextension
- Better integrate domestic violence services to families
- Provide more clinical treatment for mental health and substanceuse issues

- Address staff professional development needs and recruitment challenges
- Increase systematic and coordinated stabilization to best connect to other supports, e.g., WIC and Head Start
- Integrate workforce development
- Align DHCD and DTA income and asset guidelines eligibility is consistent

**Break-out groups to address stabilization question in more depth**(see RFI Discussion Q [here](#). Feedback included:

- Critical Time Intervention needs more than 3-6 months to be effective
- Intensive case management should be available as needed but a “transition worker” could be seen as intrusive to families (make available only when families are receptive)
- Extending HomeBASE should not be based on criteria because of complexity of assessment and determinations (and potentially uneven application)
- Should we be talking about extending HomeBASE or taking the dollars such an extension would require and allocate them to increased MRVP vouchers to actually create more permanent housing
- Extending HomeBASE would be make landlords more amenable to accepting the resource
- We need DATA on OUTCOMES on HomeBASE and stabilization to better determine the program’s effectiveness – right now DHCD’s

EA and HB data systems

are separate and do not talk to each other – efforts are being made to fix that

but this is a huge gap in quantitative evaluation (beyond case notes)

- Accountability is an important element in any program design
- Stabilization services are coordinated in many instances; we just need to do a better job of capturing that coordination
- Caseloads are too high and by definition preclude meaningful stabilization – must reduce!
- Permanent supportive housing is a model that works – it's happening in Hampden County for families and needs to be expanded – let's make sure to feature our successes in our responses to DHCD

### **Next steps:**

- We will establish a flow of communication with Homes for Families and within the Network so that ideally providers statewide are responding to the RFI with coordinated goals and strategies.
- The Request for Information (RFI) is due out by the end of this week. We will exchange on it by email and meet again to discuss at our next regularly scheduled meeting on Jan. 8.

**Announcement:** Per our previous meeting discussion, the

committee is hosting a **training by Community Legal Aid** to learn more about the resources and representation available for families facing legal challenges. The training will take place on Wed., Jan. 23, 2:30-4:00 pm, Holyoke Public Library Community Room, 250 Chestnut Street, Holyoke

Next regularly scheduled meeting date:

**Tuesday, Jan. 8**

**11:00 am – 12:30 pm**

**Kittredge Center, Room 303**

**Holyoke Community College**