

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Meeting – 12/14/18

In attendance: Peter Cofoni, DCF, Emily English, Gandara Center, Rosemary Fiedler, HCC, Lisa Goldsmith, DIAL/SELF, Ann Lentini, Domus, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield, Mena Regan, CHD, Denise Rivera-Nuiez, FOH/CSO, Jean Rogers, CHD, Rebecca Muller, Grant Works/Gandara

Implementation of EOHHS youth grants: There was a statewide meeting of all grantees recently. Good to connect and discuss data issues among other aspects of implementation. This initiative is being guided by Linn Torto of the MA Interagency Council on Homelessness. Contracts have been sent to all regions at this point.

Hampden County: The contract is all but final. Now doing sub-recipient contracts with Gandara and CHD. CHD is hiring a staff person to do outreach, prevention and diversion. Gandara will have several staff to do the same plus run the winter shelter and the administration of the flex funds. Winter shelter plans are well underway, deciding on hours with youth input (6 pm – 8 am); will open first in an available church space while looking for more permanent space in a home.

Three County: still waiting on contract from the state but should be any day now.

Data collection issues: This program is requiring the

reporting of some data points that are not already in HMIS. Because the intention is for this program to be extended up to 8 years, it is worthwhile to address the data needs in a more systematic way. Gerry is convening a meeting of Green River, the consultants that developed the data warehouse (along with other tools) that is being utilized by Hampden and Three County CoCs. Green River's system also supports coordinated entry by doing automatic matches between individuals (based on their assessments) and housing units that become available. This system offers tremendous potential for streamlining housing efforts! The hope is to expand the data system to capture the youth experiencing homelessness – both to refer into the system and to refer out, tracking the resources provided and the outcomes. The meeting with Green River and 3 county and Hampden County providers will take place sometime in January.

Youth aging out of foster care: Our next meeting in January will include Elorie Stevens, a regional supervisor at DCF, where we will have a discussion about how to build connections between DCF and coordinated entry to prevent homelessness and maintain housing.

Gerry reported on a research project out of NY focusing on interventions that prevent homelessness among aging out foster care youth. She referred them to folks on our committee so please stay tuned.

Point in time count: We confirmed that two counts will take place this year: Jan. 30 as part of the yearly HUD count and sometime in May as part of the statewide youth count. Community colleges and providers will support the Jan. 30 count with some outreach efforts (acknowledging the challenge with just returning from winter break).

Family shelter system re-procurement: We discussed the need to address youth parenting in the family re-procurement process that is underway. It was noted that young parents need to be treated differently in the system based on their developmental needs and that in general the shelter system needs to look at assessment across the board. It was also noted that the procurement should address the gap for “off hours” assistance in general (after 5 pm and weekends). Pamela will coordinate a conference call with Libby, Emily, Gerry, Lisa (and late-breaking thought by Pamela, Jane Banks).

**Next meeting date: Jan. 9, 9 am – 10:30 am, HCC, Frost Building
309**