

Family Services Meeting Minutes – 1/8/18

Note: Please note the next meeting to discuss the coordinated response to the RFI for the Family Homelessness System will take place on **Thursday, Jan. 17, 9 am -11 am, Kittredge Center, Room 303, Holyoke Community College.**

Summary Minutes of 1/8/18 Family Services Committee Meeting

In attendance: Shelly Benoit, BHN, Yoshi Bird, YWCA, Ashley Brehm, Way Finders, Tracy Caisse, BHN, Joel Cox, NEFWC, Hillary Cronin, VA, Dawn DiStefano, Square One, Anthia Elliott, BHN, Gus Erskine, Springfield Partners for Community Action, Fran Lemary, ServiceNet, Jane Lindfors, DTA DV unit, Andrea Marion, VOC, Heather Marshall, Elizabeth Freeman Center, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield/CoC, Michelle Michaelian, BHN, Donna Nadeau, DHCD, Theresa Nicholson, CHD, Yajaira Ramos, BHN, Jolanta Rumierz, DCF, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Janna Teatrault, Community Action, Janette Vigo, Way Finders, Melissa White, VOC, Erica Zayas, VOC

Review of DHCD's RFI for the Family Homelessness System (To access the RFI, go to: <https://www.COMMBUYS.com>, go to "contract and bid search" link at bottom page and insert BID SOLICITATION NUMBER: BD-19-1076-0CDDE-0CD01-34305)

The group reviewed each question of the RFI and agreed on the questions that were potentially appropriate for a coordinated response.

We identified some of the major areas we know we want to flesh out:

- mental health services – greater integration and coordination (see Project FIT as a model)
- domestic violence services – greater integration and coordination
- substance use treatment – greater integration and coordination
- permanent supportive housing – more of it for families with chronic barriers
- earlier assessment of families with complex barriers while accounting for the fact that it can take time before the full needs are known (tricky!)
- creating a shelter system that acknowledges every family has unique needs
- sufficient stabilization resources to provide the support necessary for long-term stability
- undocumented immigrant families: a response system that addresses their particular challenges to obtain housing, employment, etc.
- better coordination between EOHHS programs and DHCD
- better coordination with DCF
- more units that accommodate families with physical disabilities
- “right sizing” each community’s shelter system so families do not need to move out their community of origin
- make better use of housing authority resources

The group discussed how to continue the planning process. One suggestion was to “start fresh” in our discussion with an outcome-oriented approach: how should our system function to maximize stable housing for families at risk of or experiencing homelessness; how do we re-house families quickly

and stably? We discussed retaining a professional facilitator to lead us in this exercise but then acknowledged the limited time and complexity of each agency also sorting out their responses. Pamela agreed to continue talking one-on-one with committee members to think through the best format for our next meeting.

Next meeting date: Thurs., Jan. 17, 9 am – 11 am, Kittredge Center, Room 303, Holyoke Community College

We agreed upon the date of Thurs., Jan. 17, 9-11 am to meet next. Location is Kittredge, Room 303, HCC.