

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Meeting Minutes – 2/13/19

In attendance: Emily English, Gandara Center, Lisa Goldsmith, Community Action, Sharon Hall-Smith, Gandara Center, Charlie Knight, Rainville, Gerry McCafferty, Hampden County CoC, Magnus Monroe, Davis Foundation, Rebecca Muller, Gandara Center, Lizzy Ortiz, Mercy Medical, Jean Rogers, CHD, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Kelsey Wessels, DIAL/SELF

EOHHS Youth Grant Updates
3 County update: Focusing right now on needs assessment and winter sheltering. Meeting with ServiceNet to discuss potential accommodations for youth in their shelter (while moving towards a youth only shelter). Looking at a “youth protocol” for shelters based on a protocol developed by Father Bill’s shelter on the South Shore. On the assessment, will likely retain a consultant to assist with the project; currently gathering information.

Hampden County Update:

- Gandara (sub-grantee) has housed 4 people with long-term RRH assistance. Gandara is working on the youth shelter space but in the meanwhile is also working with Friends of the Homeless on the same youth protocol issue. Gerry is facilitating this conversation. Above all the priority is to ensure youth who enter the adult shelter are quickly connected to youth specific services. **Gerry will send to Pamela Father Bill’s protocol and she will send it out to the committee.** (Note post meeting: the link is [here](#).)

- CHD is close to hiring prevention and outreach person.
- Retained consultant to do 3 things: (1) needs assessment; (2) help with youth engagement and creation of a youth action board and (3) to improve chances of getting federal Youth Homelessness Demonstration project grant (3rd chance happening this Spring). Hired Matt Aronson consulting (used to work at HUD, created YHD program). Currently cataloguing all services and collecting all contacts for needs assessment. Gerry sent out initial draft documents to the committee, requesting input.
- Consultants will be in town March 1 and March 8. Kick-off meeting on **March 1, 9 -10:30 am – Union Station, Springfield, 2nd floor.**
- Hopeful that this planning and assessment process will provide for greater outreach opportunities when the state youth count occurs in May.

Data reporting for both CoCs: Because this state grant requires some data that is not required by HMIS, e.g., LGBTQ status, 3 county and Hampden are working with Green River consulting firm to create an intake within the system which will collect all the required data. Currently being tested, will roll out completely soon.

Monthly data report for this committee: We agreed it would be useful to get summary data on the grants on the:

of youth referred

of youth engaged

of youth housed

Also it would be useful to put these grant outcomes in the context of all youth housing work, i.e., “how many youth were

housed this month?"

Hampden County Foster Care/Homelessness Project:Foster Care Intervention Project

Through the Hampden CoC's work with the national Built for Zero campaign, it got connected to a nationwide study on the relationship between foster care and youth homelessness. A consulting firm, along with a graduate program in NYC, funded by a private family foundation (The Larson Family Foundation), focuses on "human-centered" designs of social programs. They interviewed a number of communities and selected two nationwide: Springfield/Hampden County and Phoenix, AZ. We won the lottery!

They will be doing a deep investigation on the journey from foster care to homelessness; will design interventions based on what they learn from our community, informed by data, will help implement pilot projects in response and study their impact, and eventually roll out these recommended practices nationwide.

There was an initial meeting last week where they explained the project as a whole. First step is "journey mapping" – pulling in the expertise from service providers and youth directly, on what happens in the journey from foster care to homelessness. First session in Springfield is on March 1, 11 am – 1:30 pm. Gerry will send out additional info to shelter and youth providers to invite participation. This will be a 2 year timeline for the whole project, including summer piloting and initial evaluation, then determining interventions and implementing the following year and evaluating.

Gerry has been in touch with Linn Torto of Mass ICHH who is connecting Gerry with the DCF and DYS Assistant Secretaries. Will also reach out to DMH.

OrgCode training report-out: Lisa, Emily, Sharon and Pamela spoke with Erin Wixsten after the “awesome shelter” training to discuss youth specific strategies. Click [here](#) for the notes.

Family RFI Response: Youth providers were involved in providing their input to the Family RFI. Click [here](#) for the final submission which included young parent recommendations.

DCF Training – May 23, 10 am: We established our working group: Lisa, Jean, Gerry, Emily – Pamela will coordinate a meeting in a couple of weeks and touch base with Elorie Stevens at DCF to confirm plans.

HUD PIT count Update: The count took place on and around Jan. 30. Emily reported on an outreach event at ROCA where 20 youth were engaged and completed surveys. The data is being sent to Gerry now (unclear how many were actually homeless).

While it is too soon to have youth-specific results on the count, Gerry reported that 19 unsheltered individuals were identified in Holyoke; in all of Hampden County the unsheltered count was approx. 40, so Holyoke constituted half. The high Holyoke count is most likely a reflection of the strengthening network within Holyoke – across the police dept., Tapestry, Eliot and other agencies. It’s a paradoxical reflection of progress to actually identify more of the population that is out there.

In 3 county, Pamela was able to relay Jay’s report of 28 total unsheltered individuals counted.

Career Services Resource Fair: coming up Friday, Feb. 1, 10 am

- 12 noon, MassHire Holyoke, 850 High Street, Holyoke

Save the date: 3rd annual Housing and Homelessness Resource Fair for all providers: Monday, June 10, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, HCC.

Next meeting dates:

March 20, 10:30 – 12 noon, TBD

April 17, 9:30 am, HCC, KC 302

May 8, 9:30 am, TBD

June 5, 9:30 am, HCC, KC 303