

3 County Individual Services Meeting Minutes – 4/8/19

In attendance: Yoshi Bird, YWCA, Steve Connor, Veterans Services, Sara Cunningham, Community Action, Eleanor Dodson, ServiceNet, Erin Forbush, ServiceNet, Lisa Goldsmith, Community Action, Jade Lovett, Craig's Doors, Elizabeth Mansfield, Tapestry, Danielle McColgan, CHD, Katie Miernecki, ServiceNet, Theresa Nicholson, CHD, Aidan Novo, Craig's Doors, Aisha Pizarro, YWCA, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Kate Shapiro, DMH, Michael Trembley, ServiceNet

SSI/SSDI Training: Big thanks to Caitlyn Thomas, a Social Security disability advocate, for volunteering her incredible time and energy to organizing and leading a training of roughly 75 Network partners this morning at Holyoke Public Library on SS/SSDI. The feedback was excellent across the board and the only “complaint” was wanting more! Pamela will discuss with Caitlyn any possibility for supplemental training and/or distribution of the presentation.

Built for Zero Update: Pamela updated the group on her attendance at the [Built For Zero](#) Learning Session in Atlanta, GA in late March as part of the Hampden County CoC team. This is a very exciting initiative – over 70 CoCs and communities represented with 500 people from across the country – working as part of a national initiative (led by the national organization Community Solutions) in collaboration with HUD, VA and the US Interagency on Homelessness. Its first focus is to end veteran homelessness (several communities have celebrated this milestone; Hampden County has set June 30 for its goal!). “Ending” means reaching “functional zero” where

the number of people experiencing homelessness each month is less than the average number of people who are rehoused (i.e., the “outflow” is larger than the “inflow”). After achieving veteran homelessness, the initiative will focus its efforts on ending chronic homelessness and then all forms of homelessness (youth and family).

[Built for Zero](#) considers itself a movement for social change, anchored in fundamental grassroots organizing principles (there is no such thing as doing “for” only “with”), entirely data-driven and using that data to make highly measurable progress. It is positively inspiring to be a part of it!

Pamela shared this information with the new 3 County CoC lead – Community Action – and they are participating in a webinar on 4/9 about how new communities can join. We will all stay tuned. The next national convening will be in October and meanwhile the work in Hampden County continues with the countdown to ending veteran homelessness by June 30.

Discussion of 3 county assessment tool: The group began to revisit the question of the 3 County CoC’s assessment tool for its coordinated entry system. All Built for Zero communities use the VI-SPDAT, which was previously rejected by the 3 County CoC in favor of the AZ Matrix Tool. Pamela suggested the group take another look since the VI-SPDAT allows for a common language, more training resources and comparison with the other CoC’s across the nation (as well as the Hampden County CoC). It was agreed that this was an appropriate issue for the Coordinated Entry work group to take up. Pamela will just give a heads-up on the question (and what she took away from the Built for Zero session) at the CoC Board meeting on Wed.

Update on PSH transition: Theresa Nicholson of CHD gave a

report on its acquisition of ServiceNet's PSH contract and her search for new units. She has a promising lead on a complex in Millers Falls, although we discussed access to public transportation as a possible barrier. She will examine other transpo options. At this point, CHD will be taking over ServiceNet's 26 units for PSH (and will add 28-30 more). If CHD can enter into a sub-contract with ServiceNet (for its remaining dollars), some of these units could come on line in May; otherwise it will be in July when CHD takes over the full contract.

Shelter Plus Care conversations: We reported out on the initial meeting with DMH and ACCS (ServiceNet) regarding implementation of system changes to ease the eligibility and housing process. The group will meet again in May and will keep this group updated.

MA Youth Count: April 12 – May 12 – go [here](#) for surveys and related information – please spread the word and participate!

Shelter Update: Shelters are full as usual. We agreed to reframe this topic on the monthly agenda to address questions/issues ripe for discussion – Pamela will check in with Erin, Katie and Jade prior to meeting to see if there is something they want to discuss.

FY20 State Budget Update: Pamela, in combination with various Network partners, has been leading meetings with Western MA state legislators regarding the Network's [FY20 budget priorities](#). On April 8, Network partners got an audience with Senate President Spilka who joined a planned meeting with Senator Anne Gobi (from Ware and Palmer), a fabulous opportunity to bring Western MA needs to the highest levels of

state government!

Register for the Resource Fair! Monday, June 10, 9 am – 12 noon, Holyoke Community College.

To register to attend: go [here](#).

To register to request table space to share resources: go [here](#) (note: if you're having a table but have additional staff attending, please register on the general attendance link as well).

Next meeting date: Monday, May 13, 1 pm, ServiceNet, 296 Nonotuck St, Northampton