

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Meeting Minutes - 10/17/18

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In attendance: Jesus Arce, City of Springfield, Peter Cofoni, DCF, Emily English, Gandara Center, Rosemary Fiedler, HCC, Charlie Knight, Rainville, Ann Lentini, Domus, Inc., Gerry McCafferty, Hampden CoC, Rebecca Muller, Gandara Center, Rylee O'Brien, Mena Regan, CHD, Jean Rogers, CHD, Martha Sandoval, Baystate General Pediatrics, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Julie Vital, Baystate General Pediatrics

State youth funding: Gerry and Lisa shared that they both received notice that youth grants will be announced on a call on Thursday morning (tomorrow) for Hampden and 3 County regions. Both sub-regions applied for funds as part of the state funding allocated for youth housing and homelessness services provided in the FY19 project (grant applications in the \$300,000 range). The state envisions this funding to be renewed and hopefully increased over a 10 year period. The money will be utilized for outreach, prevention, rapid rehousing and a winter shelter for youth and will pay for a range of staff, services and appropriate cash assistance for youth.

Building youth input: Gerry, Emily and Rebecca recently met with young leaders of Youth Voice, the leadership group at Gandara's Impact Center, to introduce themselves and begin a dialogue with them about how best to structure a winter shelter. It was a very productive conversation that included touching on points around how to support both privacy and safety (no doors but curtains or some kind of separation); ensuring it's LGBTQ welcoming, making it low barrier (e.g., perhaps "damp" as opposed to a dry or wet shelter - behavior based).

On LGBTQ accessibility and awareness, Gerry hosted a training on working with transgender individuals for Hampden County providers. The trainer was Rev. Louis Mitchell, a transgender man with a history in the field of homelessness and recovery, including involvement in creating the nation's first emergency shelter. His bio is here: <http://www.transfaithonline.org/engage/leadership/louis/> The training was a follow-up to a HUD webinar on the Equal Access Rule, which requires HUD-funded programs to provide equal access to all regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. An additional resource on this issue is the [Stonewall Center at UMass](#), which offers workshops (DIAL/SELF has used them with success).

Coordinated Entry update: MANY (Mid-Atlantic Network for Youth) hosted its 4th call yesterday where the focus was on how to use data. The calls include leaders on youth homelessness from 5-7 communities. It's a great opportunity to exchange best practices and goals.

Discussion of ACO's and connecting around homelessness. We had a very lengthy and productive conversation around how Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) are structured in relationship to intersecting with patients facing homelessness. Julie, Martha and Rylee of Baystate General Pediatrics helped us all understand better what hospitals/health care centers are now incentivized to do around asking about housing stability (reimbursement for each finding), how many patients are reporting their housing instability and the current gap in having a clear protocol in response to those reports. We discussed the tremendous opportunity this poses for our Network as a whole for building into the system capacity to reach and serve these people. This will be a process! And we spent some time laying the groundwork for the work that lies ahead. Gerry will provide the cards produced that summarize youth services in Hampden County. Pamela will add Julie, Martha and Rylee to the family services email list. Pamela will reach out to Julie to connect with HNE director around the 12/17 training on "thinking like a system" to see if she can attend. We will also reach out to other ACO's to see how we can bring them into these conversations as well.

Network trainings:

Pamela reported on upcoming Network sponsored trainings - how to run an awesome shelter - 12/18; progressive engagement and diversion (1/2 day 1/31) and trauma informed care (1/2 day, 1/31). All offered by OrgCode, a highly reputed consulting firm that works on system change within homelessness systems. Email registration forms went out this morning.

We didn't have the time to discuss the racial disparity analysis but will put that on the agenda for next meeting.

Next meeting dates:

Wed., Nov. 14, 9-10:30 am, Frost Building, Room 309