

Career Services Fair – Fri, Feb. 15, 10 am, Holyoke

The Career Services Committee of the Western MA Network to End Homelessness is pleased to invite you to:

Career Services Resource Fair for Housing & Homelessness Providers

Friday, February 15

10 am – 12 noon

MassHire Holyoke

850 High Street, 3rd floor, Paper City Room, Holyoke

Come learn about employment-related resources available to individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness or newly housed. See flyer below for more details.

Please RVSP to Pamela
at pschwartz@westernmasshousingfirst.org.



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Committee Meeting Minutes –

1/9/18

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Committee Meeting Minutes January 9, 2018

In attendance: Peter Cofoni, DCF, Rosemary Fiedler, HCC, Lisa Goldsmith, Dial/SELF, Sharon Hall-Smith, Gandara Center, Ann Lentini, Domus, Mena Regan, CHD/DYS, Denise Rivera, FOH/CSO, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Elorie Stevens, DCF

Discussion with Elorie Stevens, DCF Intensive Placement Coordinator, Western Region Special thanks to Elorie for joining us this morning.

Elorie explained her role at DCF: as Intensive Placement Coordinator, she works with area offices to identify placements for young people who need a higher level of care; she coordinates the work around Dually Involved Youth (DIY) – both DCF and DYS involved (meet with DYS weekly); meets with DMH and DDS on a monthly basis.

There are 5 offices in the Western region: 2 in Springfield, 1 in Holyoke, Greenfield and Pittsfield. She shares this job with a counterpart, Jen Coupe. Elorie covers one Springfield office, Holyoke and Greenfield; Jen covers the other Springfield office and Pittsfield.

We provided an overview of our homelessness system for young adults, Coordinated Entry and our goal of ensuring coordination and communication between our systems so that youth in DCF/DYS at risk of homelessness are linked to homelessness prevention programs as early as possible. We all acknowledged the challenge of young people who are transitioning out of the DCF (or any system) not wanting to be

involved – and that resistance making homelessness a greater risk.

Elorie offered to allocate one of DCF's regular region-wide trainings to learning about youth homelessness-related programs. These training dates include DCF, DYS, Juvenile Court and other providers, up to 100 total from across the four counties. We said yes!

We agreed on a date:

Thursday, May 23, 10 am – 12 noon, Kittredge Center, Rm 301/303. We agreed we would brainstorm a title (note: following the meeting we confirmed this title: *Homelessness prevention and re-housing services for young adults: how to access the system and what it offers*). Elorie will do further planning with her planning group; our committee will continue to talk about how best to organize the training.

In addition to adding Elorie to our committee email list, Elorie will reach out to Justin Lak, the Adolescent Outreach Supervisor for the Western region, and invite him to attend our meetings.

Exciting progress on building our collaboration and huge thanks to Peter for connecting us and Elorie for joining us!

Youth grant update:

Hampden County: a coordinator has been hired for the winter shelter; now hiring direct care staff. Searching for an appropriate location for the shelter. Continuing to fill rapid re-housing slots. Building collaboration with CHD on diversion and prevention work.

Three County: working on staffing and creating good data tracking systems. Lisa Goldsmith is moving from Dial/SELF to a new position as homeless youth services manager at Community Action as of Jan. 28 – she will continue the role of managing this grant.

Youth count: Jan. 30

Hampden County: Working with Impact Center, HCC, ROCA on a couple of outreach events

Three County: working with regional contact person in each county to send out information, and with Eliot Services on outreach

Next meeting date: Wed., 2/13, 9:15 – 10:30 am, Kittredge Center, Room 303, HCC.

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.

Cliff Effects Webinar: Jan. 29

[Registration is Open!](#)

The [Center for Social Policy](#), the [Commonwealth Workforce Coalition](#), and [On Solid Ground](#) are excited to announce that [registration is now open](#) for our upcoming webinar:

Cliff Effects: Turning Research into Action for Economic Mobility

to take place on

Tuesday, January 29th, 2019: 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

The webinar will feature speakers from:

- Center for Social Policy
- Learn to Earn
- Holyoke Community College
- Springfield WORKS
- On Solid Ground

[Register now to reserve your spot!](#)

Detailed agenda is forthcoming.

DHCD's RFI Released: EA Family Homelessness Shelter System

DHCD has released its EA Family Homelessness Shelter System RFI. Responses are due Feb. 15. Please see below on how to access the bid.

The Family Services Committee is meeting **Tuesday, Jan. 8, 11 am – 12:30 pm, at Kittredge Center, Room 303, Holyoke Community College**, to begin discussions on our regional response. All are welcome.

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Please be advised that the Department of Housing and Community Development has posted a new Bid Solicitation:

BID SOLICITATION NUMBER: BD-19-1076-0CDDE-0CD01-34305
BID SOLICITATION DESCRIPTION: DHCD2019-16 RFI Emergency Assistance Family Homeless Shelter System
BID SOLICITATION OPENING DATE: 02/15/2019 05:00:00 PM
ENTERED DATE: 01/04/2019 05:00:00 PM

Please refer to Bid Solicitation documents for further instructions.

Purchaser Information:

Rocco Albano

rocco.albano@mass.gov

(617)573-1258

All Bidders must respond within the requirements of this solicitation and its applicable procurement laws, policies and practices. All Bidders are responsible for ensuring that their responses are based on the most current version of the bid record.

Technical questions about system functionality or your account? Contact the COMMBUYS Helpdesk at commbuys@state.ma.us

Thank you for using COMMBUYS!

HOW DO I ACCESS THE BID RECORD ABOVE?

If you DO NOT have a COMMBUYS Login ID and Password:

1. Go to <https://www.COMMBUYS.com>
2. Select the "Contract & Bid Search" link and on the next page Select "Bids"
3. Enter the Bid # listed above in the Bid# field and select the "Find It" button
4. In the Results section, select the Bid# hyperlink to open and view the bid record

If you DO have a COMMBUYS Login ID and Password:

1. Go to <https://www.COMMBUYS.com>
2. Enter your login credentials into the Login ID & Password and select Login
3. Select the Settings icon from the top right of the page, and then Advanced Search
4. In the Document Type drop down box select "Bids", the page will refresh and offer the Advanced Search fields
5. Enter the Bid # listed above in the Bid# field and select the "Find It" button
6. In the Results section, select the Bid# hyperlink to open and view the bid record

***** External
bid URL
: <https://www.commbuys.com/bs0/external/bidAck.sdo?parentUrl=activeBids&bidId=BD-19-1076-0CDDE-0CD01-34305>

Use this link to log on to
COMMBUYS: <https://www.commbuys.com/bs0/view/login/login.xhtml>

Final push for MA ID Access Bill – before January 1!

See this alert from the MA Coalition for the Homeless – thanks for taking action if you can!

The 2017-2018 legislative session officially ends on Tuesday, January 1, 2019, so it's time for our final push to pass the Mass ID access bill! Thank you for making calls, signing our petitions, writing letters, posting on social media, and visiting the State House. Your efforts have a positive impact and we are so grateful for your support.

In these last two weeks of the session, we need your continued help to encourage House Ways and Means Chair Jeff Sánchez and House Speaker Robert DeLeo to move Senate Bill 2568, An Act to provide identification to homeless youth and families. The bill would direct the Registry of Motor Vehicles to waive the \$25 Mass ID fee for applicants experiencing homelessness, and make it easier for applicants experiencing homelessness without an address to prove Massachusetts residency.

We are asking you to do two things:

Sign and share our #EveryoneNeedsID online petition

Call Speaker DeLeo and Chairman Sánchez, urging them to take action to pass Senate Bill 2568 during informal sessions (before January)

Speaker DeLeo's number: 617-722-2500

Chairman Sánchez's number: 617-722-2990

Once you are done, post these two easy steps on social media, tag the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless using the links above, and encourage others to do the same! With enough momentum, we can get this bill passed!

Thank you to everyone who already has taken action on this bill, including those who added your organization as an official endorser of the #EveryoneNeedsID campaign. We now officially have 67 endorsers for this campaign! See our latest

fact sheet with an updated list of endorsing organizations here.

If you would like to check in about the ID bill, please don't hesitate to contact Kelly.

Thank you for your collaboration, and best wishes for the holidays!

In solidarity,
Molly Schulman
Community Organizer/Legislative Advocate
molly@mahomeless.org

Kelly Turley
Associate Director
kelly@mahomeless.org

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,

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**

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes – 12/13/18

*VI*n attendance: Steve Connor, Veterans Services, Craig Deraway, Soldier On, Justin Maynard, VA, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Kate Sweetster-Owens, VA, Stephanie Tonelli, FOH/CSO, Allie Wilson-Pierce, VA

Hampden County Update: 19 veterans currently on the by-name list.

Housing is identified for half. Will be using Chapin Mansion (through VOC) that has 8 vacancies and has changed its policies to low barrier (no longer sober housing). It will prioritize housing veterans.

The non-VA eligible HUD-VASH vouchers have been all but approved (awaiting final final approval after some minor changes to the agreement). There will be 11 vouchers to be used across the region. This

will make a huge impact for hardest to house veterans.

A few veterans have returned to the area and are repeat voucher recipients. This raised the larger challenge, i.e., how to better serve veterans who need more support than VASH currently gives (due to case load and veterans' needs). The veterans involved here have thought disorders that make stability especially difficult. We will further research best practices on this challenge (Gerry will see what Built for Zero folks have to offer). We also discussed the value of Critical Time Intervention (CTI) as a model that has proven success. We agreed that to train on this model would require regional and organizational buy-in (from top down to bottom up) and this is something the CoCs could encourage/require in their grant funding application process. We will discuss further.

Three county Update:

We discussed 3 County's by-name list. It does not include veterans living at Soldier On, just unsheltered veterans outside of Soldier On. We discussed the fact that because veterans in transitional housing at Soldier On are considered homeless and must be rehoused that it could be helpful in our regional work to have them on the by-name list; it would also allow for better tracking as veterans move in and out of Soldier On, and up and down 91, and providers would have a better chance of understanding history and needs when they enter the system again.

We also noted that Soldier On's permanent housing is allocated based on traditional fair housing criteria (first come first serve), and is not integrated into coordinated entry

where vulnerability and chronic homelessness are the deciding factors. This creates a disconnect between VA requirements for allocating HUD-VASH (prioritization based on acuity of need). This issue has been discussed previously and we agreed it would be useful to get an update on where conversations are at with the VA and HUD. Pamela will reach out to Jim Seney to get an update.

We agreed it would be useful to meet across the CoC's to brainstorm how to build better collaboration and possibly one by-name list. We agreed Pamela would reach out to:

3 County CoC – Brad and Lisa, co-chairs, and Community Action as the incoming lead
VA – Jim Kate, Allie, Solider On – Craig, Mike
Hampden County CoC – Gerry
ServiceNet – Erin Forbush
Hilltown CDC – Nikki Riello, Dave C

Our goal is to identify the barriers to unified coordinated entry – what are local and what are national – and determine together next steps.

Next quarterly meeting date: Thurs., March 14, 9:30-11 am, Frost Building, Room 309