

## Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Committee Minutes - 5/25/17

### Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Committee May 25, 2017

*In attendance: Courtney Godbolt, Friends of the Homeless, Lisa Goldsmith, DIAL/SELF, Sarah Hills, Eliot CHS, John Lewis, Springfield Police/Shannon Grant, Kim Majewski, Gandara Center, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield, Jenny Mills, Youth Build, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Delphine Wray, Friends of the Homeless*

#### **Youth Count Debriefs:**

The MA sponsored youth count took place over 2 weeks at the start of May.

**Hampden County:** Kim reported 3-4 events (boys and girls club, STCC, Dunbar, MLK) - STCC generated most contact with approx. 30 surveys. CHD organized an event at HCC which generated approx. 35 surveys. Gerry reported over 100 surveys were completed from parenting youth residing at shelters. This number is greater than last year (except the state has not yet released the results from last year's surveys). High school outreach was not particularly fruitful. A couple of non-profit organizations complained that they felt tired of being asked to complete surveys without additional engagement. This suggests the need for more sustained follow-up around the services that are available.

**Hampshire County:** Lisa reported that there were a couple of outreach events, one at ServiceNet, another in Greenfield. She does not have outcome info as she was not directly involved in running these events. She noted that some of the youth that had interacted with ServiceNet had not been referred to DIAL/SELF, which points again to the need for sustained outreach (since it's not just a matter of "knowing" about the resources are there but really about *integrating* their existence into the daily work).

**Discussion of data collection and analysis as it pertains to understanding the status of the youth homelessness and the system response to it:** We returned to question of what data would be useful for this committee to generate to best understand the over-arching questions:

how many youth are homeless?

how many are assessed?

how quickly and in what manner are they getting housed?

are they staying housed or returning to homelessness?

The broader goal is to determine the amount of youth homelessness and how effective our system is in responding to it and where the gaps lie.

We noted the limits of the State's quarterly report requirements stemming from the youth grant since they are too detailed and too specific to the programs meeting their grant obligations. The questions listed above require a combination of HMIS data and a by-name list (as successfully demonstrated by Hampden County's coordinated entry efforts with chronic homeless and veterans; Three County has a coordinated entry retreat scheduled for 6/19). Gerry also noted the development of a new data warehouse for Hampden County that is in process that will greatly increase capacity to pull the data we are interested in.

Kim noted that Gandara Center is currently maintaining a list of youth that seek services but it is not formalized based on the questions listed above. Gerry and Kim will meet to plan for the development of a list that is consistent with coordinated entry. Lisa noted that DIAL/SELF's youth workers each have a list of who they are currently working with but that is also not an overall cohesive by-name list and it also does not account for the people who are referred but do not make it into services. This goes to the universal challenge of greater outreach and engagement services.

Another area to explore is the intersection between unaccompanied youth and parenting youth who are in the family shelter system - how do the two systems connect, e.g., an unaccompanied youth seeks services through Gandara and then later reveals having a child in the foster care system or at a relative's home.

For next month's meeting, we agreed that Gerry and Kim would report back on their meeting around a by-name list; Lisa would share any additional information/thoughts on reporting; we will further discuss the outreach to family providers working with parenting youth.

**State Budget Update:** The Senate Amendment to increase the youth funding to \$4 million did not pass but the \$2.5 million for youth is still in the Senate budget which is \$.5 million over last year's funding (and \$1.5m over the House Budget). Debate is still underway about language ensuring a Youth Commission.

**New Youth Housing in Northampton:** Lisa announced the great news of the purchase of youth housing in Northampton. Click [here](#) for the flyer.

**Next Meeting Date: Wed., July 5, 10 am - 11:30 am, Holyoke Public Library**