

Joint Individual Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 7/25/23

In attendance: Tanja Alessi, CSO/FOH, Shawn Banks, CSO/FOH, Keith Benoit, City of Northampton, Toni Diaz, CSO-FOH Safe Haven Program, Jake Ferrera, AISS, Hampden County Sheriff's Dept., Kim Fontaine, Eliot Services, Laura Hudson, Positive Place, Janice Humason, CSO/FOH; Mark Jachym, Springfield CTC, Nicole Lussier, Open Pantry, Gerry McCafferty, Hampden CoC, Dana Motley, CSO-Northampton, Theresa Nicholson, CHD, Liz Plouffe, City of Easthampton, Jess Salas, Eliot Services, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Stephanie Tonelli, Tapestry Health, Kathleen West, Eliot Services, Kennyetta Wilson, CSO-FOH

Shelter and housing updates

Springfield: CSO/FOH is very close to capacity at the current moment; almost always full to over-capacity; observing an increase in medical challenges among guests; an increase in the young adult population; an increase in pregnant and parenting guests (DHCD referring to shelter)

Note: discussion of the overall stress on the family system and the impact that is having on the individual system. The demand for family Emergency Assistance shelter is as high as it has ever been, fueled by refugee crisis and local need. HLC (the new DHCD, short for Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities) is opening up additional shelter as fast as they can manage (and it is simply not fast enough to meet the need). Therefore it makes sense that the individual system is seeing more pregnant and parenting guests at their doors. Currently CHD is sheltering 120 families in hotels (above their usual congregate shelter) and VOC is sheltering families in hotels in Chicopee as well.

Holyoke: CHD Motel 6 is always full with 50 individuals.

Note: CHD's low-threshold housing in Holyoke is also full with 48 people residing. Continuing to take referrals as CHD is soon to enter a contract for 25 more low-threshold beds.

Northampton shelters: at capacity (19 at Grove St; 18 at Center St). Seeing an increase in older individuals, many over 70, seeking shelter. Also seeing increase in pregnant women and families (but directing them to HLC).

Craig's Doors (Amherst) - at capacity (38 at Econolodge; 28 at congregate site at Immanuel Lutheran Church)

Wells Street (Greenfield): at capacity but the capacity was expanded from 30 to 40 recently - and that is full.

Pittsfield: full and preparing a move to a permanent shelter site (from St. Joe's High School) which unfortunately has less capacity than St. Joes (40 instead of 50) so starting to plan for winter overflow

North Adams - full with 20 beds and 18 transitional beds

Samaratin Inn: questions about its status - Pamela will follow-up.

5 Franklin Street - questions about the elevator repair status - Pamela will follow-up.

CHD's Outreach and Triage Program

Hired 3 of 6 staff thus far; receiving high volume of calls. Will be providing monthly data reports via the program's advisory committee starting next month (which will be shared here). Distributing tents, food, guiding people to shelter. Working on a google doc to track shelter availability for all providers.

Phone number to call for assistance: 413-867-0398 - staffed Mon-Fri, 9 am - 6 pm (will increase hours with additional staff); will also create in-person sites across the four counties once staff is hired

HUD NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity)

The HUD NOFO is out for all CoC's. In this region, the Hampden and Three County CoC bring in close to \$10 million in federal housing dollars that respond to homelessness (\$6.5m to Hampden; \$3m to 3 County). Will be applying for program renewals and bonus programs (targeted to DV programs). Both CoCs are in the process of finalizing their local RFPs, which will be out next week and decisions made by end of August. Application to HUD is due on 9/28. All orgs are eligible to apply for funding (not limited to previous recipients). Funded projects will begin programs in June/July 2024.

Budget and Legislative Advocacy Update

- Sign-on letter for federal renter protections - can sign on by 7/28 - [go here to sign!](#)
- Pamela is continuing to represent the Network at legislative hearings on Network top priorities. See more on [housing hearing on 7/25 here](#).
- State's FY24 budget is not out of Conference Committee yet (FY24 fiscal year began 7/1). Will post on blog when there is news.
- Be sure to stay connected to advocacy and funding opportunities by subscribing to the blog: [go here to subscribe](#) (check out the bright orange subscribe button!)

Next meeting date: August 29, 1-2 pm