

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes - 2/25/21

In attendance: Dan Bahls, CLA, Craig Deraway, Soldier On, Shaundell Diaz, Three County CoC, Mike Hagmaier, Soldier On, Michelle LaFleur, Three County CoC, Jay Levy, Eliot Services, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Kate Sweetster-Owens, VA HUD-VASH, Sue White, VA GPD

Three County CoC Veterans Case Conferencing meeting: Shaundell reported out on the first veterans case-conferencing meeting last week. A good start. Next meeting will be March 5 (email Shaundell for details: sdiaz@communityaction.us).

Ending SSVF funding for hotels: The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing the federal decision to end SSVF funding for hotels, a pandemic-driven response to veteran homelessness. SSVF has given the end date of March 3. Shaundell provided policy clarification via TAC provider that this end date is contingent on veterans having an alternative sleeping arrangement. Soldier On case managers, which administers the SSVF program, with HUD-VASH workers, are working hard to re-house the veterans currently residing in hotels (10 in Lenox; roughly 20 in Hampden County), using HUD-VASH vouchers and SSVF funding. There was agreement that the individuals had to be assessed regarding their barriers to alternative arrangements (e.g., if shelter was a viable option for them), and that this was in part the role of case conferencing.

Mike is reaching out to other Soldier On staff more directly involved in this effort to connect them to Shaundell, who will convene folks early next week to plan further.

Kate reported that veterans in Hampden County are being discussed in their case conferencing meetings. Not needing to be assessed first to be discussed, just going straight to the question of "how are we going to rehouse."

Three County just re-starting its case conferencing so continuing to develop systems. One identified gap is that right now assessments are only happening if they come through the GPD program (Kate); that Soldier On is not yet in the loop on assessments for people being served in the community. This will be a topic of further discussion in subsequent meetings, beginning with inviting Soldier On case managers to case-conferencing.

Dan will provide the group contacts to small landlords with potentially available units.

Network and Budget Policy Update: The Network is working on its FY22 Budget and Legislative Priorities and has meetings scheduled with our Western MA delegation the week of March 8 to discuss them. Most immediately, see [this blog post](#) on the COVID-19 Housing Equity bill a top priority. Stay tuned for additional priorities and more detail early next week. Be sure to [subscribe to the Network blog](#) to be in this important action loop!

Next meeting date: Thursday, March 25, 2-3 pm