

Family Services Committee Minutes - 5/14/24

In attendance: roughly 25 Network partners, including providers of family shelter, RAFT, health care and child care and education and workforce providers and more

Family Shelter and RAFT Updates:

- CHD: close to 18 placements this month; 120 families in motel shelter; roughly less than 1/2 are Haitian immigrants.
- ServiceNet: seeing similar demand (16 families in Greenfield; approx. 17 in Pittsfield; 50 in hotels).
- Discussion of shelter limits that will go into effect on June 1. This message from DTA was shared: This policy will not go into effect until June 1st at the earliest and will not affect all families immediately. However, all families will receive notice 90 days prior to any exit from shelter as a result of the new 9-month timeline. This means that families will not be required to leave shelter due to this policy until September 1st at the earliest. HLC may not may not exit more than 150 in a single week statewide.
- The group noted that families are anxious about this policy change, worried about whether they will be terminated as of June 1. Under the current policy, the soonest date for a family's termination would be 9/1 (account for 90 day notice). We noted the difficulty in understanding what will actually happen when the termination date is reached. Shelters will need extensive guidance from HLC.
- Way Finders re RAFT: roughly 1,500 applications in progress; experiencing some staff turnover so applications are being processed a little slower for the itme being; seeing roughly 120-150 applications/day; seeing many utility shut-offs; roughly 100 applications from homeowners.
- Franklin County RAFT: status quo on level of demand

HLC Listening Sessions for 5 year Strategic Plan:

This week in Pittsfield and Greenfield - learn more [here](#).

Hampden CoC Lunchtime Learning Series:

Starting this week on May 15, every Wed., 12-1 pm, a series of different topics for homeless service providers. All are welcome. Learn more and register [here](#).

FY25 Budget Update:

The State Senate Ways and Means Committee has filed its proposed budget. It will be debated next week. Now is the time to weigh in on the Network's key priorities. See the [Network blog post here](#) for more details and quick actions.

Affordable Homes Act Update:

The Affordable Homes Act - the \$4.1 billion housing bond bill - is currently in the House Ways and Means Committee and is likely to be debated in the next couple of weeks. To learn more about the bill and [what we can do, go here](#).

Announcements:

- Way Finders' Secure Jobs program serves all of western MA - eligibility extends to all people eligible for family shelter, HomeBASE or RAFT AND those who have APPLIED (do not need to be Way Finders clients). Contact Jasmin Rojas for more information at jrojas@waysfinders.org
- Nurturing Children program at Head Start on Maple St. in Holyoke- Wednesdays, 11-12:30. For parents and children infant to 5 years old. Please call Christine (413) 348-4355. zaskeyc@headstart.org Sponsored by the Holyoke Chicopee Family and Community Program.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, June 18 (3rd instead of usual 2nd Tuesday due to scheduling conflict)