

Individual Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 10/22

In attendance: roughly 35 housing and homelessness and community service providers

We discussed the upcoming (and just today released) HLC funding available via to support winter shelter expansion. See the CommBuys link

here: <https://www.commbuys.com/bs0/external/bidDetail.sdo?docId=BD-25-1076-OCDD-ES003-107590&external=true&parentUrl=close>

We affirmed our commitment to coordinating the region's responses as much as possible to ensure maximum coverage and minimal (no!) duplication in services being proposed.

Tentative regional responses as of now:

Hampshire County: CSO, CHD and Craig's Doors met earlier this morning to begin the conversation around coordination.

- Craig's Doors will be applying for additional shelter capacity for the 2nd floor of the Econolodge in Hadley - still unclear how many beds, depending on estimated need (TBD in further conversation with partners).
- CHD is considering an application to fund hotel rooms at the Quality Inn in Northampton.
- CSO is considering seeking funding for 11 additional winter overflow beds at its new shelter site on Industrial Drive in Northampton BUT this is contingent on the opening (i.e., completion) of the new building, which will not be sooner than January.

Franklin County:

- CSO will not be able to expand its current shelter capacity in Greenfield due to the temporary shelter move (due to the renovation/housing development about to be underway at its current site). However, it currently has an additional 5 beds that are in "overflow" and they will seek funding to support the continuation of these beds.
- The Franklin County/North Quabbin Opioid Task Force is compiling a directory of warming and shelter sites across the region. Currently, they have listed 9 warming locations in Athol and 7 in Greenfield. They will be releasing this resource list shortly for broad distribution. They will also be exploring in coalition additional prospects for HLC funding.

Berkshire County:

- ServiceNet is hoping to expand its capacity in Pittsfield, working closely with the city. Determining a location for expansion is the greatest challenge. Hoping to expand their warming center at minimum.
- Louison House in Northern Berkshires will also seek funding for additional beds at a local church and in hotels
- CHD will be running a daytime warming site in Pittsfield as well.

Hampden County:

- CSO is undergoing a renovation/expansion so will not be able to expand its current capacity (which is frequently already in overflow).
- CHD is considering applying for funding to expand capacity (double occupancy) at the Motel 6 in Holyoke. CHD will also be running a daytime warming center in Holyoke.

Additional Hampden County news:

- The Springfield-Hampden CoC has awarded CHD a \$1.5 million grant to provide rapid rehousing to people living unsheltered in the City of Springfield. This contract will hopefully be finalized and begin to be implemented in the next couple of weeks. The goal is to house people who would otherwise be living outside during the winter months (and to keep them housed beyond).
- The CoC has an RFP out to reallocate the approximately \$400,000 in rapid rehousing (RRH) funds that Catholic Charities previously had. These funds can be used for RRH throughout Hampden County and must be spent by June 30, 2025. The hope is for these funds to be utilized during the winter months as well.
- The City of Springfield is reconstituting its Project Hope - a partnership between Behavioral Health Network and the police department to conduct street outreach and provide support. BHN is taking the lead on hiring a social worker to serve in this capacity.
- Re: Springfield encampment along the railroad tracks - BHN recovery coaches are connecting with street outreach workers; BHN staff who interact with unsheltered people will begin attending COC case conferencing meetings; they are exploring a vacant warehouse building near the site as a potential location for permanent supportive housing
- BHN has been awarded a new SAMHSA grant to support another several years of the Mission West project for serving dual diagnosis chronically homeless individuals

Family Homelessness' Impact on Individual Shelters:

We discussed the impact of the family homelessness crisis on individual shelters, specifically the experience of more families and pregnant women reaching out to individual shelters for help because they have no place to go. Pamela shared that this issue was discussed extensively at the Western MA Task Force meeting earlier that day and our western MA delegation will be following up to request a meeting with Secretary Augustus to discuss the situation.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, 11/19, 1 pm