

Family Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 2/11/25

In attendance: Maribel Acevedo, DCF, Martha Aviles, Christina's House, Lomay Caban, Salasin Project, Sarah Cloutier, Way Finders, Kiirsten Cooper, Hilltown Health Center, Will Dávila, CHD, Joscelyn de Tojada, New North Citizen Council, Jen Dieringer, CLA, Luray Fladd, YWCA Anthia Elliott, BHN- DV, Erin Forbush, ServiceNet, Brenda Garcia, BHN, Alyssa Golden, CLA, Ivelisse Gonzalez, New North Citizens Council, Lynn Guertin, Ware Family Resource Center, Christy O'Brien, CHS, Lizzy Ortiz, C3, Nicky LaValley, Way Finders, Dorothy Prieto, Head Start, Jessica Sastre, CHD, Rachel Trant, DCF, - Janette Vigo, Way Finders, Melissa White, VOC

Reviewed family shelter changes in state supplemental budget

See Network [blog post here](#) that summarizes EA shelter changes in supplemental budget currently pending in the Legislature. Feedback included:

- noted families are getting re-housed quickly - already exceeded the targeted number of placements for next year - last year approved 370 placements; this year, already approved 433 placements
- concerned about sustainability (apartments are market rate and some even on the high end in the name of HLC's priority to get families rehoused) and potential return to shelter
- already challenging with the 9 month limit - reducing the limit to 6 months adds to the challenge
- CORI checks, hotel closures are extremely demanding and distracting
- Concerned about staff fatigue with all the changes - CORI rush; inspection rush; rehousing pressures
- Concerned about a large number of families who will not be served (esp in face of 6 month limit)
- fear for families who are not in the system today and will need the system
- worried about more and more challenges as time passes

CORI Discussion

Alyssa Golden, an attorney with CLA who focuses on CORI issues provided an update regarding the new CORI check requirements for shelter.

- the CORI check includes "level 1 access" which means all pending criminal cases and convictions no matter how old will be shared
- in communication with counsel for EOHLC to gain clarification on how the CORI information will actually be used in relation to admissions or denials to shelter
- in the event an individual in the household has a record, it is unclear how that impacts the entire household
- it is unclear how an individual assessment of a person's record takes place
- the EA application will have a CORI question on it but it is unclear how an applicant should answer it if they have no opportunity to offer mitigating information (or they accidentally over or under-disclose) - unclear why the application would include this question if searches are to be conducted no matter what

With any questions or concerns with CORI questions, do not hesitate to contact Alyssa at Agolden@cla-ma.org.

Hotel Closures

- Days Inn in Greenfield (ServiceNet) - will close by end of Feb (2/21). 6 families remaining at the Days Inn from the total 45. Rehousing all families.
- Quality Inn Northampton (CHD) - 20 families - closing end of April. Also rehousing families, seeing success so far.
- Clarion Hotel West Springfield (CHD) - now at 50 families, must close by end of June - working on rehousing

Other news:

- **Massachusetts Housing Plan** - released last week - [go here to read it!](#)
- The Network is preparing to release its FY26 budget priorities and legislative priorities. This will inform our advocacy work over the coming months. Be sure to be subscribed to the [Network blog](#) to stay connected on action steps.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, March 11