

HAMPDEN COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

Board of Directors

Springfield Municipal Operations Center
70 Tapley St., Springfield, MA

February 2, 2018, 1-3 pm

Minutes

Present: Lauren Voyer (Way Finders), Linda Cruz ((RVCC), Marianne Polmatier (RVCC), Cheryl Fasano (MHA), Dave Havens (MHA), Charlie Knight, Doreen Fadus (Mercy Medical), Steve Trueman (Regional Employment Board), Lynne Wallace (Way Finders), Kathryn Buckley-Brawner (Catholic Charities), Terry Maxey (Open Pantry Community Services), Michelle Booth (Springfield Housing Authority), Peter Miller (City of Westfield), Steve Huntley (VOC), Bill Miller (FOH/CSO), Gerry McCafferty (City of Springfield).

Minutes

The Board reviewed minutes of the November 17, 2017 Board meeting. Charlie Knight moved to approve the minutes, Kathryn Buckley Brawner seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Statewide Data Sharing

As a follow-up the discussion at the November 2017 Board meeting, the Board was joined by phone by Emily Cooper, Massachusetts Department of Elder Affairs, Linn Torto, Mass Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness, and Ryan Burger, ICF (HUD TA), to discuss the Massachusetts proposal for statewide data sharing.

The state plans to establish a statewide data warehouse for CoC data. Ultimately, the CoC data will be one spoke of data that is part of a larger effort and will incorporate data from other state agencies.

The concept for the CoC data warehouse is that it will bring together data from all state CoCs, de-duplicate that data, and produce aggregate reports. The state's goal is to have accurate information about the state's homeless population, and the state would not be accessing client-level information. Individual CoCs will upload data regularly. The system will also enable CoCs to share individual data across CoC borders, if the CoC agrees to this level of sharing, and has an appropriate signed consent to share information in place for the individual client. Neither HIV status nor domestic violence history will be shared in the system, even for households with client-level releases for sharing.

So far, 8 of 15 CoCs have agreed to participate in the data warehouse. The state representatives are urging the Springfield-Hampden County CoC to commit to participation.

The state will set up and pay for the warehouse, and will provide funding to CoCs for the work that they will do to participate, which is the monthly CSV upload, and a one-time effort to have all existing clients

sign a newly-created release form which allows statewide data sharing and complies with federal and state privacy laws. For CoCs, the benefits of participation include: ability to access EA data, ability to gain statewide records to verify chronic homelessness, and enhance data availability to be used for system planning. The state will create an HMIS Data Warehouse Governance Board, which will create a sharing MOU, a standardized release form, and policies and procedures to cover: who has access to identified data and standards for use by researchers. The Board will have input into the RFP to select a vendor to design the system. The state expects to put out the RFP by the end of June 2018, and to have the data warehouse active by January or February 2019.

The CoC had a number of questions about client consent forms and who can access data. The state representatives said that most of these issues will be decided by the HMIS Data Warehouse Governance Board. It was clear, however, that sharing through the warehouse would only happen for clients who signed written consent for allowing the sharing.

Following the presentation and discussion (and after the state representatives left the meeting), the Board considered whether the CoC will participate in statewide CoC data sharing. Charlie Knight moved that the CoC participate, and Peter Miller seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to participate.

Coordinated Entry – Warehouse and CAS

Gerry McCafferty provided an update on the CoC's Data Warehouse and Coordinated Access System. Since early fall 2017, the CoC has been using the Green River data warehouse, which collects and merges data from multiple sources. It has built out the front door of the warehouse, which enables users throughout the community to enter information about homeless households for the purpose of accessing coordinated entry. This has included building out entry forms for input of Individual, Youth and Family VI-SPDAT information. With the buildout of the system, the CoC is slowly expanding those who have access to enter new households, and training community partners, such as hospital social work staff.

The system includes a component in which, when a housing vacancy is entered, the system automatically matches that vacancy with the next prioritized eligible person for the spot. Upon making a match, the system begins sending automated emails to the necessary parties, to notify them and move the match forward. The system is a key component of coordinated entry, helps to fill vacancies more quickly, and makes a transparent trail showing how vacancies are filled and the way the CoC prioritizes people for units.

Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures

In connection with the new system, the CoC has produced updated [CoC Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures](#), for which it is seeking the approval of the CoC Board of Directors. Charlie Knight moved that the Board approve the policies and procedures. Dave Havens seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

Updates

Gerry McCafferty provided the following updates

1. 2017 CoC Competition

HUD has released the list of awards for the 2017 CoC competition. Most Springfield-Hampden County projects were renewed, with the exception of Annie's House, which lost funding. The CoC and the Mental Health Association will work together to find replacement PSH placements for each of the 13 women currently staying at Annie's House before the end of the grant, which is June 30, 2018. There were two new projects funded: Viability Next Step Holyoke, which is PSAH for 5-7 chronically homeless individuals in Holyoke, and Gandara Shine RRH, which will provide 12-month rapid rehousing assistance to 14 youth age 18-24.

2. Network Funding

Unexpectedly, the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness has been awarded its FY17 earmark funding, which had previously been vetoed by the Governor. The funding provides support for the Network and, in addition, the Network awards some of the funds to each of the two CoCs in the Network. The amount allocated to the Springfield-Hampden County CoC is \$54,500.

The CoC was required to very quickly allocate these funds, which must be spent by June 30, 2018. Following consultation with Board members, the CoC made the decision to allocate the funds to the two recipients of last year's state funding, which was cut this year—Catholic Charities and Gandara. These agencies will use the funds for rapid rehousing.

3. Cold weather response

December and January included an especially cold and lengthy arctic cold snap. The CoC had sufficient shelter capacity throughout the snap, and shelters were flexible in assisting people who had been previously banned. Church in the City coordinated with shelters to assist people who could not get inside otherwise, and found that it was not needed. The Springfield Rescue Mission remained open on a Sunday night on a trial basis at the request of the City.

4. People displaced by 2017 hurricanes

Hampden County has received a large influx of people displaced by 2017 hurricanes. FEMA has indicated that the county has 339 households (with 1047 people) in motels paid for by FEMA. Agencies report that there are hundreds more households staying with friends and family. MEMA has designated Enlace and Gandara's family Center as official support centers for the relocated families, and the New North Citizens Council is also assisting the families. There has been little coordination, so families were placed in hotels without cities or school departments receiving any notice from FEMA/MEMA. The Springfield Public Schools have enrolled over 500 new students from Puerto Rico.

There is concern about the lack of housing and lack of resources to assist these families.

The meeting adjourned.