**MA 507, Three County CoC - June 2020 – Quarterly Board Report**

This report was compiled in preparation for the upcoming Quarterly meeting, scheduled for **June 18th from 11am-1pm on zoom.**

***COVID-19 -***

***Our efforts over the past two months have been to work on critical response to the needs of Shelter Providers and Homeless Service Providers in the three county area (Berkshire, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties)  to support the efforts to obtain support from Municipalities, State and Federal Partners, to reduce risks to this vulnerable population and to disseminate information and resources from HUD and National homelessness response efforts.  For CoC funded projects, we have worked closely with our partner agencies to support their efforts to continue to provide housing and supportive services in an extremely challenging time, while maintaining fiscal and programmatic oversight.  Our funded agencies continue to provide essential services and vital basic needs, as well as to support the mental and physical health of their program participants.  HUD has issued guidance regularly on waivers and eligible funding changes for our programs to create, as best they can, an appropriate COVID-19 response.***

***The Three County CoC staff are working full time, mainly from home and minimally in the office at 393 Main street.  In order to plan for a return, following the MA Govenor’s phase system, the CAPV’s Community Services Department has located new office space for the CoC staff, at 277 Main Street, in order to provide physical distance and individual offices for the growing staff. The CoC will move during the month of June. Below is a chart of the current CoC staffing structure and plan as we increase funding & oversite capacity in the fall, for the YHDP projects.***



***Board Updates:***

We currently have 1 open seat (formerly homeless) on the CoC Board of Directors which Keleigh is working to fill, and an empty Board Chair role.

***CoC Funding Updates:***

* The CoC (MA507) was awarded a total of **$1,808,722** for **FY2019** funding, this met the full amount of our Annual Renewal Demand.  We have received the contracts from HUD for all projects, and the funding was made available in ELOCCs.  The projects funded by this award, including the funding which CAPV retains to support the staffing of the collaborative applicant have rolling annual start dates.
* The CoC was awarded an additional **$22,000** in YHDP Planning funds to support the CoC leadership in planning activities for the coordinated community plan, for the project design phase, development of the Request for Proposals and project selection outline and documents, and for project implementation.  This grant began in December of 2019 and will complete in November of 2020.
* The CoC released **an RFP in March for the $925,000 available annually for two year Youth Homelessness Demonstration Period** to begin in the fall of 2020.  See below for project breakdown. This will include $44,000 in HMIS funds for YHDP for CAPV as the HMIS lead and $60,000 in Coordinated Entry funds for CAPV as the Collaborative Applicant to conduct youth coordinated entry.
* The CoC **rec’d $60,000 in funding from a state earmark, for FY2019**, to be used before 6.30.20. These funds cover the match for the CA and Planning grants for the CoC’s FY2018 grants (grant terms of 7.1.2019-6.30.20), as well as a portion of the HMIS cash match for FY2019 grant subrecipients. In addition, this funding has paid for website development, a learning management system, data dashboards to be made available to community partners, and technical assistance and training through TAC. We do not expect to receive this in the next state funding cycle.

***CoC Project Updates & Funding Utilization:***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| General |  Program Utilization | FY 2019 Contract Utilization (as of 6/5/20) |
| Project | Contract Units | Contract Capacity | **Current Units Filled** | **Current Unit Utilization** | Contract Start | Total Sub-Award | Point in Contract (end of June) | Month Billing Processed Through\* | **% of Contract Billed**  |
| A Positive Place | 13 | 17 | **13** | **100%** | Aug-19 | $127,886 | 92% | April | **68.6%** |
| Adult Independent Living | 10 | 10 | **10** | **100%** | Nov-19 | $43,412 | 67% | February | **33%** |
| CHD PSH | 48 | 48 | **43** | **90%** | Jul-19 | $690,520 | 100% | March | **\*38%** |
| DIAL/SELF TH/RRH-PH | 10 | 10 | **5** | **50%** | Jul-19 | $98,256 | 100% | May | **\*82%** |
| Louison House TH | 14 | 22 | **14** | **100%** | Feb-20 | $139,091 | 42% | March | **20%** |
| Northern Berkshire PSH | 9 | 9 | **9** | **100%** | Sep-19 | $137,368 | 83% | March | **57.7%** |
| Paradise Ponds | 4 | 4 | **4** | **100%** | Feb-20 | $27,247 | 42% | April | **22%** |
| Project Reach | 3 | 3 | **3** | **100%** | Nov-19 | $24,290 | 67% | February | **30%** |
| Shelter Plus Care | 22 | 18 | **18** | **82%** | Oct-19 | $211,239 | 75% | January | **22%** |
| Village Center Apts | 5 | 12 | **5** | **100%** | Nov-19 | $65,117 | 67% | December | **19%** |

\*Indicates new project, HUD (and CoC) has more flexibility expectations for spend down

***CoC Committee Updates:***

The CoC has continued to engage with our membership in connecting to and participating in CoC meetings remotely. In March and April, the CoC held productive Data Evaluation and Ranking Evaluation Committees via Zoom. In May, the CoC held the Coordinated Entry and Equity and Inclusion Committees via Zoom as well as data and ranking committees.  In total,  over 50 people continue to be members of one or more of the six committees. In addition, the CoC has held the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) core planning team meetings and YHDP Selection Team meetings remotely and has increased participation in our racial equity workgroup to bi-weekly online.

As the expectation of social distancing continues, the CoC remains committed to holding committee meetings that are accessible via Zoom and, as much as possible, at the normally scheduled time.

* ***Data Evaluation Committee, meets monthly, on the first Friday.***

The Data Evaluation Committee approved changes to the Release of Information, Privacy and Security Training Sheet, and Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security Checklist in January after they were looked over at the previous Board meeting. However, after further review the Committee has decided to make further changes on the Release of Information in order to allow for more clarity of choice around sharing data for coordinated entry. The biggest change is going to be moving from an option to opt into either coordinated entry and/or the HMIS to a series of three yes or no questions- Consent to fully participate in coordinated entry and HMIS, participate in HMIS and have identifying data coded for coordinated entry discussion, or opt to have no data recorded with an explanation of how this could affect services. The primary goal of this change is to allow someone the option to be able to participate in Coordinated Entry even if they do not feel comfortable being talked about in depth at case conferencing and to make it clear for both participants and providers what happens in each scenario. In addition to the release of information, the Data Evaluation Committee has been brainstorming different ways to review Data Quality and has started looking at what can be learned from our most recent System Performance Measures. Moving forward, the Committee will begin to develop a System Performance Improvement Plan and continue work on a Three County CoC Data Quality Plan.

* ***Ranking and Evaluation Committee, meets monthly in current stage***

This committee has been meeting regularly, in order to prepare for the upcoming project ranking process and to support this CoC staff’s efforts in updating the ranking tool and plan. Members of this committee have provided a historic context for the ranking structure and have been evaluating our process moving forward. Over the last two months, we have concentrated on renewal projects and in our next meeting, will consider steps for new projects as the NOFA application process approaches.

* ***Youth/Young Adult Action Board (YAB), meets weekly***

The YAB has continued to meet and participate in the YHDP process with one member on the Project Selection Team, and in completing the Coordinated Community Plan by writing the welcome letter!   The YAB has been engaging in the CoC's racial equity work that is happening in Three County.  One highlight was a combined training of both the Franklin County and Hampden County YAB around this work.

* ***CE Committee, meets quarterly***

The Coordinated Entry Committee continues to meet quarterly, most recently meeting on Tuesday, May 12th. The CE Committee has continued to be an integral part of our CE work as the CoC moves forward with improving upon our CE access, assessment process, and referral outcomes. During the May meeting, the committee started stakeholder mapping for a future CE Crisis Pre-Assessment, which will give a broader array of partners and agencies the ability to better determine eligibility, resources, and diversion options at the front door. The committee also discussed and reviewed the CoC’s CE COVID Assessment tool, which is a HUD-required temporary change to prioritization for PSH based on vulnerability to severe health impacts from COVID-19. This committee will convene again on Tuesday, August 11th. In August, one agenda item is for the committee to begin thinking deeper about how youth and young adults will move through the CE system when the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program projects begin.

The Annual CE Evaluation is in progress. The Amercorps team conducting this evaluation sent surveys to CE partners and CoC-funded projects in May. They have begun receiving responses and are hoping for more responses in order to produce a meaningful analysis of responses.

* ***Equity and Inclusion Committee, meets monthly on the 3rd Friday.***

After cancelling the March and April meetings due to COVID-19, the Equity and Inclusion Committee has resumed monthly meetings on the third Friday of each month. In the May meeting, this committee spent time discussing how working remotely has brought issues of equity and inclusion to the forefront of our work; pushing many agencies to adopt new technologies that can serve to be tools of inclusion in the future and also highlighting areas in need of improvement to ensure programs continue to serve remotely. The committee also discussed racial equity related to COVID-19, reviewing and discussing data that shows Black people and people of color as being disproportionately at risk for severe impacts from COVID-19 and yet less likely to receive quality medical care and testing. The committee continued exploring how the CoC can deliberately employ an intersectionality-based framework in all of our policy and programmatic work. In addition, the committee reviewed and gave feedback on the CE COVID Assessment tool. In June and July, the committee work will be inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and the powerful force we are seeing demand racial justice and equity, as well as Pride Month. The committee will be tasked with looking at our CoC’s data, outcomes, and practices to evaluate how the CoC must better serve Black people, people of color, and LGBTQ+ people.

***Ad-Hoc – Special Working Group Updates:***

* ***Racial Equity Workgroup***

The CoC has been working regularly with a small group of diverse, dedicated professionals and persons with lived experiences of homelessness and racial disparities to move forward the plan for continued Racial Equity efforts for Three County, funded by the Western Mass Network to End Homelessness. We are working with consultants through JO Consulting who have been onsite with the team for 2 meetings a month. As the Pandemic emerged and the light was shown on the already existing racial disparities in our homelessness systems and economic and health care systems, this group was motivated to continue the efforts we had planned and moved to remote trainings. In May, we began with a robust leadership for the Workgroup and CoC staff, and leadership training for the YAB. In June we have been participating in a community training series with over 300 registered participants. In the last week of June we will hold a Three County Specific Planery session, strategy session, and CoC/YHDP funded project meeting to address racial disparities in our homelessness response.

***Coordinated Entry System Updates:***

* While some of the systems-level work around improving and adjusting the Three County CoC Coordinated Entry (CE) system has been slowed or put on hold due to COVID-19, the CoC continues to operate and maintain our Coordinated Entry system. CE has remained open for referrals and new additions to the By-Names-List.
* Although the CoC has had few open housing opportunities since early March, CoC-funded projects have remained engaged in CE and have continued moving individuals into open and available units. Programs have been able to ensure safe screening, intake, and move-in protocols to take all health precautions for the new and existing program participants. Between March and June, the CoC counted the following move-ins:
	+ 2 individuals moved into CoC PSH units with CHD
	+ 1 individual moved into a CoC PSH unit with A Positive Place
	+ 5 individuals moved into CoC TH units with Louison House
	+ 3 individuals moved into PSH with DIAL/SELF’s Joint Component project.
* In light of the need to social distance, we have transitioned from holding weekly in-person Coordinated Entry Case Conferencing in each county to holding one weekly CE Partners Zoom call for all CE partners across counties. The meetings have served as a space for sharing important updates and resources as shelters, CoC providers, and CE partners adjust to providing services in a safe way. Over the new few weeks, CE partners will continue to gather via Zoom and will move forward with any housing placements should there be an available opening. Starting on June 15th, the CE meetings will transition back toward separate meetings by county with a Monday Zoom meeting held for Hampshire and Franklin CE partners and a Wednesday Zoom meeting held for Berkshire county partners. All partners will be welcome to join both meetings but separating intends to focus conversations back toward case conferencing about individuals and families on the BNL and county-specific needs.
* The CoC has been meeting weekly with Doug Tetrault from TAC, our technical assistance provider, to focus on improving, adapting, and streamlining our CE system. In May, we worked on rolling out a CE COVID Assessment tool and began discussion for improving our current CE Assessment tool and process. Over the next few weeks, we will continue systems-mapping with Doug as we prepare to expand the front door to the CE system with a CE Crisis Pre-Assessment tool and adapting our current CE Assessment tool to better assess and refer individuals and families to resources. We will also be working with him on trainings around our assessment tool and diversion.
* On Thursday 6/4, the CoC officially rolled out a Temporary CE COVID Assessment tool, which will be used to prioritize individuals and families at high-risk of health impacts from COVID-19 for CoC-funded PSH units. This tool will be in effect until August 31st. The tool was designed with our technical assistance provider, TAC, based on HUD expectations that we are dedicating CoC-funded resources towards people experiencing homelessness at highest risk for severe impacts from the virus. The tool is a supplementary tool and will be used alongside the current assessment tool.
* In June, we moved toward a more streamlined process for tracking open beds, units and recent placements by creating a template chart for projects to use when notifying the CoC of any open units. This template intends to not only better notify the CoC of openings to improve the CE referral process, but to help the CoC keep real-time track of the reason behind unit openings, including if program participants are terminated, evicted, or exited to a non-permanent housing option.

Below is a breakdown of all Three County CoC-funded beds by project type, location, unit characteristics, and unit size.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | General | Units | Characteristics Per Unit | Unit Type/Bedroom  |  |
|  |  | **County** | **Household/Units** | **Capacity**  | **Adult 25+** | **Families** | **18-24+** | **Congregate** | **SRO** | **1 bed** | **2 bed** | **3 bed** | **4 bed** |  |
| Transitional Housing |  | Berkshire | 24 | 32 | 17 | 3 | 4 | 24 | - | - | - | - | - |  |
| Franklin  | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |  |
| Hampshire | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |  |
|  |  |  |   |   |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |
| Permanent Supportive Housing |  | Berkshire | 26 | 36 | 21 | 3 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 8 | - | 2 | 1 |  |
| Franklin  | 37 | 37 | 35 | - | 2 | - | 16 | 21 | - | - | - |  |
| Hampshire  | 35 | 59 | 26 | 8 | 1 | - | 6 | 21 | 1 | 6 | 1 |  |
| Hampden | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | 5 | 2 | - | - |  |
|  |  |  |   |   |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |
| TH/RRH -PH |  | Franklin  | 10 | 10 | - | - | 10 | - | - | 10 | - | - | - |  |
|  |  | **Totals** | **139** | **183** | **104** | **16** | **19** | **37** | **24** | **65** | **3** | **8** | **2** |  |

***HMIS lead Updates:***

With DHCD’s assistance we were able to create a working By Names List in the Homeless Management Information system (HMIS) which is used for the majority of our data collection. This eliminates the need for each agency to maintain and share their own lists of people who have been assessed for the coordinated entry system in addition to entering them in the HMIS since we can now obtain the information directly from the system. We are also making progress in engaging veteran service providers in the coordinated entry system. We have had our data warehouse, Green River, build out the coordinated entry vulnerability assessment in the warehouse which will allow VA case workers to conduct assessments for their participants residing in Soldier On’s Grant Per Diem beds in Leeds and Pittsfield. We have recently conducted a training for the providers on how to navigate and conduct assessments in the data warehouse and have set up a Veteran By Names List in the warehouse to store the information collected in new assessments. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD decided to push back the deadline for utilizing the new coordinated entry data elements until October 1st and the deadline for the Point in Time Count and accompanying Housing Inventory Chart have also been extended to June 30th. We have made significant progress around finalizing point in time count data but need to address some data quality issues and collect additional information from shelter staff who are currently dealing with an unprecedented crisis. Our current preliminary counts are 82 persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness and 475 persons experiencing sheltered homelessness.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|     | Emergency   | Transitional   |   Unsheltered  |  Total   |
| Total Number of Households   | 205   | 174   | 82  | **545**   |
| Total Number of   Persons   | 294   | 181   | 82   | **557**   |
| Number of Children  (under age 18)   | 80   | 8   | 0   | **88**   |
| Number of Persons  (18 to 24)   | 23   | 6   | 8   | **37**   |
| Number of Persons  (over age 24)   | 191   | 167   | 74   | **432**   |
| Female   | 117   | 33   | 23   | **173**   |
| Male   | 174   | 147   | 58   | **379**   |
| Transgender   | 0   | 2   | 1   | **3**   |

We recently received notification from DHCD that they will be starting a procurement process to select a new HMIS and will not be supporting other Massachusetts CoCs in the new system. We will begin conversations with our HMIS TA provider, Mary Schwartz, on beginning our own procurement process to ensure that we have a new data collection system ready when DHCD leaves the statewide one. We have had three data dashboards created which will integrated in our new website, some of which look at system performance and others which look at the demographic breakdowns of who is served in our Continuum of Care. We are also working with two website consultants- one who will look at our site's design and continuity and the other who will look at accessibility. Other future plans include a trauma-informed data collection training for new YHDP projects and potentially some custom data dashboards to ensure we are meeting the goals outlined in the consolidated community plan.

***Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)***

The Planning Team finalized our coordinated, community plan, which was submitted and approved by HUD, in April.  We obtained signatures for the plan from the CoC Board, the Mayor of Greenfield, the YHDP Lead, and DCF. We are working on obtaining YAB signatures and the plan will be complete. The HUD approval released the $1.9 million for projects for the two year demonstration period, which have now gone through an RFP process. Below is a chart of the approved projects and the applicants which have moved to esnaps application submission. The projects to be funded include a Joint Component Transitional Housing/Rapid Rehousing project with a focus on young families, a Housing Navigator project, an HMIS project, a Coordinated Entry project, a Permanent Supportive Housing project, and a small Rapid Rehousing project.  We have an expectation of project starts, this fall and the COC is working closely to support application submission prior to 7/1.

Once the applications are complete, and the funding is released, we will begin the implementation of our plan, which will be supported by the soon to be created Youth/Young Adult Homelessness Committee and include members of the planning team and the Youth/Young Adult Action Board (YAB).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project**  | **Subrecipient** | **Budget/YHDP funding** |
| **CE – SSO** (Coordinated Entry) | CAPV | 60,000 |
| **RRH**/SSO - Youth Navigators Project | Mental Health Associates | 204,000 |
| **TH/RRH** - Joint Component (Family and Ind) | Gandara | 412,000 |
| **RRH** (Individual) | Mental Health Associates | 167,000 |
| **PSH** (Ind) | Dialself | 70,000 |
| **HMIS** (HMIS lead) | CAPV | 44,000 |
| **Totals** | 957,000 |
| Notes: Funding still available     $1,960,000 - $22,000 (1 time planning grant) = $1,938,000 or  $969,000 annually    **- $12,000**  |

***EOHHS:***

CAPV oversees a contract with the MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services for housing and services for youth/young adults under 25 y.o., partners and contracts with Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority and DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services to provide the direct services.  Both agencies have shifted to more remote services during COVID-19. DIAL/SELF has been operating their drop-in centers on a “take out” model getting much needed food, hygiene products, cleaning supplies and other items out to young people to support them in remaining home/sheltered and both agencies have continued to provide support with emergency shelter and long-term housing.

We have started outreach to housing authorities in Berkshire County around the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers, which provide housing vouchers for up to 36 months for young people aging out of foster care.  Housing authorities and the Department of Children and Families, with support from the CoC and BCRHA, will create a partnership around this, which could serve up to 25 young people each year per housing authority.