Community Action Pioneer Valley’s Three County CoC

***Notice of Quarterly Board Meeting Notes***

This is to herby notify the membership of the Three County Continuum of Care that the CoC Board of Directors were called to a meeting from **11:30am-1:30pm, Thursday, December 16th, 2021.**

**This meeting was held on zoom**

**Present:** Keleigh Pereira, CoC staff/Director; Michele LaFleur, CoC staff/Data; Brooke Murphy, CoC staff/billing & services; Teri Koopman, CoC staff/Youth; Theresa Nicholson, CHD; Brad Gordon, co-chair-BCRHA; Kathy Keeser, LH; Phil Ringwood, Dialself; Andy Klatka, ELIOT CHS; Dave Christopolis, Hilltown CDC; Jay Sachetti, ServiceNet; Stacy Parsons, McKinney Vento; Pamela Schwartz – WMNEH; Jen Dieringer – Community Legal Aid; Justine Dodds – City of Pittsfield Community Development; Jane Ralph – Construct; Cindy ray, Mass Hire Career Center; Deb McPartland, Wayfinders; Betsy Shally-Jensen, A Positive Place.

**Board Membership, Training Business**

* *(5)* *Review of minutes from the Annual meeting.*
* *(15) New Membership Discussion:*
  + *Brief Presentation from Potential members*
    - **Persons with Lived Experience of Homelessness *(financial compensation for meeting attendance is available)***  -Omayra Quinones, Latina /x Advocate, The Salasin Project
      * Hispanic women, a wife and mom of 4 boys.
      * survived DV
      * personally lived through discrimination for both jobs and housing
      * goal in this community is to interrupt those conversations that shouldn’t be happening. To lead those uncomfortable conversations to a place of neutrality and positivity.
      * Both has lived expertise and works in the field at the Salasin Project
    - **Affordable Housing Advocate or Developer**  - **A representative from Community Legal Aid.**

**Jennifer Dieringer**|Managing Attorney to discuss this opportunity and we have determined that there may be a more suitable member from their team.

* + - * + CORI reentry work
        + Eviction support efforts
        + Rental assistance termination hearings/application denial
        + HAF work – COVID foreclosures
  + *Discussion/Vote on suggested new members*
* Comments: Brad – CLA should be a part of our work, strong, Pamela – great bridge building efforts.
* Pamela – motion to approve, Jane seconded, all in favor.
* Brad – suggested that board members also engage in bringing folks onboard with lived experience, identifying that there are financial resources.
* **Q**- Betsy – are people with lived experience involved in committees in a pipeline to the board. How do we make our board meetings more accessible?
  + Keleigh suggested that we bring this issue to the next meeting and have CoC staff and person with lived experience present on the efforts we are involved in.
  + *Additional members still working on:*
    - **Representative from the CAPV Youth Action Board (*financial compensation for meeting attendance is available)***  The CoC Director has been working to communicate with a current YAB member regarding the possibility, no updates or confirmations yet.
    - **Representative from a Housing Authority in the Three County Area -** The CoC Director has been communicating with a representative from Berkshire County, but unfortunately, they have declined the invitation. A few members of the Board are aware and reaching out.
* *(5) YHDP representation/membership next steps*
  + *It was voted on during the June meeting to incorporate representation from these agencies*
    - *Need for next steps planning – Phil will support Keleigh in bringing them onboard.*

**Current PSH Funding RFRs**

**Quick note for shelter capacity support – approved in the Gov’s budget –**

**Louison House:** $75,000 for non-congregate shelter (via Sen. Hinds)

**Center for Human Development**: $25,000 for non-congregate shelter (via Sen. Comerford)

**Craig's Doors:** $25,000 for non-congregate shelter (via Sen. Comerford)

As well as an earmark for the Three County CoC – to be a match for our new CE DV Expansion Project!

***PSH RFR – MHSA***

COVID relief funds – Mass Alliance for Supportive Housing (MASH)

* Roughly 2 million dollars remaining
  + This round will be focused on Supportive Housing costs
  + Providing low threshold PSH in non-congregate single occupancy settings for people who experienced homelessness
  + Expenses for July 1, 2021 through June 30,2022
* Funding categories
  + Rehab for existing PSH
  + Development costs for new PSH
  + Pre-development costs for new PSH
  + Other PSH costs

Timeline:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V93PTFH> Pre-qual due Friday Dec 17th

RFP issued 12/21

Responses due – 1/21

Awards estimated for 2/14

***DHCD RFRs***<https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/resources/2021/new-housing-requests-for-responses-posted/>

**DHCD RFR – Sponsor-based PSH – Due January 14th**

DHCD aims to increase access to low-threshold permanent housing with supportive services appropriately   
scaled to quickly move individuals experiencing homelessness from shelter or unsheltered situations into   
housing. The program model for the permanent supportive housing produced will be housing first.   
Housing first is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing   
homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety,   
treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing   
stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals   
prior to permanent housing entry.4 As such, the Sponsor Based PSH program will allow providers to   
support and serve very vulnerable populations by delivering quick lease-up periods by overcoming many   
of the barriers experienced in more traditional rental assistance programs

**DHCD RFR – State Opioid Response RRH - Response Due January 24th**

The purpose of this RFR is to solicit qualified, cost effective, creative, and competitive applications to   
operate SOR Grant Rapid Rehousing Program (SOR RRH) projects across the Commonwealth. Funding   
for this RFR is through the SOR grant awarded to the Department of Public Health’s (DPH) Bureau of   
Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) by the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services   
Administration (SAMHSA), a portion of which is being administered by the Massachusetts Department   
of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to develop and operate rapid rehousing projects for   
homeless persons with substance use disorders who are newly in recovery.

**Brief Report of the Ad Hoc/Special Committees**

* *(10) HMIS Implementation workgroup: system implementation updates* ***(see power point presentation)***
  + Go live date – 12/31/21, though we can stay in January/Feb of 2022 if needed
  + Asking agencies to pause on entering data in the old system by this weekend
  + Held many trainings this fall for all agencies/projects in our system – **we need agency leadership to be sure their users are attending trainings.**
  + New HMIS – is through Clarity- Bitfocus
    - **Q** – Betsy – are our assessments in other languages?
      * Brooke – we are finalizing the new assessment tool and do have a plan to get them created in other languages – starting with Spanish.
* ***(****5) Racial Equity Action Plan/workgroup – updates on efforts funded by the Network*
  + Joint CoC trainings
    - Training to review and revise policies and procedures with an equity lens
    - Training to review program level data with an equity lens
    - Training for hiring managers - bias free/racism free hiring practices and creating pipelines for advancement and mentorship
      * Betsy – suggested that we include a broader audience beyond just housing providers to this training.
      * Brad suggested that also other folks
  + Three County efforts
    - Landlord and housing provider training on tenancy and racial equity
    - Training for ppl with lived expertise to participate in the work of ending homelessness/leadership coordination

**Funded Project Report/Update**

***NOFO Response updates/FY2021 grant cycle project evaluation & ranking, final decisions***[**https://www.threecountycoc.communityaction.us/news-events**](https://www.threecountycoc.communityaction.us/news-events)

* Non-Funded Members of the CoC's Ranking and Evaluation Committee, as well as the Board engaged in a process of approval & evaluation in order to rank projects.
* There were two new applications submitted to HUD, with hopes of approval, along with our CoC renewal and YHDP renewal and replacement applications.  One is an expansion grant for Coordinated Entry funding to support Survivors of Domestic Violence and their access to the housing and service system (CE-SSO DV Bonus), and the other is a new Project for Permanent Supportive Housing to support Independent Housing Solutions, a non-profit, to house 16 of our most vulnerable chronically homeless in Northampton.
* 21 project applications were submitted in our project listing (including the planning grant), totaling $3,094,244 and $85,155 in planning funds which means the **total request to HUD for Three County will be $3,179,399.00** for the FY21 funding cycle.
  + **Total Amount in Housing and Service Projects that will be Submitted for HUD Approval:**
* Renewal Projects: $1,807,664
* New Projects: $285,903
* CoC Planning Dollars: $85,155
* YHDP Projects: $1,000,675
* Rejected: $0
* TOTAL CoC Request: $3,179,397
  + *New DV bonus – CE expansion - $124,850*
  + *New CoC Bonus – Independent Housing Solutions – Housing the disabled homeless – tier 1 - $104,845, tier 2 $56,527 – total-$161,372*
  + *Consolidation project – Project Reach/Northern Berkshire PSH – LH*
  + *Reallocation – SN Shelter Plus Care - $30,168 reallocated to New Projects – project now totals $199,527 – reduced the total of units to 19 from 22.*
  + *Timeframe for HUD approval/response is unknown*

***FY19 – final report on funding utilization, project concerns***

* ***Spend down:*** The following projects completely spent down the FY19 Contract: *Louison House TH, Northern Berkshire PSH , Village Center Apartments ,Adult Independent Living*

The following projects underspent the FY19 project, amount of funding remaining included:

* A Positive Place: $294.78
* **CHD PSH: $43,664.59**
* Dial/Self Joint: $549.73
* Paradise Ponds $230.52
* Project Reach $105.53
* **Shelter Plus Care $56,700.50**

All FY19 projects met their match requirements.

* ***Billing Concerns:***

One area of concern for the CoC is the slow spending on the four YHDP grants. As shown in the chart in the board report, all four grants are over halfway through the 2-year grant and all remain under a quarter spent. All the YHDP projects worked hard to get the projects off of the ground last year but ran into some hurdles including barriers brought by the COVID-19  pandemic, lack of housing stock available, and staffing. The CoC staff will continue to support the YHDP project as is useful and will continue communicating with YHDP TAC providers to gain any insight on ways the grants can spend down and utilize the grants.

A second area of concern is there may be an issue with combining Operating funds with Rental Assistance programs, such as Section 8. The CoC is actively working with Hilltown CDC, with assistance from technical assistance providers, regarding the combination of Operating Funds and Section 8 rental assistance to ensure reimbursement requests for the FY20 contract and all contracts going forward only include eligible expenses, per HUD expectations. The CoC is exploring if there is a need for repayment for duplicative or ineligible costs.

***YHDP 1 year in – update/areas of strengths & concerns – Teri***

* New Youth CE implementation!
  + Meets weekly in case conferencing
  + Total referred youth – 47
  + Housed – 13 Permament housing, 4 TH
  + BNL – 73 remain on the list
* 4 Subrecipient projects – 38 beds (TH, RRH, PSH)
* YYA Homelessness committee meeting monthly to move forward the Coordinated Community Plan
* YHDP Project evaluation – committee/COC staff/internal – for areas of success and growth – YAB will participate in youth surveys and reading policies, there is also a data eval – we are holding off due to the HMIS migration and will be done during CoC Site monitoring.
* YAB also working on a care package project with EOHHS through a transition aged youth project
* YAB holds a building bridges meeting monthly with orgs involved
* Challenges – housing inventory, engaging landlords, hiring staff/staff turn-over, YAB turn over, keeping community members engaged.

**New Business**

* *(10)**Three County CoC Unified Funding Agency (UFA) status considerations – timeline for registering to apply is between mid January and early March.* [**https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Discussion-Guide-Key%20Questions-for-CoCs-Considering-UFA-Status.pdf**](https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Discussion-Guide-Key%20Questions-for-CoCs-Considering-UFA-Status.pdf)
  + **Opportunity for Single start date for grants**
* One grant agreement for renewal projects, UFA costs, and planning dollars
* One grant agreement for new projects
* More leeway to support projects with match
* We are already the direct recipient to the funding & monitoring
* Fiscal responsibilities – not more responsibilities/could potentially be less, perhaps fewer levels of oversight.
* **Learning curves** 
  + Moving funds between projects
  + Using the match across the continuum
  + Changing project start dates
  + Additional questions to consider as outlined on page 12 of the linked document.
* **What do we need/have? – Depending on what we find as we move forward, we may want to apply now or plan for a year from now.**
  + COC structure/Governance – have some, will likely need to create others as we identify gaps
  + Project management/financial and fiscal capacity – we have subrecipient policies, will need to create a structure/guidelines for moving funds between projects/demonstrate ability to meet HUD’s fiscal standards
  + Decision making process – must be added to the Governance Charter – demonstrating transparency – including educating stakeholders on what it means to be a UFA, and incorporating principals for an operating agreement between the CoC and the Collaborative Applicant – as a UFA.
  + Keleigh has applied for the CoC to obtain additional TA support on this.
* **Needs Board vote – CAPV willing to explore if the board votes to move it forward.**
* **Jane –** move to explore further and take due diligence, Phil second. All those in favor
* **Q –Betsy -**  have we always wanted to do this with the different lead applicants?
* **Keleigh will reach out to the board –** ask for participation.
* *(10) Coordinated Entry*
* **EHV Update - Brooke**
* Funding uses/new hire
  + New COC intake and referral specialist hired! First direct service staff person.
    - Housing search/lease up process with EHV vouchers
* **Holding EHV specific case conferencing**
* Update on referrals – all 68 vouchers have either been referred or identified.
* 4 out of 17 lease ups at NOHO housing
* 1 lease up out of 15 at Franklin County Regional
* 1 out of Franklin County Regional has been released
* 17 DHCD vouchers have been referred out of 36
  + Some of the DHCD vouchers have been committed to Berkshire County (15), and we have referred an additional 7 vouchers.
* No supportive services are attached to these vouchers – so working to arrange.
* At risk populations were not able to be served in this system
  + Brad commented that At risk should be really considered for funding
    - CoC staff acknowledged this and also identified the community process taken to determine the prioritization plan for these and that at the time – Federal resources for folks at risk were noted as part of the decision for order of populations to serve.

**The following were not discussed in the meeting (but will leave in the notes)**

* **New C4 Innovations work.**
* *Youth EOHHS (Partner Agencies with* 
  + *TAY youth – additional $50,000 (Dialself and Berkshire Regional)*
  + *$15,000 approved for feasibility study – for two capital project possibilities*
  + *Possible additional Capital Funds – we are looking closely at a Berkshire Area opportunities to increase housing options for youth in that area.*

**Adjournment**

Betsy – motion

Jane - second