

MA 507, Three County CoC – December 2021– Quarterly Board Report

This report was compiled for dissemination prior to the December 16th quarterly board meeting.

Board Updates:

The CoC Program Director has been actively recruiting for the following available seats. Potential members have been invited to the start of the December 16th meeting to share a bit about their reasons for participation and then the board will discuss/vote on membership.

1. **Persons with Lived Experience of Homelessness (*financial compensation for meeting attendance is available*)**
 - Omayra Quinones, Latina /x Advocate, The Salasin Project
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **An Affordable Housing Advocate or Developer**
 - **A representative from Community Legal Aid. The Program Director met with Jennifer Dieringer** | Managing Attorney to discuss this opportunity and we have determined that there may be a more suitable member from their team.

2021 Annual Meeting highlights(included again from last report):

The Three County CoC Membership (at least 110 in attendance) met on Sept 23rd, in a virtual meeting. The membership approved the following:

1. Updated Board Slate which can be found [here](#).
2. Updated Three County CoC Governance Charter which can be found [here](#).

3. Updated Three County CoC HMIS Charter which can be found [here](#).

Find the link to the annual meeting powerpoint [here](#).

Trainings offered:

The CoC Provided trainings this fall, in partnership with the Western Mass Network to end Homelessness in:

- How to Help DV Survivors in Your Homeless/Housing Programs
- Addressing Survivor Safety and Confidentiality Within Coordinated Entry Systems
- HUD's Equal Access and Gender Identity Rules

The CoC, as part of the HMIS Bitfocus Implementation Provided trainings this fall in the following:

- New HMIS End User Training
- New HMIS End User Training for Shelter Providers
- New HMIS Agency Manager/Administrator Training
- Privacy & Security Training
- New HMIS Policies & Procedures Overview
- HMIS Overview Session run by Eric Gammons from TAC

CoC Funding Updates:

The Three County CoC released a [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) for housing and supportive services specifically to serve persons experiencing homelessness in Berkshire, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties.

- 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.
- The full listing - including scoring and ranking, is posted and can be found on our website in the following location <https://www.threecountycoc.communityaction.us/news-events>

FY22 current/Updated EOHHS budget (7.1.21 start) has increased from \$585,000 to \$650,000 as of Quarter 3, to include TAY and a feasibility study

Three County has submitted a proposal and suggested budget increase of \$50,000 for Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) support including increased staffing, YAB stipends, and Flexible funds for direct impact for YYA exiting DCF services.

- EOHHS has identified about 1.6 (at least 1.2) million in additional funding available for Capital Improvement projects (purchase/pre-development/completion of projects already under way). Three County Partners met with state representatives and have been approved so far for \$15,000 for a feasibility studies for and are considering the following:
 - Berkshire county - really important for providing unit equity for Three County - downtown North Adams - walkable to lots of resources - we are looking to work with an architect to look at some changes in a building to serve YYA - rehab/systems upgrades - cost/number of units -for a building we already have site control of. Maybe 1 hundred -250,000. (might end up with 6-8 units - potential for some to be RRH and a few emergency housing resources.)
 - Franklin/Hampshire - looking for multi-family unit - total price tag for acquisition and rehab - \$400-\$450,000. (If EOHHS can do some - \$300-\$350- can work on bridge financing with local banks/credit unions) - *will need to consider what might have to go into a P&S agreement to discuss with a seller for closing- need to consider funding for after this/consider geography..*

The CoC has signed a contract with DHCD for administration of the support funds and housing search for the 36 state administered Emergency Housing Vouchers that cover our geographic area.

- The budget for this funding is \$126,000 (\$3500 per voucher) and 10% admin. **The CoC has hired a new Intake and Referral Specialist who will start just before the end of the calendar year to support this work and provide housing search support and assessments conducted in our area.**

Our current (FY20) CoC funding is below:

CoC (plus \$52,585 in planning dollars)

Applicant	Project Name	Grant Number	Expiration Year	Project Component	Total ARA
CAPV	3 County CoC HMIS Project	MA0064L1T072010	2022	HMIS	\$80,079
CAPV	3 County CoC CE Project	MA0540L1T072004	2022	SSO	\$111,543
CAPV	Paradise Pond Apartments	MA0072L1T072013	2022	PH	\$29,604
CAPV	Adult Independent Living Program	MA0142L1T072013	2022	TH	\$43,412
CAPV	Louison House TH	MA0144L1T072013	2022	TH	\$139,091
CAPV	Project Reach	MA0336L1T072010	2022	PH	\$26,110
CAPV	SN Shelter Plus Care North	MA0353L1T072011	2022	PH	\$229,695
CAPV	A Positive Place	MA0401L1T072009	2022	PH	\$135,932
CAPV	Village Center SHP	MA0468L1T072007	2022	PH	\$68,811
CAPV	LH Northern Berkshire PH	MA0604L1T072003	2022	PH	\$147,464
CAPV	CHD PSH	MA0633L1T072002	2022	PH	\$727,836
CAPV	Dial Self TH/PH RRH	MA0634L1T072002	2022	Joint TH & PH-RRH	\$98,255
					\$1,837,832

YHDP

Applicant	YHDP Project Name	Grant Number	Expiration Year	Project Component	Total ARA
CAPV	3 County CoC YHDP HMIS	MA0689Y1T071800	2022	HMIS	\$44,000
CAPV	3 County CoC YHDP SSO-CE	MA0688Y1T071800	2022	SSO	\$60,000
CAPV	Mental Health Association YHDP RRH Navigators	MA0690Y1T071800	2022	PH	\$210,912
CAPV	Mental Health Association YHDP PSH Hope for Home	MA0691Y1T071800	2022	PH	\$185,928
CAPV	Gandara SHINE YHDP TH/RRH	MA0692Y1T071800	2022	Joint TH & PH-RRH	\$424,849
CAPV	Dialself YHDP RRH Franklin	MA0693Y1T071800	2022	PH	\$74,986
					\$1,000,675

Project Updates:

2021 – Project Unit & Grant Utilization

General	Program Utilization (on 12/10/21)				FY19/FY20 Contract Utilization (12/10/21)				
Project	Contract Units	Contract Capacity	Current Units Filled	Current Unit Utilization	Contract Start	Total Sub-Award	Point in Contract (12/10)	Month Billing Processed Through	% of Contract Billed (12/10)
A Positive Place	11	17	14	127%	Aug-21	\$135,932	33%	October	24%
Adult Indept. Living	10	10	10	100%	Nov-21	\$43,412	8%	-	0%
CHD PSH	48	48	46	96%	Jul-21	\$727,836	42%	October	34%
DIAL/SELF TH/RRH-PH	10	10	11	110%	Jul-21	\$98,255	42%	October	26%
Louison House TH	14	22	13	92%	Feb-21	\$139,091	83%	October	75%
Northern Berkshire PSH	9	9	9	100%	Sep-21	\$147,464	25%	October	20%
Paradise Ponds	4	4	4	100%	Feb-21	\$29,604	83%	September	50%
Project Reach	3	3	3	100%	Nov-21	\$26,110	8%	-	0%
Shelter Plus Care	22	18	20	90%	Oct-21	\$229,695	17%	-	0%
Village Center Apts	5	12	4	80%	Nov-21	\$68,811	8%	-	0%

* Received but not processed

YHDP Projects

General	Program Utilization (on 12/10/2021)				FY18/FY19 Contract Utilization (12/10/2021)				
Project	Contract Units	Contract Capacity	Current Units Filled	Current Unit Utilization	Contract Start	Total Two Year Sub-Award	Point in Two-Year Contract (12/10)	Month Billing Processed Through	% of Two-Year Contract Billed (12/10)
DIAL/SELF RRH Franklin	4	4	2*	50%	Oct-20	\$140,576	58%	October	21%
Gandara SHINE TH-RRH	8TH/12RRH	20	4/4*	50%	Oct-20	\$828,962*	58%	October	20%
MHA PSH	8	8	3*	38%	Oct-20	\$351,120	58%	October	12%
MHA Youth Navigators- RRH	6 RRH	6 RRH	0*	0%	Oct-20	\$408,000	58%	October	17%

*Additional referrals have been made and housing search is underway

+Gandara Shine project includes \$85,882 in supportive services funding contracted to CAPV Youth Programs

FY19 Project year end details:

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 above, 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, it was brought to the attention of the CoC that 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.

CoC Committee Updates:

CoC Board and Committee meetings are continuing to be held over zoom. Specific workgroups have been meeting to address large efforts for these committees – see below for workgroup updates as well. All CoC committees are looking for co-chairs and are looking for people with lived experience of homelessness to lend their voices to the work of ending homelessness in the Three County area. The CoC staff have developed a policy to be certain to pay people with lived experience for their time and perspectives.

Youth/Young Adult (YYA) Homelessness Committee, meets monthly

The YYA Homelessness Committee resumed meeting monthly this quarter. During these meetings the Committee reviewed and discussed Youth/Young Adult Action Board (YAB) updates, Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) project updates, the submission of renewal/replacement YHDP applications for the FY21 HUD NOFO, the Statewide Homeless Youth Awareness Campaign, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and YHDP Demonstration Period Project Evaluation process/planning, prioritizing and addressing unmet short-term goals in the Coordinated Community Plan (CCP), and legislative updates/advocacy. YAB members continued to participate in these meetings and provided intros/check-ins, YAB updates, and shared opinions re the Statewide Homeless Youth Awareness Campaigns poster message and imagery. YHDP Demonstration Period Program Evaluation comprises three groups of evaluation elements-Surveys, Policies/Administration and Data. YAB expressed interest in participating in the survey and policy evaluation and data will be evaluated by CoC staff once HMIS has migrated and a data report can be developed.

Data Evaluation Committee, meets monthly

The Data Evaluation Committee has reached a draft of both the Privacy and Security Plan and Data Quality Plan which have been incorporated in an HMIS Policies & Procedures document as well as an HMIS agreement for users in the new system. This HMIS user agreement appears directly in the new Clarity HMIS and users are required to read, check boxes, and sign off on the agreement before the system will let them access HMIS. We still need to incorporate these plans into an agency agreement for new and existing agencies to sign off on agreeing to proper use of the CAPV Clarity HMIS. There will likely be changes and edits in the future to refine the plans once we begin implementing it and see how everything works in practice but for the time being it's a version we feel comfortable using. These plans were presented to HMIS users and project leadership during a new HMIS policies and procedures overview session at the end of October. The Data Evaluation Committee has asked that the CoC and projects in HMIS try to implement these new plans by June 1st, 2022. The Data Evaluation Committee convenes every 4th Wednesday each month from 3-4:30pm but did not meet in November due to timing near the holidays and Michele being out.

Ranking and Evaluation Committee, meets monthly in current stage

This committee actively participated in the FY21 NOFO response for our CoC. Non-funded members met to train on this year's ranking process, met several times to rank both the renewal projects and new applications for funding in response to the NOFO's additional resources for Three County. This committee's next steps will be to review the ranking plan for annual year 2022, in preparation for the FY22 NOFO process and to specifically consider the areas surrounding racial equity and gender equity. They will begin this process in January.

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

The Youth/Young Adult Action Board members continued to meet weekly to work on projects and collaborations, and identified additional funding sources for youth stipends to support/expand the YAB. They continued attending the YYA Homelessness Committee meetings to provide updates, and will participate in the YHDP demonstration period evaluation process. The YAB also continued to host monthly Building Bridges meetings -to build relationships and trust among members of the YYA Homelessness Committee - and conversations this quarter focused on documentation as a barrier to receiving services and extra supports needed for YYA experiencing homelessness in winter. The YAB also worked with CAPV's community Youth Council to identify YYA homelessness as a community priority and explored root causes of homelessness as a first step in addressing this issue. In addition, they continued working on a peer engagement project to create care packages for youth transitioning out of DCF next year, and met with DCF to further plan logistics and care package contents.

CE Committee, meets quarterly

The Coordinated Entry Committee did not meet during the 4th quarter. The next CE Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, February 15th from 3:00-4:30.

Equity and Inclusion Committee, meets monthly

The Equity and Inclusion Committee convenes monthly on the third Wednesday of each month. The Equity and Inclusion Committee last met on Wednesday, November 17th. During the months of September, October and November, the Equity and Inclusion Committee reviewed the crosswalk between the Equity and Inclusion Strategic goals and the Racial Equity Plan's Organizational Training and Workforce Development Action Plan and combined the two. The Equity and Inclusion Committee continues to work on advancing aspects of the Three County CoC Racial Equity Plan and plan around increasing participation of people with Lived Experience of Homelessness in CoC work. COC staff and the committee members also completed a survey, that allowed the committee to score the COC on how equitable our practices are when it comes to engaging people with lived experience. By completing this survey, the committee was able to identify what the COC needs to build on and added the

goals to the People with Lived Experience Plan to make it a more cohesive plan. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday December 15th at 11:00a.

*****NEW - Landlord Engagement Work Group, meets bi-weekly***

The Landlord Engagement Workgroup has been convening bi-weekly on Wednesdays. The Landlord Engagement Workgroup last met on Wednesday December 8th. During the last couple of months, the workgroup has been working to assist the COC on identifying ways to engage with Landlords in Hampshire, Franklin, and Berkshire counties effectively. The Landlord Engagement Workgroup has worked together to create a Landlord Engagement Flyer, that is being used to engage with local Landlords and Management companies. COC staff and the workgroup worked together to create a Landlord Survey to also engage with Landlords, but to also survey what programs they are aware of, if they know what COC is, and inviting them to be added to a list of Landlords. The hope for the list of Landlords is that it will help CE partners to have better relationships through the COC. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday December 22nd at 9a.

Coordinated Entry System Updates:

- Since October, the Coordinated Entry system has seen the following placements into CoC Housing:
- Transitional Housing (includes YHDP): 8
- Permanent Supportive Housing (includes YHDP): 6
- YHDP RRH: 6

Since July, the CE system has made changes to accommodate the new Emergency Housing Voucher program. EHV voucher referrals started in August. As of 12/10, all 15 Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority vouchers have been referred for; all 17 Northampton Housing Authority vouchers have been referred for; and all of the 36 DHCD vouchers either have had a referral or a household identified for referral. As of 12/10, there have been 4 lease ups with the NHA and 1 lease up in progress for FCRHA.

To support the work of the EHV's and other CE needs, the CoC has hired for a CoC Intake & Referral Specialist. The new hire will be starting on 12/29 and we are thrilled to welcome her to the team.

The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) in partnership with C4 Innovations is leading an evaluation of our Coordinated Entry system. Recently a survey was circulated to help C4 Innovations gathering information for. MHSA is undertaking efforts within the community to help Continuums of Care (CoC) develop their capacity to improve racial equity in the distribution of homeless/housing resources. Our CoC has a robust Racial Equity Action Plan and a workgroup that meets regularly to address our efforts in responding to the goals set through a year long process in partnership with Racial Equity Partners. This effort is completely aligned with and will become a part of that action plan. I have

included an outline of that plan in this communication- each of these goals has detailed action steps that the workgroup is working to implement.

As a part of this process of further evaluation of our coordinated entry system and housing programs, we would like to hear from you to assess knowledge gaps and areas for continued learning and support as they relate to racial equity. We are hoping for 100% completion in a survey, as your participation will help guide the racial equity work for each CoC. The survey is anonymous, and you will not be individually identified. If you haven't already, Please take 10 minutes to fill out the survey below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6DLQ6WX>

General		Units		Characteristics Per Unit			Unit Type/Bedroom					
County	Household/Units	Capacity	Adult 25+	Families	18-24+	Congregate	SRO or shared	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	
Transitional Housing	Berkshire	24	32	17	3	4	24	-	-	-	-	-
	Franklin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Hampshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent Supportive Housing	Berkshire	25	35	20	3	2	-	1	21	-	2	1
	Franklin	37	37	35	-	2	-	16	21	-	-	-
	Hampshire	34	58	25	8	1	-	6	20	1	6	1
	Hampden	8	9	6	2	-	-	-	6	2	-	-
YHDP PSH	Franklin	8	8	-	-	8	-	-	8	-	-	-
YHDP RRH	Franklin	22	22	-	-	22	-	-	22	-	-	-
YHDP TH	Franklin	8			2	6			6	1	1	
TH/RRH -PH	Franklin	11	11	-	-	11	-	-	11	-	-	-
Totals		177	212	103	18	56	24	23	115	4	9	2

HMIS lead Updates:

Community Action Pioneer Valley signed a contract with Bitfocus on April 21st for their HMIS [Clarity](#) and has been in the process of implementing this new system since May. The Data and Evaluation Manager and Program Director are meeting weekly with this vendor to manage implementation which should complete in December. The CoC conducted a series of trainings in the fall to prepare HMIS users in programs across the three counties for the switch from our current ETO HMIS to the new Clarity HMIS. In addition, HUD has released new data elements as of October that are required changes to the CoC's data collection. A training was held on these new data standards at the beginning of October although the ETO HMIS has had some difficulty implementing the new standards in reports. The CoC is now in the final phases of data migration, conducting testing to ensure that data is being migrated successfully from our current systems to the new HMIS. There has been a delay in our "go live" date in the new HMIS from December 9th to December 31st due to issues in the export from current systems which had arisen since the data standards change in October and resulted in missing and/or erroneous data in the migration. Many of these issues have been addressed but the CoC has confirmed with DHCD that we may be able to continue utilizing the DHCD ETO HMIS into January and February if problems with the data exports persist.

YHDP Year 1 Updates:

YHDP is a Franklin County program which completed its first year of project implementation. This program is comprised of Housing Projects, HMIS, Coordinated Entry, the YAB and the YYA Homelessness Committee. HMIS is in the final stages of migrating data and implementing a new HMIS system through Bitfocus. YHDP has 4 Housing Projects which are operated by three providers (DIAL/SELF, Gandara, and Mental Health Association) and offer 36 beds across a youth housing continuum of Transitional Housing (TH), Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). Our YYA-specific Coordinated Entry Program holds weekly Case Conferencing meetings where Project openings, the By Names List (BNL) and Referral Tracking Log are reviewed. As of December 8th, 45 YYA had been referred to Housing Projects, 14 were currently housed (10 in Permanent Housing and 4 in Transitional), and 77 Youth are on the BNL. All YHDP projects submitted renewal/replacement applications in response to HUD's FY21 NOFO with program periods of October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023. And currently projects are underspent.

YHDP projects will be evaluated via Annual Performance Measures (due to HUD by Dec 29, 2021 and December 29, 2022), CoC Site Monitoring in Spring 2022, and Demonstration Period Program Evaluation (in Fall/Winter 2021 and Summer 2022). The latter is a first- and second-year review of YHDP projects scoring measures developed by the community (YYA Homelessness Committee and YHDP Planning Team) which provides feedback to the CoC and projects and Systems but is not shared with HUD. Evaluation measures are divided into three areas-Youth Surveys, Policy/Administration and Data.

Many elements of the Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness (CCP) have been implemented and the YAB has grown despite COVID. YHDP challenges to date include lack of housing inventory, difficulty in filling vacant staff positions, turnover in YAB membership (many were not involved in initial YHDP planning and development), and keeping community members engaged.