

MA 507, Three County CoC – December 2020 – Quarterly Board Report

This report was compiled in preparation for the full meeting of the board, scheduled for December 8th, from 3-5pm over zoom. An agenda for that meeting is forthcoming.

The Three County CoC held it's **annual meeting on September 29th from 2-4pm, on zoom, with over 80 people from the membership in attendance**. Visit the CoC's Board page on our new [website](#) to see more information! The CoC has continued in depth systems effort with technical assistance providers in the area of Coordinated Entry development and training, as well in the area of data clean up and reporting for several of our partner agencies in response to what was seen in systems performance measures tracking. We are also finishing our Racial Equity Action Plan, and have begun project implementation ad youth and young adult case conferencing. We have hired and are training our new Coordinated Entry Specialist, Shaundell, who has begun leading all case conferencing and has begun development of a landlord engagement strategy to support our projects in finding appropriate units for their programs.

COVID-19 -

The Three County CoC staff are working full time - partially in the office at 277 Main Street and part time from home. We are in the office in small teams in order to keep risk low. We are working closely with Shelter Providers in all three counties as they try to respond to the rising needs and continue to turn people away. Our Program director maintains open lines of communication to service providers working with our unsheltered population, the Shelter leadership and staff within the communities that we serve and the the municipalities continuing to see a rise in the Shelter capacity need. Our projects, throughout the pandemic have continued to provide supportive services to their participants and have continued to share openings and utilize case conferencing and the coordinated entry process to house people experiencing homelessness.

Board Updates:

There is one seat open at this time. The current board slate was approved at the Annual meeting in September. We welcome Melphy Antunes, in his board participation as a representative from Wayfinders and Theresa Nickolson will move forward as the co-chair, since the board voted to accept this change at the July 2020 special meeting.

CoC Funding Updates:

- The country continues to await information regarding a NOFA release for FY2020 CoC funding cycle, which is currently, for Three County over 1.8 million dollars. February Projects will be notified of the concern for the possibility that funding will not be made available in the early months of 2021, by mid-December. We are hopeful that this year's process will be limited to renewal applications due to how late this release will be.

- The \$22,000.00 planning grant for YHDP awarded to the COC was fully utilized from November 29,2019-November 28, 2020 to support the work at the COC staff level to perform the planning process for YHDP, submit a coordinated community plan to end youth homelessness in Franklin County – to HUD, and receive approval; to release a request for proposals for the funding awarded to Franklin County and conduct a selection process; to complete the application process in ESNAPS for the approved grants, and to begin project implementation for a full continuum (TH,RRH, and PSH) totaling 36 beds.
- The CoC has been awarded funding, once again, by the Western Mass Network to End Homelessness, to continue our work in racial equity and our Racial Equity Workgroup continues our work with jo Consulting. This year’s funding amount for the Three County CoC is
- CAPV will be engaging in conversations with the Community Foundation of Western Mass to discuss possible match support for the CoC system grants.
- Currently, the MA House and Senate Ways and Means budgets each included a \$3,000,000 increase in the EOHHS line item, so we are cautiously optimistic about continued level funding and possible increases for our Youth Services programming.

2020 Project Unit & Grant Utilization:

COC Projects:

General	Program Utilization (on 11/9/2020)				FY18/FY19 Contract Utilization (11/9/2020)				
	Contract Units	Contract Capacity	Current Units Filled	Current Unit Utilization	Contract Start	Total Sub-Award	Point in Contract (12/1)	Month Billing Processed Through	% of Contract Billed (11/23/20)
A Positive Place	13	17	13	100%	Aug-20	\$127,880	33%	October	22%
Adult Independent Living	10	10	10	100%	Nov-20	\$43,412	8%	-	0%
CHD PSH	48	48	43	98%	Jul-20	\$690,520	42%	September	17%
DIAL/SELF TH/RRH-PH	10	10	5	50%	Jul-20	\$98,255	42%	October	30%
Louison House TH	14	22	14	100%	Feb-20	\$139,091	83%	September	68%
Northern Berkshire PSH	9	9	9	100%	Sep-20	\$137,368	25%	September	8%
Paradise Ponds	4	4	4	100%	Feb-20	\$27,247	83%	October	59%
Project Reach	3	3	3	100%	Nov-20	\$24,290	8%	-	0%
Shelter Plus Care	22	18	18**	82%	Oct-20	\$211,239	17%	September	0%
Village Center Apts	5	12	5	100%	Nov-20	\$65,117	8%	-	0%

*Indicates still in or waiting to submit final billing for FY18 contract **3 additional vouchers are earmarked and housing search underway

YHDP Projects:

General	Program Utilization				FY18/FY19 Contract Utilization (11/9/2020)				
Project	Contract Units	Contract Capacity	Current Units Filled	Current Unit Utilization	Contract Start	Total Two Year Sub-Award	Point in Two-Year Contract (12/1)	Month Billing Processed Through	% of Two-Year Contract Billed (11/23/20)
DIAL/SELF RRH Franklin	4	4	0	0%	Oct-20	\$140,576	8%	October	.6%
Gandara SHINE TH-RRH	6TH/12RRH	20	0	0%	Oct-20	\$828,962*	8%	-	0%
MHA PSH	8	8	0	0%	Oct-20	\$351,120	8%	-	0%
MHA Youth Navigators- RRH	6 RRH	6 RRH	0	0%	Oct-20	\$408,000	8%	-	0%

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

CoC Committee Updates:

CoC Board and Committee meetings are continuing to be held over zoom. Specific workgroups have begun meeting to address large efforts for these committees. The Data and Evaluation Committee now has a workgroup meeting regularly to procure a new HMIS platform and is working closely with Technical assistance providers; The Coordinated Entry Committee held a small workgroup that met bi-weekly to address changes needed in the assessment tool and system mapping; the racial equity workgroup is still meeting regularly to work on completion of our Racial Equity Action Plan; and the Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Committee of the CoC met for it's first time this quarter, to begin responding to the Franklin County Coordinated Community Plan for Ending Youth Homelessness.

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.

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

The YYA Homelessness Committee has had three monthly meetings, so far. These meetings have focused on the YHDP planning process and review of the plan, the Continuous Quality Improvement process, and discussion of YHDP Demonstration Period Evaluation for Projects. Each of the meetings have had 20-30 people in attendance, demonstrating a real interest in this population and our YHDP coordinated community plan.

Data Evaluation Committee, meets monthly

The Data Evaluation Committee has decided to meet every other month instead of every month while the HMIS Implementation Workgroup is ongoing because the workgroup is a sub-group of the committee and many members are on both groups and it felt necessary to lessen how often the committee meets until the workgroup finishes the bulk of its work. The committee is still meeting for an hour and a half every other month and in that time, we have been prioritizing the CoC's Privacy and Security Plan and Data Quality Plan. Moving forward, the Committee will continue to revise these plans in an iterative fashion after soliciting feedback from various partners. The committee will also begin to develop a System Performance Improvement Plan and will assist in some YHDP goals and Racial Equity goals around data which have been formed by the Racial Equity Workgroup.

- The **New HMIS Implementation Workgroup** was created to act as a planning and selection team for the Three County CoC's new HMIS Implementation. We have formed this workgroup in response to a notification from DHCD that we will no longer be able to utilize the HMIS they administer as of December 31st, 2021. The HMIS Implementation Workgroup released a request for proposals for a new HMIS on October 29th. This request included a comprehensive list of features the CoC prioritizes or requires and can be found on the Three County CoC webpage at the following URL: <https://www.threecountycoc.communityaction.us/hmisrequestforproposals>. The workgroup has been in a small hiatus while we wait for questions and responses to our RFP which are due by December 10th. Once the proposal period has ended, the Workgroup will reconvene to begin the scoring and selection process which will last until we enter contract negotiation in March. Our goal is to have access to our new HMIS by September 30th, 2021 and to have all data migrated from the DHCD HMIS by December 10th, 2021.

Ranking and Evaluation Committee, meets monthly in current stage

This committee has been meeting regularly, in order to respond to and advise the CoC's project ranking process and to support this CoC staff's efforts in updating the ranking tool and plan. Members of this committee have supported the CoC program staff in providing feedback for upcoming changes for the next year in the ranking process and based on the NOFA, will address the needs of any new project ranking opportunities. The ranking process will now implement changes based on new project types since we have two joint component programs and some Rapid Rehousing programs due to YHDP.

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

Youth/Young Adult Action Board (YAB) members continue to participate in weekly meetings to plan new projects to serve their community and some members have participated in the last two YYA Homelessness Committee meetings. The YAB has also met with other YAB groups, including one that asked them to participate in a focus group to support the development of a provider feedback survey, and they joined the

Massachusetts YAB Collab, which is a statewide organizing group for YABs. They also spoke at a radical healing symposium and one member had their powerful story presented at a local legislative forum.

CE Committee, meets quarterly

The Coordinated Entry Committee met on Tuesday, November 10th. The Committee reviewed and discussed the Coordinated Entry goal in the Racial Equity Plan. The committee discussed a plan for evaluating assessment and intake procedures to inform racial equity needs and identified potential implicit bias trainings to recommend to CoC funded-projects and CE assessors. In addition, the committee discussed the progress of the Coordinated Entry Workgroup in designing the CoC's CE Vulnerability Assessment tool. During the next meeting in February, the Committee will be conducting a final review of the updated CE Vulnerability Assessment tool, after it is reviewed by CoC consultants.

- **CE Workgroup, met bi-weekly**

The CE Workgroup continued to meet biweekly throughout October and November and held its last meeting on Thursday, November 19th. The workgroup mapped out needs for connecting providers to the CE system, identified a purpose and structure for a housing crisis “decision tree”, and re-designed aspect of the CE Vulnerability assessment tool with a racial equity lens. In October, the workgroup received presentations from Dr. LaMont Green from TAC and Donald Whitehead and Jeff Olivet from Racial Equity Partners to help the workgroup center the redesign of the assessment tool in racial equity. Throughout October and November, the workgroup did a deep dive into the current assessment tool and discussed the effectiveness, intentions, and outcomes of the current structure, contents and scoring. Details about next steps:

- “Decision Tree” -- The vision of the “decision tree” is that it will be a regional list of resources and distributed broadly throughout the CoC to community-based agencies and organizations that may interact with individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis and posted visibly so that those agencies/organizations or the individuals and families themselves can refer to the resource as a guide for helping those in housing crisis. The regional housing crisis decision trees will be brought to case conferencing meetings over the winter months so that regional resources can be identified. The two-page resource will then be distributed to a wide range of agencies and organizations throughout the three counties to be posted for community use.
- CE Assessment tool- The CE Workgroup combed through the current CE Vulnerability Assessment Tool and re-designed aspects of the tool to meet Three County priorities and incorporate racial equity needs. In December, the updated tool will be sent to our TAC consultant Doug Tetreault, who also lent time and expertise to the workgroup, and the Racial Equity Partners consultants. The tool will then be brought back to the Coordinated Entry Committee in the February meeting for a final review.

Equity and Inclusion Committee, meets monthly

The Equity and Inclusion Committee convenes monthly on the third Friday of each month. Since the last Board meeting, the committee met in September and October. During the September meeting, the committee reviewed and discussed the work of the Racial Equity Workgroup, HMIS Workgroup, and Coordinated Entry Workgroup. In addition, the committee heard a presentation from Kelsey Wessels about DIAL/SELF's racial justice and equity group. The committee also reviewed data and discussed committee goals and action plan for the upcoming year. During the October meeting, the group continued discussion about the Committee's charter identified and self-identified goals. The committee has received some interest in a co-chair, which will be discussed at the November 20th meeting. At the November 20th meeting, the CoC will introduce the new CoC staff facilitator of this committee, Shaundell Diaz, the Coordinated Entry Specialist, and the committee will review and discuss the Racial Equity Plan goals.

- ***Racial Equity Workgroup***

This workgroup continues to meet regularly with consultants through JO Consulting who have been meeting with the team for 2 meetings a month. Team leaders developed the 6 goals that were developed through community strategy sessions held in June and July and the Action Plan is almost complete. The workgroup is now planning for dissemination of the plan and a large community event to begin implementation in February.

Coordinated Entry System Updates:

Since September, the Coordinated Entry system as seen the following placements into CoC Housing:

- Transitional Housing: 1
- Permanent Supportive Housing: 5

As of October 1st, CoCs must start tracking CE Touchpoints. The CoC held info sessions during case conferencing to update CE partners on these expectations. CoC staff is in the process of creating a user guide for entering CE Touchpoints and Exits.

The CoC has also been working to identify households who are still listed in the Coordinated Entry Project in HMIS who need to be exited from the system because they have found housing or have not been in contact for over 6 months with CE partners.

In November, the CoC began convening YYA Case Conferencing meetings, which will be facilitated by the Coordinated Entry Specialist Shaundell Diaz. The YYA Case Conferencing meetings will be held weekly on Tuesdays from 2:00-3:00 via Zoom. This meeting will primarily focus on YYA

connected to Franklin County and placements into YHDP funded-housing and DIAL/SELF's TH-RRH project; however will also include discussion of YYA experiencing homelessness CoC-wide.

	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	-	-
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	10	10	-	-	10	-	-	10	-	-	-
Totals		177	213	104	18	55	37	24	101	4	9	2

HMIS lead Updates:

As of October 1st we have officially begun utilizing the new coordinated entry data elements specified by HUD in the most recent 2020 HMIS data standards. We have implemented two of the three data elements and are working with DHCD to add the third and final element. Our next steps

after securing this third element are to try and gain access to enroll and dismiss participants from those Coordinated Entry projects so that we can help providers remove housed participants.

The CoC held three HMIS-related trainings in September and October as a refresher for current projects and an introduction for new YHDP funded projects which are starting this fall and winter. These trainings included Privacy & Security, Site Administrator Training, and End User HMIS Training. They were recorded and made available for those who were not able to attend and have been added to the CoC's Learning Management System which will be shared with partners after adding more content.

In terms of reporting, the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) is now underway and has been changed enough since last year that HUD is requiring a re-submission for last year (10/1/18 - 9/30/19) in addition to a new submission for this past year (10/1/19-9/30/20) in order to ensure the data can be compared between years. This is a system-wide report that looks at performance measures across the whole system like rates of first-time homelessness, recidivism, exits to permanent housing, and average length of time in homelessness. The report process involves a back-and-forth data cleanup and explanation with HUD which we are currently in the process of. There is no set due date but the hope is that this is all settled by the second couple week of December.

In addition to the LSA, HUD has released an update about the Point in Time Count (PIT Count) after months of being unsure whether or not they would hold an unsheltered count. The PIT count is the annual count of all persons experiencing homelessness in our region and there are concerns about safely conducting a count while the pandemic is ongoing. HUD has decided to hold the sheltered count as normal (the count of people in shelters on the night of the PIT Count) and to hold the unsheltered count (of those not in shelter- outside or somewhere else not meant for or safe for habitation) but offer exemptions. CoCs can go as far as to request an exemption from doing the whole unsheltered count if it isn't possible but most are expected to request some form of exemptions or to take advantage of more flexible rules like 2 weeks for provider surveys instead of 1 or holding the count in February or March instead of January. The PIT Count workgroup is set to have its first meeting to discuss whether we want to take advantage of any of the exemptions on December 1st from 3:30 –4:30pm. If you are interested in being part of the planning process for the PIT Count this year please reach out to Michele at mlafleur@communityaction.us.

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Updates:

The 4 housing and services projects funded by the YHDP designation for Franklin County have begun operations and project implementation. No YYA have been housed through these programs yet, as each project is working on start-up activities and hiring staff. The YYA case conferencing meetings are being held weekly on Tuesday afternoons, since the beginning of November. These meetings currently have concentrated on providing project staff from Gandara and MHA with Franklin County related resource information and YYA CE partners with training on the assessment tool. The CoC hopes that these projects will be able to start engaging youth and young adults in services by the end of December. The Projects will be able to bill the CoC for eligible activities beginning October 1st. We are uncertain if Gandara's joint component program will need to have a different start date due to the need to find and provide an Environmental Review for a TH site by the end of December, in order

to bill in this quarter. Unfortunately we have struggled to obtain a site, though Gandara is working hard to secure this location. So far, Dialself has been able to bill for October activities, as has the two systems projects (HMIS and CE). We are expecting to receive MHA's first billing package at the end of this week.

Executive Office of Health and Human Services – Youth Services Updates:

The first FY'21 quarterly report was submitted to EOHHS in October. We served 113 youth this quarter via outreach, case management, and housing services. 8 youth received emergency housing and 33 youth were able to maintain housing for at least three months with our case management and/or flex funds support. We made some changes and are now reporting on demographics of those who receive flexible funds and those who have positive housing outcomes to see if there are disparities in the populations served which need to be addressed.

There is a new Moving to College Scholarship Program starting next fall, which is a partnership of the MA Department of Higher Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and EOHHS. MCLA and BCC are two of the colleges that are part of this program, which includes a housing scholarship through HUD Moving to Work funds, food support through participating colleges, and support services through EOHHS, which would be funded through the EOHHS contract. EOHHS partners are participating in this effort.

We are planning for a regional emergency/winter/COVID response plan for youth/young adults, which includes: Emergency Response-Ensuring crisis housing for young adults experiencing Covid related unsheltered and sheltered homelessness; Creating and sustaining housing opportunities for young adults experiencing homelessness; and focusing on effective and equitable use of resources and equitable impacts. EOHHS held two meetings to support development of these plans, which we participated in and we will soon submit our regional plan.