

"Building Communities Where Everyone Has a Place to Call Home: A Letter from the Director"

The Three County Continuum of Care (CoC) MA-507 promotes and guides a community-wide vision, strategy, and commitment to efforts to prevent and end homelessness; mobilizes funding; improves coordination and integration of mainstream resources and programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness through a housing first model; and establishes system-wide data collection and performance measurement practices to ensure successful housing strategies and equitable housing for vulnerable populations. The CoC strives to engage funded projects in processes and procedures that are anti-racist, free of bias, and advance the priorities of those most impacted by housing instability and homelessness. The CoC geography includes Franklin, Hampshire, and Berkshire counties in western Massachusetts.

As we hear this mission, it's a reminder of the depth and purpose of the work we all commit ourselves to every day. Together, we are not just service providers or partners—we are advocates, changemakers, and stewards of a shared vision for our communities. For those I have not yet had the opportunity to meet, I'd like to reintroduce myself. My name is Shaundell Diaz, and I use she/her pronouns. I identify as Afro-Latina, as a person with lived experience of homelessness, and as a survivor of domestic violence. These experiences have shaped not only who I am but also the work I dedicate my life to. I stand here today as someone deeply committed to ending homelessness and addressing the needs of our most vulnerable populations in a person-centered, trauma-informed manner. This work is not just professional for me—it is personal. I bring that same passion locally here in the Three County CoC, and I also extend it nationally as a consultant for the National Coalition for the Homeless. It is my belief that the voices and experiences of those most impacted by homelessness should always be at the center of the solutions we create.

Looking ahead, over the next year, I will focus on strengthening the foundation we have built by reaching out to forge deeper and more meaningful relationships with our partners, towns, cities, and municipalities across the CoC's coverage area. Collaboration is essential as we continue to align our strategies, bring in new resources, and ensure that every person experiencing homelessness in Franklin, Hampshire, and Berkshire counties is seen, heard, and supported in a path toward housing and stability. To each of you in this room—your dedication, your hard work, and your perseverance are what make this mission possible. I look forward to partnering with you, learning from you, and achieving greater impact together as we move into the year ahead.

Thank you again for being part of this vital work. Together, we are building communities where everyone has a place to call home.

Shaundell Diaz

Program Director