



THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

CITYWIDE

## Grant may spur new ideas for avoiding homelessness

January 4, 2009

It's not going to solve Boston's homelessness problem, but one local organization is using a state grant to brainstorm new ideas that could help keep people in their homes.

With \$1.18 million from Governor Deval Patrick's administration, the **Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership** will work with community, religious, service, and municipal leaders to develop programs and services and come up with alternatives to casting people out of their homes and into homeless shelters.

"I think that a big part of what this funding is for is that it provides a real incentive to work together as a community," said Mary Doyle, director of policy and program development for the housing partnership. "What we've found is that there are a number of different agencies . . . and certain areas where each of us have strength that we can now share."

The grant is part of \$8 million in funding aimed at similar programs statewide.

"Really we see this as research and development dollars, or experimental dollars, to see what works," said executive director Chris Norris. "We know that we are not going to end homelessness in metro Boston, but if we can take that money and use it to come up with models that can be replicated and brought to scale down the road . . . then from that standpoint it will be a victory."

Potential ideas include ways to work with landlords to provide emergency funding when a family falls a month behind on its rent, and providing funding to multiple families who share a home.

There is a focus, too, on "Housing First" programs aimed at getting people out of shelters and off the street by working with courts, housing authorities, Transitional Assistance offices, and large property owners.

JOHN M. GUILFOIL ■

© [Copyright](#) 2009 The New York Times Company