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Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership And Boston Private Bank & Trust Company Partner To Preserve Tenancy During Foreclosure

Date Published: February 20, 2009
Publisher: [Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership](#)
Region: Massachusetts

BOSTON – While she didn't own property, Sherry easily could have been yet another victim of foreclosure. Her landlord had defaulted on his mortgage, the bank was foreclosing on the Dorchester property where she lived, her utilities had been turned off, and Sherry wasn't sure if or when she'd lose her apartment.

She didn't, thanks to a unique partnership between the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP) and Boston Private Bank & Trust Company.

Sherry said she first learned about the foreclosure when her "lights went out." The utilities were in the landlord's name, and one day they suddenly were disconnected. Until that time, Sherry was unaware that the property was in foreclosure.

Sherry contacted MBHP to report the foreclosure, learn about her rights as a tenant of the property, and get advice. Property Owner Services Manager Howard Wensley helped Sherry navigate getting her utilities reinstated in her own name, and other MBHP employees worked with her as the foreclosure process evolved.

When Boston Private Bank officials learned of Sherry's tenancy, they contacted MBHP about their willingness to make repairs and improvements to the property and to preserve her tenancy while preparing to resell the property.

"Boston Private Bank essentially became a partner in tenancy preservation and an interim property manager," said MBHP Director of Client Services Maura Pensak. "The bank recognized and embraced the concept that a building doesn't have to be empty to sell, and that it's good for the community to keep people living in these properties."

The process was new to both organizations; details had to be worked out and procedures established. The two organizations were in contact almost daily, discussing repairs and upgrades needed for the property to pass inspections and making sure Sherry and her family were impacted as little as possible.

"We wanted to do everything in our power to keep the tenant there," said Boston Private Bank Senior Vice President and MBHP Board Member Esther Schlorholtz. "It is rare that we have any foreclosures, but

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Homeless children	sometimes unfortunately they happen. We wanted to help the tenant stay in her home because it is the right thing to do, and we also realize that her presence helps to preserve the property."
Homeless families	
Homeless individuals (chronic)	Despite the newness of the arrangement, Sherry says everyone worked well together. Even the real estate agent retained by the bank to sell the property was on board. "Janice Burns was great. She would let me know everything that was going on and give me 48 hours' notice if someone was coming to the apartment," said Sherry. "MBHP and Boston Private Bank staffers were always coming around to make sure things were okay for me and my kids, and that we were safe."
Homeless in prisons and jails	
Homeless veterans	
Homeless youth and foster care	
Housing first	
Housing Trust Funds	Sherry still lives in the apartment she moved into a year ago, and the property now has a new owner. Boston Private Bank was able to sell the three-unit property to a first-time home buyer who obtained low-interest financing and will live in one of the units.
Katrina evacuees	
Legal issues	
Legislation (sorted by date)	"It's the ideal situation," said Schlorholtz. "MBHP helped us to keep the tenant in her home and now we have a first-time home owner living in a three-family house with an existing tenant. It's a true success story."
McKinney-Vento	
Mental Health	
NIMBY (Not in my back yard)	*****
Permanent supportive housing	MBHP is the state's largest regional provider of rental housing voucher assistance. We serve homeless, elderly, disabled, and individuals and families with low and moderate incomes. Our region spans Boston and 29 surrounding communities; Arlington, Bedford, Belmont, Braintree, Brookline, Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Lexington, Lynn, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Milton, Newton, North Reading, Quincy, Reading, Revere, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, Winthrop and Woburn.
Poverty	
Prevention	
Prisons	
Property Values	
Rapid rehousing	Our mission is to ensure that the region's low- and moderate-income individuals and families have choice and mobility in finding and retaining decent affordable housing; all of our programs and initiatives are designed to encourage housing stability, increased economic self-sufficiency, and enhanced quality of the lives of those we serve. To achieve our mission and to promote efficient service delivery, we work collaboratively with a broad array of service providers and neighborhood-based organizations.
Reentry housing	
Rural Homelessness	
Substance abuse	
Systems change and interagency collaboration	
Targeting	
Vulnerability Index	We believe that everyone deserves a place to call home.
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