

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metro Boston Network to End Homelessness to highlight projects and accomplishments at State House May 17

BOSTON – The Leadership Council of the Metro Boston Network to End Homelessness (MBN) will host a briefing to highlight its accomplishments, collaborations and pilot projects from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Monday, May 17, in Room A-1 at the State House. Members of the House and Senate along with friends, collaborators, staff and members of the MBN Leadership Council are expected to attend.

In December 2008, the Metro Boston Network was one of eight regional networks awarded a collective \$8 million for pilot programs to end homelessness statewide through better coordination, integration and implementation of services.

Since being awarded \$1.18 million, MBN has built upon existing and ongoing efforts of constituent cities and towns by partnering state and federal agencies, local nonprofits, faith communities, individual residents and members of the business community. All are working to transition from a shelter response to a housing response to homelessness and toward an integrated regional safety net of housing, housing stabilization, and homelessness prevention resources that can preempt and end family and individual homelessness.

MBN has focused on three major innovative program areas: Housing First, diversion and prevention. Housing First targets chronically homeless unaccompanied adults and families who are presently homeless and/or facing many complex barriers to housing. The diversion program focuses on interventions that divert families from shelter toward alternative safe housing options. Prevention activities help families avoid eviction to prevent homelessness and avoid a stay in a shelter.

The briefing will focus on three pilots that MBN has created:

- The District Court Initiative is a program being implemented by the Community Dispute Settlement Center, Just-A-Start/Mediation for Results, the Somerville Tenancy Preservation Collaborative, and Tri-CAP. It focuses on four major service areas: basic legal services, case management, mediation with landlords, and utilization of emergency funds to help stabilize tenancies in the Chelsea, Malden, Medford, Somerville and Woburn district courts.
- The Large Property Owners Collaboration is operated by Affordable Housing Services Collaborative, Inc. and the Somerville Tenancy Preservation Coalition. These network members are focusing on sustaining tenancies in large properties

- including Clarendon Hill Towers and the Winn and Peabody Properties residences in Braintree and Chelsea.
- A Local Housing Authority (LHA) Initiative in which MBN agencies, including the Brookline Community Mental Health Center, the Community Service Network, Housing Families, Inc., and the Somerville Tenancy Preservation Collaborative are working with LHAs in Brookline, Everett, Malden, Somerville and Woburn. The agencies are building relationships with both executive and front-line staff at the LHAs to identify problems that might put tenants at risk, such as missed rent payments or behavioral issues. The network agencies can then provide appropriate assistance to preserve tenancies.

In addition, MBN will provide an overview of lessons learned, anticipated next steps, and plans for future work. Findings from a Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation-funded report highlighting Emergency Assistance reform also will be presented.

Funding for the briefing is generously provided by the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation and One Family, Inc.

Additional Metro Boston Network information:

Agencies implementing MBN's diversion innovation: CAPIC, the Community Service Network, the Domestic Violence Collaborative, and Just-A-Start/Mediation for Results.

Agencies implementing MBN's Housing First innovations: Heading Home and HomeStart, Inc.

Agencies implementing other MBN prevention efforts: The Cambridge Multi-Service Center and Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership.

Communities in the Metro Boston Network to End Homeless: Arlington, Bedford, Belmont, Brookline, Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Lexington, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Milton, Newton, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, Winthrop and Woburn.

The convening agency for MBN is the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, Inc.

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