

News Release

Contact: Beth Wagner, (617) 425-6691

beth.wagner@mbhp.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MBHP receives \$500,000 grant to help Fairmount Corridor families

BOSTON – A recently awarded \$500,000 Boston Foundation grant will help the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP) take a successful economic self-sufficiency program deep into the three neighborhoods where hundreds of families can benefit from it.

The Fairmount Initiative will focus resources of MBHP's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program in the Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan areas along the Fairmount Corridor commuter rail line. Partnering with neighborhood-based organizations, MBHP will encourage Fairmount Corridor families who receive MBHP Section 8 rental assistance to participate in the FSS program, plus receive many of the program's services and resources right in their own neighborhoods.

The FSS program helps families with low incomes increase their assets and decrease their need for public assistance. FSS participants work one-on-one with an advisor, who helps them develop a five-year plan detailing the steps they need to build assets, enhance educational and career opportunities, become and stay employed, increase earnings, become independent of public assistance programs, and move toward economic independence.

Included in the FSS program is a built-in savings component: As a participant earns more, money is placed in an escrow account that becomes available to the participant upon graduation. In FY 2009, the average income increase for MBHP graduates was \$22,615, and the average escrow savings was \$15,000. Graduates use this escrowed money to get college degrees or pay debts, and some even buy their own homes.

The Fairmount Corridor was chosen for the FSS expansion based on census tract data that shows these neighborhoods are in need of greater economic support and stabilization services. MBHP already has identified 1,731 families in the Fairmount Corridor who may qualify for the FSS program. Currently, about 5 percent of these families participate in the program.

By focusing the program in the neighborhoods and collaborating with neighborhood organizations, MBHP will bring its FSS best practices to program participants and increase families' connections with community-based networks. Many of the transportation issues that compromise a participant's ability to connect with services and resources will be minimized.

Other targeted goals and outcomes of the Fairmount Corridor initiative include:

- Establishing a MBHP satellite office in the corridor where MBHP support and advisory services can be provided locally.



125 LINCOLN STREET, 5TH FLOOR, BOSTON, MA 02111-2503
Phone: (617) 859-0400 | Toll Free: (800) 272-0990 (MA Only)
www.mbhp.org

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- Increasing MBHP's program capacity to 500 by enrolling 100 new participants in the first year and another 50 participants in each of the subsequent four years.
- Increasing enrollment in GED and post-secondary education and training opportunities.
- Reducing neighborhood dependence on housing and public assistance programs.
- Improving connections to community resources and local CDCs.
- Use private foundation dollars to leverage existing federal resources currently not being accessed.

“We are thrilled to be able to take the FSS program, which has changed the lives of so many families, to a whole new level,” said MBHP Executive Director Chris Norris. “Collaborating with neighborhood-based organizations will provide an unparalleled network of support to the Fairmount Corridor’s FSS program participants. We are grateful to the Boston Foundation for its generosity and for sharing our vision for this initiative.”

“This program by the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership is part of a broad effort to create greater opportunity and economic security for residents of the Fairmount Corridor in the heart of Boston,” said Paul S. Grogan, President and CEO of the Boston Foundation. “MBHP is a highly esteemed partner for us in this area, expanding a proven strategy to support and strengthen local families.”

For more information about the Fairmount Initiative or the FSS Program, please contact MBHP Communications Manager Beth Wagner at (617) 425-6691 or e-mail beth.wagner@mbhp.org.

MBHP is the state’s largest regional provider of rental housing voucher assistance. We serve homeless, elderly, disabled, and low- and moderate-income individuals and families. Our region spans Boston and 29 surrounding communities.

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, increase economic self-sufficiency, and enhance 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.

We believe that everyone deserves a place to call home.

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