

# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **MBHP houses 62 families under new program**

BOSTON – Sixty-two families who were homeless now have a permanent place to call home and are building their economic self-sufficiency, thanks to the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP) and a state-funded pilot program called Moving to Economic Opportunity (MEOP).

MEOP, which recently celebrated its first anniversary, is a collaboration among the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MBHP and other housing agencies to provide time-limited rental assistance to eligible homeless families who are participating in job training and education programs.

MEOP provides transitional support – including rental assistance, an asset-building tool and employment services – to assist families moving from homelessness to permanent housing and from unemployment to economic self-sufficiency. During the first year, all of the program, participants remained stable in their housing, thereby saving the Commonwealth \$1.2 million in shelter costs and providing a far better environment for families to improve their job situations.

Modeled after the federal Family Self-Sufficiency Program for Section 8 voucher holders, MEOP is targeted toward families with extremely low incomes who have demonstrated the motivation and skills to obtain and keep regular and gainful employment.

To be eligible to participate in MEOP, a family must be referred directly by DHCD to MBHP. Applicants must be homeless and in shelter, recent recipients of public assistance, and actively participating in employment with a work history but current unemployment.

The 62 families receive rental assistance from the MBHP and ongoing employment assistance, housing search help, housing stabilization assistance, and case management from their shelter providers. Once a family's portion of the rent, which is based on household income, exceeds \$350 per month, MBHP begins an escrow account to automatically save the difference between \$350 and what the family is paying. Families who successfully complete the program will receive their escrow account at graduation.

“We know that this model of asset development works,” said MBHP Executive Director Chris Norris. “Housing and jobs are linked, and this partnership among residents, housing providers and stabilization workers benefits everyone.”

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*everyone deserves a place to call home*



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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: 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.

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.

For more information, contact MBHP Communications Manager Beth Wagner at (617) 425-6691, or log onto [www.mbhp.org](http://www.mbhp.org).

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