



The panel discussion included comments from (L-R): State Representative Chynah Tyler; Bill Brauner, CEDAC; Beverly Bates, The Community Builders; Byron Rushing, former State Representative and Co-Chair, Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness; Bill McGonagle, Boston Housing Authority.

HOUSING REPORT RELEASED

Findings show housing shortage for families with lowest incomes

Metro Housing joined Citizens' Housing and Planning Association and Homes for Families on April 3 to present the findings from a new report about the shortage of housing that is affordable and available to extremely low income (ELI) renter households (a family of three with an annual income of less than \$29,150 for the metro Boston area).

The report finds that in 2016, there were 48.6 AA units per 100 ELI households in the state, down from

50.2 in 2011. This equates to less than one affordable and available home for every two ELI renter households in Massachusetts, a shortage of 141,000 homes.

The report also identifies ways that the state's policymakers and housing agencies and providers can more efficiently use limited resources to address the affordable housing needs of ELI households.

The report was released by the New England Public Policy Center

at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and was authored by Policy Analyst – and former Metro Housing staff member – Nick Chiumenti.

After Chiumenti presented the findings, a panel of housing experts and elected officials discussed policies, programs, tools, and strategies for producing homes that are affordable to people with extremely low incomes.

Section 8 Workshop for Property Owners in Randolph Focuses on inspections

More than 35 property owners and managers attended a free workshop in late March offered by Metro Housing at the Turner Free Library in Randolph.

The workshop covered the topics of owners' rights and responsibilities in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, commonly referred to as Section 8, inspections, and the rent determination process.

Leaders from Metro Housing provided information and answered questions regarding Housing Quality Standards, tenant-caused violations, how to deal with the legal implications of lead paint, common inspection fail items, and rent determinations.



A few of the local landlords and property managers that attended the free workshop on March 19. (L-R: Osaro Agbongiague of Randolph; Kelsey Ross of Randolph; Andre Rouse of Stoughton; Nhan Chiang of Chelsea; Deb Picarski of Randolph; Howard Wensley of Metro Housing; and Carolyn Simon of Randolph.

BOARD NEWS

Susanne Cameron Rejoins Board



Susanne Cameron

Metro Housing welcomes Susanne Cameron back as a member of the Board of Directors. Susanne rejoined the Board in March, after previously serving as a member from 2009 to 2015.

With over 30 years of experience in affordable housing and community development finance and regulatory responsibilities in the financial services industry, Susanne joined JPMorgan Chase in September 2018 as

a community reinvestment and partnerships officer for New England. She served previously in various leadership positions at Citi, TD Bank, Fannie Mae, and in community banking.

“Metro Housing is a leader in providing housing, preventing homelessness, and advocating for long term solutions to the affordability crisis, which is impacting too many Massachusetts individuals and families,” said Susanne.

“These issues are important to me both personally and professionally, so I am proud to serve on the board and to further support the work of this agency.”

Susanne holds a Masters of Public Policy from Tufts University, Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, with a concentration in housing and community development. Susanne lives in Newburyport with her husband Ed and their 2 children.

AYANNA PRESSLEY VISITS METRO HOUSING

Expresses Appreciation to Staff

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, representing Massachusetts' 7th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, visited Metro Housing|Boston on April 22. She conveyed her appreciation to the Metro Housing staff for the work they do every day to ensure that the families of Greater Boston have a place to call home. Pressley was elected in November of last year and became the first woman of color to be elected to Congress from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



Ayanna Pressley (2nd from right) poses with Metro Housing staff (L-R): Tishauna Thomas, Ladawn Patton, F. Marley Augustin, and Evandissa Cabral.



Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley

METRO HOUSING FAMILIES

Brothers – and Best Friends – Stay Connected with Metro Housing’s Help

Brothers Daniel and Samuel have lived in Chelsea for 30 years. They are each other’s best friend and have looked after one another since their mother passed away in 2004.

Shortly after their mother died, Samuel started experiencing multiple health issues, and he could no longer care for himself. Daniel became his primary care giver.

The brothers had been managing fine, living in the same home for more than 10 years. Things changed dramatically for them last year when the condominium they were renting was sold and they learned that they could not stay. With skyrocketing rents in the Boston area, and with limited income between the two of them, the brothers struggled to find an affordable home and were facing eviction.

Daniel was referred to CONNECT in Chelsea, one of Metro Housing’s colocation sites that help families facing a housing crisis. Blanca Gomez, Colocation Case Manager, met with the brothers and helped them navigate the overwhelming process of finding a new home and also helped them apply for funding to help them pay the last month’s rent and security deposit. With Blanca’s help, Samuel and Daniel avoided eviction and found a new apartment in Chelsea.

“I don’t know where we’d be without Blanca’s help,” said Daniel. “We’d be facing a terrible situation, likely living in a shelter. She provided us with the tools and resources we needed to find an apartment. We are so appreciative.”



Daniel Vega (R), with Blanca Gomez, Colocation Case Manager.

POLICY UPDATE

Metro Housing's Statement on Affordable Housing Legislation and Priorities



The high cost of rent in our region and throughout Massachusetts is a massive barrier for families with low incomes seeking safe and affordable homes, making our state one of the most expensive places to live in the country.

In the Greater Boston region served by Metro Housing, there are 35,000 families waiting for a housing assistance voucher. The family at the top of that wait list applied eleven years ago, and applicants' average annual income is approximately \$15,000. From 1,000 families subsisting in shelters 20 years ago to 3,500 families today, the link between expensive housing and homelessness is unmistakable.

The status quo is not effectively serving our lowest income households. Clearly, families cannot live in homes that do not exist, and many cannot afford to live in homes with market rents.

Governor Charlie Baker recently introduced a new bill - An Act to Promote Housing Choices - to address the Commonwealth's housing crisis. Although it appropriately identifies zoning reform as a priority, a key element is missing: specific focus on families with lowest incomes. Additionally, in a state with finite room to grow, every lot developed with a market rate apartment eliminates the opportunity to develop an affordable one.

THE HOUSING CHOICES BILL is just one piece of a very large puzzle. Here are five additional pieces that could help:

1. Set a goal. What gets measured gets done.
2. Continue to increase the supply of state vouchers using the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program. The state should continue its recent commitment to invest in this program.
3. Require every community to identify multifamily housing zones as of right.
4. Mandate inclusionary zoning with the majority of affordable housing on site.
5. Track what is being built, where it is being built, and who can afford it.

Massachusetts should consider various strategies to increase the availability of affordable homes for those most in need. For example, the Governor could follow the lead of at least nine other jurisdictions that have declared "homeless states of emergencies" (including San Diego, Portland, and Hawaii) to coordinate resources and heighten the public's focus on the issue.

Making it easier to rezone for housing is a necessary step, but it cannot be the only step. Additional initiatives that intentionally include affordability provisions, with targets for deeper subsidies for families with the lowest incomes are crucial, as are assurances that every community across the commonwealth does its part.

VISITS FROM BOSTON CITY COUNCIL



A number of Boston City Councilors took time this spring to meet with members of Metro Housing staff. Clockwise from left: Council President Andrea Campbell (2nd from right); Councilor At-Large Althea Garrison (center); Councilor At-Large Michelle Wu (2nd from left); and District 6 Councilor Matt O'Malley (far left).

LOWELL L. RICHARDS, III FELLOWSHIP

Georgina Ann Hernandez Named 2019 Lowell L. Richards, III Fellow



Georgina Ann Hernandez

Georgina Ann Hernandez, a student at the Kennedy School of Government, has been selected as the 2019 recipient of the Lowell L. Richards, III Fellowship for Leadership and Public Service.

Hernandez was born and raised in Manila, Philippines. She will complete her fellowship this summer with

the Massachusetts Port Authority's (Massport) Real Estate and Asset Management Department, where Lowell Richards was Chief Development Officer for more than ten years.

"We continue to attract exceptional and very competitive candidates for the fellowship and this year was no exception," said Karen Richards, Lowell's wife. "Georgina exhibited a combination of life experiences and accomplishments that would have made Lowell proud to have her represent him with this Fellowship. In the end, I like to believe that what we knew and loved about Lowell inspired this decision."

"We are excited to host another Lowell L. Richards, III Fellow at Massport," said Andrew Hargens, Chief Development Officer at Massport. "Over the last several years, we have had exceptional individuals work alongside us in the Department of Planning and Economic Development. Georgina's

credentials are outstanding, and we look forward to having her join the team for the summer."

Georgina will graduate in May with a Masters in Public Administration. She is a Fellow in the Edward S. Mason Program in Public Policy and Management, the oldest international program at Harvard.

"I am a strong advocate of cross-sector collaboration and community engagement so I see this fellowship as an opportunity to apply these into actual situations that would improve people's quality of life," said Georgina.

Eventually Georgina wants to work on social and urban policy issues to address poverty and homelessness in the Greater Boston area. "I see myself dealing with the intersections of social services and economic development to support low-income families overcome the challenges that they face on a daily basis."

DONOR PROFILE

Joanna Munson-Paloma, Executive Director, Cards4aCause

There are not many 14-year olds that have the title Executive Director after their name. But not many 14-year olds are Joanna Munson-Palomba.

Now 18, Palumbo began commuting from Watertown to Jamaica Plain for school when she entered sixth grade. For the first time, she experienced the realities of city life – including witnessing homelessness.

Believing that homelessness is inexcusable, Joanna began to research ways she could help. The result was the establishment of a charitable organization: Cards4aCause.

Rather than provide financial assistance directly to those facing housing instability, Cards4aCause donates gift cards so that families have the flexibility and choice to purchase what they need. The charity has been partnering with Metro Housing's Specialized Intensive Programs & Services (SIPS) since 2018.

"To me, SIPS represents the most effective form of intervention: a wide range of resources and a staff that is willing to take chances on people that everyone else has given up on," says Joanna. "The comprehensive care that SIPS provides people is

what needs to happen all over the country. I'm glad to help in whatever small way I can."

Cards4aCause donates 15 cards a month to Metro Housing for SIPS participants to use at stores such as CVS, Star Market, and Stop & Shop. "I appreciate the fact that trust and dignity are inherent in the model that Joanna created," says Sylvia Kelly, SIPS Manager. "The cards we distribute to our clients from Cards4aCause provide them freedom to make their own choices."

Cards4aCause has raised more than over \$50,000 in the last five years and currently donates about \$1,400 worth of



Founder of Cards4aCause Joanna Munson-Palomba (L) with Rob Buttman, SIPS Case Management Specialist

cards per month. "Without the help of sponsors, grants, and large donations, this would not be possible," says Joanna. "However, the vast majority of this came from

small donations which truly proves that if everyone does a little, it goes a long way."

To donate to Cards4aCause, visit <http://www.cards4acause.org/>.

2019 BOSTON MARATHON

Team Metro Housing Turns in Memorable Performance



Team Metro Housing



Venice Touze



Kate Keaney

Metro Housing thanks the sponsors of Team Metro Housing for their generous support.

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BRONZE SPONSORS

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Early morning thunderstorms on Monday, April 15 did not dampen the enthusiasm of Team Metro Housing - Cece Baggott, Andrew Haas, Dina Vargo, Venice Touze, and Kate Keaney - knowing that they would be running to help end homelessness. The team left Hopkinton under dry conditions and all five runners experienced the excitement of crossing the finish line in Copley Square after completing 26.2 miles.

"This journey has meant so much to me and it's all the richer because of all the support I received," said team member Kate Keaney. "I had some struggles during the race and when I turned the last corner and saw the finish line I started to break down. But then I heard my husband call out to me and it was the surge I needed to finish strong. I couldn't be more proud. It's been an absolutely amazing experience."

This year's team surpassed it's fundraising goal of \$55,000.

Funds raised by our marathon teams support intensive services delivered by experienced case managers to people who face extraordinary obstacles. More

than 96% of the residents with the highest needs remain safely housed throughout the year. These results save millions of dollars in eviction procedures, expensive clean outs, emergency shelter, healthcare, and other costs.

Team Metro Housing has had runners compete and raise funds through the Boston Marathon since 2006 thanks to the John Hancock Nonprofit Program. Runners have raised a combined \$431,000 to prevent families and individuals throughout Greater Boston from becoming homeless and transition from homelessness to stability.

"Running Boston was a once in a lifetime, unforgettable, and humbling experience," said team member Cece Baggott. "Going on this journey with the help of Metro Housing has shown me what hard work, determination, and overcoming challenges can do for others and for me. I will never forget the feeling of seeing the finish line and recognizing what this means to the families I will have helped by taking on this challenge."



Cece Baggott



Andrew Haas



Dina Vargo

METRO HOUSING|BOSTON

helps families and individuals address their housing needs across the continuum toward economic security.

OUR MISSION

Metro Housing|Boston mobilizes wide-ranging resources to provide innovative and personalized services that lead families and individuals to housing stability, economic security, and an improved quality of life.

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SAVE THE DATE

CHAMPIONS *of* **HOUSING**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019 | 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Boch Center Wang Theatre Grand Lobby, 270 Tremont Street, Boston

