



@HOME



Metro Housing
BOSTON

People First. Housing Always.



Homelessness Prevention



Housing Stability



Economic Security

Summer 2019

REPORT EXPLORES COLOCATION BENEFITS

METRO HOUSING PROVIDES SERVICES AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

BOSTON

- Boston Medical Center
- Children's Hospital

CAMBRIDGE

- Cambridge Multi-Service Center

CHARLESTOWN

- Bunker Hill Community College

CHELSEA

- CONNECT

DORCHESTER

- Epiphany School

HYDE PARK

- Georgetowne Homes

QUINCY

- Interfaith Social Services

ROSLINDALE

- Family Resource Center

ROXBURY

- Madison Park High School

SALEM

- Salem Heights

SOMERVILLE

- Somerville Homeless Coalition

WALTHAM

- WATCH CDC

WOBURN

- Council of Social Concern

Locations as of 8/1/2019

For more information, contact rose.davis@MetroHousingBoston.org

Responding to community need, one site at a time

Twelve years ago, Metro Housing developed a new service delivery strategy, partnering with other locally-based nonprofits to serve participants close to their home communities. This work is now known as colocations.

In June, Metro Housing released a report - *Integrating and Expanding Access to Housing Services in Greater Boston* - that explores how colocations fit within the trend toward service integration in health and human services. The report includes three case studies that illustrate the unique structures, strategies, and site-based outcomes for different colocation sites.

"Adopting a broad view of housing needs as fundamentally connected to other social needs and social determinants of health, colocations represent an innovation in Metro Housing's service delivery system," said Neena Schultz, the report's author. "They are aimed not only at addressing immediate housing needs

but also at improving longer-term health and social outcomes."

Through a survey of partner agencies done for the report, respondents described additional benefits from colocations to their organizations and to clients. These benefits included access to rental assistance, streamlined referrals between human service systems, access to additional housing expertise, and increased capacity to navigate housing resources.

"The services provided by Metro Housing's colocation staff are critical to our work," said one partner. "Our close communication with Metro has enabled us to work together on highly challenging cases which has resulted in better care under very difficult circumstances."

Metro Housing thanks our funders that help to make colocations possible, including the Bank of America Charitable Foundation.



The findings of the report were presented on June 12 by its author, Neena Schultz (second from left), as part of Metro Housing's ongoing Housing Matters Forum Series. A panel discussion followed the presentation, featuring (L-R) Esther Fan Fan, Colocation Case Manager at Metro Housing; Ivys Fernandez-Pastrana, Family Navigation Program Manager at Boston Medical Center; and Mark Alston-Follansbee from Community Action Agency of Somerville. Cassandra Clay (far right), Professor Emerita at Boston University School of Social Work and member of the Metro Housing Board of Directors, was the forum moderator.

NEW GRANT TO MEASURE IMPACT

Metro Housing Awarded \$100,000 Grant from The Boston Foundation

The Boston Foundation has awarded a \$100,000 grant to Metro Housing that will increase Metro Housing's ability to measure the impact our services have on our participants in various ways, such as housing stability, level of economic self-sufficiency, education, and health.

Metro Housing program staff members previously used at least five different data systems that do not easily integrate with

one another and the occasional random spreadsheet to make up the difference. This process posed a significant barrier to tracking participants - and their outcomes - across programs and limited the ability to analyze the impact of our work with families and individuals.

"The creation of our new case management system and data warehouse will allow us to replicate or expand programs that are

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MARSHALL JAMES RETIRES

Helped Families for 21 Years Become Self Sufficient



Marshall James has long been the face of Metro Housing's Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program and a financial coach to countless families. After 21 years of helping families achieve increased economic self-sufficiency, Marshall retired from Metro Housing on July 12.

As an FSS Advisor, Marshall provided one-on-one financial coaching and assistance to families with reaching their goals in the area of financial literacy, credit help, education, job skills, and career guidance.

Marshall was always a willing volunteer at Metro Housing events and helped out anyone who needed it. His constant smile and friendly personality will be missed.

"There was never a day that I did not enjoy coming to work at Metro Housing," said Marshall. "I will miss the work and my colleagues very much."

After spending some time with his daughter and granddaughter in western Massachusetts, Marshall plans to move with them to Virginia to be closer to family.

HOME MODIFICATION LOAN PROGRAM

Loan Program Helps Keep Families and People with Disabilities in their Homes and Communities

For elders and persons with disabilities, being able to stay in their own home can make a significant difference in their quality of life while they maintain their independence.

The Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP), a program of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC), assists homeowners and small landlords to fund the necessary changes to keep disabled or elderly family members, and families with children with physical and/or cognitive disabilities in their own homes and communities.

HMLP provides loans for access and safety modifications to a home, such as installation of ramps and lifts, widening of doorways, and alteration of kitchens and bathrooms.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any homeowner who has a disability, has a household member who has a disability, or rents to an individual with a disability may apply for a low- and no-interest loan that does not need to be repaid until the house is sold.

Since 2006, Metro Housing has helped more than 350 families stay in their homes through HMLP. Two families who recently benefited from the program through Metro Housing were Stephen and Tara, and Velina and Didi.

After suffering a severe stroke, Stephen, of Dorchester, was going to need extensive work to his house if he was to remain at home during his recovery. He needed a deck removed and a room built in its place, an access ramp to accommodate a wheelchair, an accessible bathroom, and a walk-in closet. Stephen's wife Tara was very grateful for the loan assistance. "Without HMLP, I'd be in big trouble. The program gave me the ability to give my husband a place to call home, within our home."

Velina and her 15 year-old daughter Didi, of Roslindale, needed some accessibility changes to their bathroom and kitchen after Didi suffered a severe fracture. She was born with a rare genetic condition called Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI) which can put someone at risk of easily breaking bones. "We are so grateful," said Velina. "We would never have been able to do this without the loan and all of the great people at Metro Housing."



Velina (L) with her daughter Didi in their renovated kitchen.

For more information about HMLP and to determine whether you might be eligible to take advantage of this opportunity, contact Jennifer Shaw at jennifer.shaw@MetroHousingBoston.org.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funds for RAFT Now Available; Walk-in Hours Temporarily Suspended

METRO HOUSING HAS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED WALK-IN HOURS FOR THE HOUSING CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTER

We are now only scheduling appointments through the Resource Line at 617-425-6700 or resourceline@MetroHousingBoston.org.

This change was due to an unprecedented demand during the Housing Consumer Education Center's walk-in days, making it difficult for Metro Housing staff to sufficiently meet the needs of our participants.

Thank you for your patience.

New homelessness prevention funding for families and individuals in housing crisis became available on July 1. With the start of the new fiscal year, Metro Housing announced to our partners that Residential Assistance for Families in Transition, or RAFT, was now available to help households at risk of being homeless to stay housed or move into a new home.

Eligible households can receive up to \$4,000 in a 12-month period. Funds can be used for rental or mortgage arrearages, security deposits, first and last month's rent, utility arrearages; furniture, or employment-related transportation costs.

To determine eligibility for RAFT, households must be screened by a Metro Housing representative.

We are scheduling appointments through the Resource Line at **617-425-6700** or resourceline@MetroHousingBoston.org. When calling the Resource Line, please leave only one message. Leaving multiple messages will only delay the time it takes to respond.

RAFT screenings also occur at some of our colocation sites. Go to bit.ly/ColoReport to see our most current locations.

During the screening meeting, it is required that each person in the household presents identification for all household members, and also brings the most updated proof of income, and proof of housing crisis documentation.

For more information on RAFT, please visit our website at bit.ly/RAFTHCEC.



New Grant Will Help Measure Impact, from page 1

WITH THIS GRANT, METRO HOUSING CAN:

- Use one consistent participant intake process
- Automatically determine eligibility for local, state, and federal benefits programs
- Identify immediate and long term need and begin to prioritize
- Conduct full housing needs assessments
- Identify desired outcomes with participants
- Evaluate participant progress consistently

successful and to end or modify programs that are not achieving goals," said Chris Norris, Executive Director.

"We are pleased to be able to support Metro Housing|Boston in its efforts to leverage data systems to help low- and middle-income families navigate what can be a challenging system to find housing opportunities," said Paul Grogan, President and CEO of the Boston Foundation. "At a time when our research shows clearly the positive impact of stable housing on health and other indicators, we look forward to partnering with Metro Housing on building out a data-driven system to expedite solutions to critical housing needs."

The ability to determine program eligibility on the spot will improve programs while ensuring that participants are properly served and referred.

Additionally, the aggregate data and outcomes collected will be able to be shared with various partners, including Boston Indicators, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and other funders.

"At a time when our research shows clearly the positive impact of stable housing on health and other indicators, we look forward to partnering with Metro Housing."

— PAUL GROGAN,
President and
CEO of The Boston
Foundation

CONGRESSMAN STEPHEN LYNCH

Congressman Addresses Affordable Housing



(L-R) Sean Tierney, CHAPA; Elissa Margolin, Housing Action New Hampshire; Congressman Stephen Lynch; Eric Shupin, CHAPA; and Chris Norris, Metro Housing.

Congressman Stephen Lynch has represented the 8th District of Massachusetts since 2001, which includes many of the cities and towns served by Metro Housing. We recently had the opportunity to ask Congressman Lynch questions about affordable housing in Massachusetts and in the United States. Congressman Lynch serves on many House committees and subcommittees, including Financial Services, which as part of its duties continually reviews the laws and programs relating to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

[Q] What do you see as the biggest housing challenge in the United States today?

[A] I think the biggest housing challenge

is a growing shortage of affordable housing across a large range of incomes in the United States. What's made things worse is that even where some incomes have seen a slight increase, housing prices have greatly outpaced those workers as well. Now we see the need for "middle income housing" for professionals such as nurses, teachers, truck drivers and firefighters - who are all competing for limited housing stock. This lack of affordable housing accounts for why almost 30% of all persons experiencing homelessness are children and we must act now so we do not become accustomed to this statistic.

[Q] What approach should the federal government be taking to address those challenges?

[A] The federal government must take an all-of-the-above approach to address the affordable housing crisis. We have programs that we know work, such as the Community Development Block Grant and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, but we also continue to need rental assistance and public housing, especially for households with the lowest incomes. Congress has failed to fund these at the levels necessary to solve the problem. However, the affordable housing crisis requires more than federal funding. We are experiencing a shortage of both affordable homes and housing in general, and first time home buyers are

also in a challenging position. We may want to look at modifying the building code to allow smaller lot sizes near transportation hubs, or "micro units" studio apartments of less than 500 square feet that a newly married couple could purchase and build some equity.

[Q] What is the most promising trend you see in the affordable housing field?

The most promising trend I see in affordable housing is that we finally seem to be acknowledging the problem in Washington, D.C. At a time when the White House continuously attempts to cut critical, effective housing programs, Congress has stepped up to protect these programs. We are realizing, finally, that these programs are necessary and should be funded appropriately.

[Q] What is your vision for affordable housing in Massachusetts and the United States?

[A] We have to be willing to innovate. We have to explore new methods of financing. We have to incentivize construction of new housing and use improvements in our transportation systems - including high-speed rail - to expand the zone of commercial viability to make areas like Worcester, Springfield, Fall River/New Bedford and other areas more attractive for workers and employers.

STATE BUDGET UPDATE

On July 21, House and Senate negotiators agreed to a \$43.1 billion Fiscal Year 2020 Budget. The FY'20 budget conference committee released its report which includes increases for many affordable housing programs that help the families with which Metro Housing works. At the print deadline for this newsletter, the budget was awaiting the signature of Governor Charlie Baker.

Among the positive elements of the conference committee report include:

- **Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCEC) – \$3.75 million** (an increase of \$750,000) to support the front line of housing search, homelessness prevention, and counseling for thousands of families at Metro Housing and nine other regional nonprofits.
- **Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) – \$21 million** (an increase of \$1 million) for the most flexible tool Metro Housing has to help families in crisis avoid homelessness.
- **Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) – \$110 million** from the FY'20 budget (plus up to an

additional \$6 million in unexpended FY'19 funds) that can be used to support additional vouchers, the preservation of existing homes, and resources to ensure the program is administered effectively.

As the budget awaits action by Governor Baker, Metro Housing, along with our colleagues at CHAPA, Regional Housing Network, and other advocacy groups, hopes that the Governor will acknowledge the need for additional resources throughout the state, not veto any of these budget items, and sign the budget with the affordable housing and homelessness prevention elements intact. Metro Housing thanks Speaker DeLeo, Senate President Spilka, Housing Chairmen Crighton and Honan, Ways and Means Chairmen Rodrigues and Michlewitz, and all of the members for taking such strong steps to provide housing resources for those most in need.



METRO HOUSING CONGRATULATES PROPERTY OWNERS



L-R: Sue Nohl, Metro Housing; Bob Clement, Park Lodge Hotel Group; Doris Dickson, property owner; Sue Sciascia and Carmen Morales, The Schochet Companies; Carmen Rodriguez, Middlesex Crossing; and Boston City Councilor At-Large Annisa Essaibi-George.

Celebrating its gratitude to property owners and managers for their continued commitment to providing quality affordable housing, Metro Housing|Boston hosted 75 people at the 17th Annual Property Owner Appreciation Night on May 8.

The partnerships that Metro Housing maintains with property owners are critical to ensuring that families and individuals move along the continuum of housing

instability toward economic security and an improved quality of life.

Boston City Councilor At-Large Annisa Essaibi-George was the keynote speaker. Councilor Essaibi-George is the Chair of the Committee of Homelessness, Mental Health, and Recovery.

Congratulations to property owners and managers for their exemplary service to tenants served through Metro Housing.

THANK YOU TO KEVIN DONAHER

Kevin Donaher has been a dedicated, loyal, and passionate employee of Metro Housing since 1987. He retired on June 28 after a 32 year career helping families find and stay in safe and affordable homes.

Kevin started as a Section 8 program representative. Most recently he served as Director of Inspections and Property Owner Services. Kevin has had many jobs in the organization, including creating the first Resource Room, now known as Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC), director of the organization's customer relations, and the manager of scattered site shelters.

In 2003, one of Kevin's roles was managing the emergency assistance funding for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, known as KRAFT. Two hundred families displaced by Katrina

in Louisiana and Alabama arrived at Camp Edwards on Cape Cod that fall. Kevin and other members of Metro's staff drove to Camp Edwards three times a week to help families with housing search and referrals to resources like the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program.

Yelena Orkin, who has worked with Kevin at Metro Housing for 15 years, says, "One of the reasons I am still here and still love my job is because Kevin always makes me feel very valuable and an important member of our department. It's not going to be the same without him."

"Looking back over the past 32 years at Metro Housing, I am forever grateful for the many opportunities, experiences and memories I have of working with thousands of staff,



property owners, tenants and housing agencies," said Kevin. "What an incredible privilege it has been to be able to work with them to provide decent, stable housing to families in need."

For all of the many contributions made over the last 32 years – both professional and personal – Metro Housing wishes Kevin Donaher a wonderful and well-earned retirement.

TO OUR PROPERTY OWNERS & MANAGERS:

PORTAL LINK REMINDER

You are able to track your monthly payments through the Property Owner Portal section of our website. Visit bit.ly/poPortal for access to the portal.

Metro Housing knows that you rely on timely payment of rent from both us and your tenants. Unfortunately, during the State's recent transition to a new finance system, some payments were disrupted.

While we have worked diligently to resolve this issue, some payments have continued to be disrupted. This is not acceptable, and we sincerely apologize to those of you who have been impacted.

If you continue to experience issues with your payment, please contact **John Hillis, Director of Inspections and Owner Services, Compliance and Systems** at john.hillis@MetroHousingBoston.org or **617-425-6736**.

Thank you for your patience.

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 - 8:00 PM

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

HOUSING CHAMPION AWARD



Shelley Hoon Keith, Philanthropist.

John Keith, President of Keith Construction Company

LOWELL L. RICHARDS AWARD



Pamela Feingold, Senior Vice President & Group Director of the Community Development Lending Group at Eastern Bank

RISING STAR AWARD



(L) Robert Torres, Director of Community Engagement, Urban Edge Community Development Corporation

(R) Jesse Kanson-Benahav, Senior Project Manager, B'nai B'rith Housing

For information about sponsorship opportunities, contact Carla Beaudoin at carla.beaudoin@MetroHousingBoston.org or 617-425-6679.