



# mbhp@home

Information and resources for program participants and their families

Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership SUMMER 2014

## Colocations: Visit MBHP in Your Community

Ever wish MBHP could come to you? We're working to make that happen. Several days each week, MBHP's Outreach Team travels from our downtown Boston office to work out of a local agency's office. These partnerships, which we call "colocations," help the residents of that area to participate in our programs without the added hassle of securing transportation and spending time traveling far from home. Currently, MBHP has colocations in Chelsea and Somerville, as well as Boston locations in Dorchester, Roxbury, and Bunker Hill Community College's Charlestown campus.

Through the colocation program, MBHP is more visible in the communities we serve and more responsive to our clients and their housing needs. Those who come to the colocations to work with MBHP staff also have a chance to learn more about the

programs and services offered by the local agency, giving them more options. Partnering with these agencies and using their expertise in the community increases MBHP's ability to most effectively serve those in need of housing assistance.

MBHP offers three different kinds of support at our colocations:

- 1) Information and referral services and brief counseling for housing concerns,
- 2) Recertifications for rental voucher clients, and
- 3) Family Self-Sufficiency program outreach and recruitment.

"The staff here at MBHP is really excited about getting out of the downtown office to bring our services to the outer neighborhoods and towns of Greater Boston," said Director of Housing Supports Kate Fulton. "It's a great chance for us



*MBHP Outreach Specialist Sigourney Norman works with Medford resident Claudel Chevry at the Somerville Homeless Coalition colocation.*

to get out into the community and meet people where they are, while at the same time strengthening our local partnerships—it's a win-win for all involved."

Next, MBHP would like to open a new colocation south of Boston. Check back at [www.mbhp.org](http://www.mbhp.org) for more details.

## OUR COLOCATION PARTNERS

*Colocation services and schedules vary. For more details, visit [www.mbhp.org](http://www.mbhp.org) or contact [ResourceLine@mbhp.org](mailto:ResourceLine@mbhp.org).*

COLOCATION PARTNER	LOCATED AT
Bunker Hill Community College	250 New Rutherford Avenue, Boston (Single Stop, USA)
Codman Square NDC	587 Washington Street, Dorchester
Codman Square @ Talbot Bernard Apartments	193 Talbot Avenue, Dorchester Center
CONNECT	4 Gerrish Street, Chelsea
Dorchester CARES	35 Westville Street, Dorchester
Jamaica Plain/Roxbury Family Resource Center	1542 Columbus Avenue, Roxbury
Somerville Homeless Coalition	1 Davis Square, Somerville
Urban Edge	1542 Columbus Avenue, Roxbury

## Marioly Brito Named First Lowell Richards Participant Fellow

For the first time, MBHP has selected a program participant to honor with a Lowell Richards Fellowship. Named in honor of MBHP's long-time board co-chair, the fellowship serves as a way to honor those who personify Lowell's qualities of leadership, integrity, loyalty, commitment, and ambition. Marioly Brito has all this and more.

Since becoming homeless in 2010, Marioly has worked constantly to improve her situation. She found a Dorchester apartment for her and her four children, with rent she could afford, thanks to the HomeBASE rental assistance program. With the stability of having a safe, affordable home, Marioly was able to go back to school and earn her associate's degree from Roxbury Community College.

When her HomeBASE assistance ran out, MBHP referred Marioly to Jewish Vocational Service through the Secure Jobs program. After working with her on job skills, such as going on interviews, appropriate dress and appearance, and conducting an effective job search, JVS took Marioly on as an employee.

When MBHP decided to honor a program participant, Marioly was a natural choice. The fellowship,



*Marioly Brito (right) works with Leah Moscbella at The Work Place, operated by JVS.*

which is hosted by JVS, means that Marioly can add one more day to her work schedule. In addition to working full time, she is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in Human Services from the University of Massachusetts–Boston.

Marioly is grateful for the opportunity to work with JVS and follow through with her career goals. "This is a very good first step toward what I am trying to achieve," she said.

Her ultimate goal is to become a social psychologist, a job where she can help point people in the right direction to find the help they need.

"There are a lot of services that people don't know about," she said. "Finding that appropriate person that can help you and direct you the correct way is already a major step toward going where you want to go."

Marioly looks forward to the day when she can use her life experiences to help others. "I have been in situations where I needed help, and I want to help others by taking my experiences from being homeless and needing a job. I want to help others do the same thing so they can achieve their goals."

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## CAREER SPOTLIGHT: The Work Place

The Work Place, operated by Jewish Vocational Service, provides comprehensive employment and career services that are easy to access, customer-driven, and linked to the latest technology. They help individuals to find current job openings, assess their skill levels and interests, and enter education and training programs. The Work Place is funded in part through the Department of Workforce Development, allowing them to offer many basic services at no cost.

The road to job-search success begins with motivation, mindset, and the right tools. Take advantage of

free membership and the many free resources, including:

- *Career Resource Library* (provides free access to high-tech resources)
- *Workshops* (check their monthly calendar for upcoming events)
- *Access to Occupational and Skills Training* (The Work Place assists eligible individuals to access occupational and skills training courses which are paid for by the Commonwealth)
- *Recruitment Sessions* (provide an opportunity to explore career options, make valuable contacts and obtain job leads)

### Become a Member of The Work Place

Membership is free and easy to obtain. Become a member by completing the Membership Form (available at [www.theworkplace.org](http://www.theworkplace.org)) and attending one of the Welcome Sessions (Mondays and Wednesdays 11 a.m.–12 noon).

The Work Place  
29 Winter Street, 4th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 737-0093

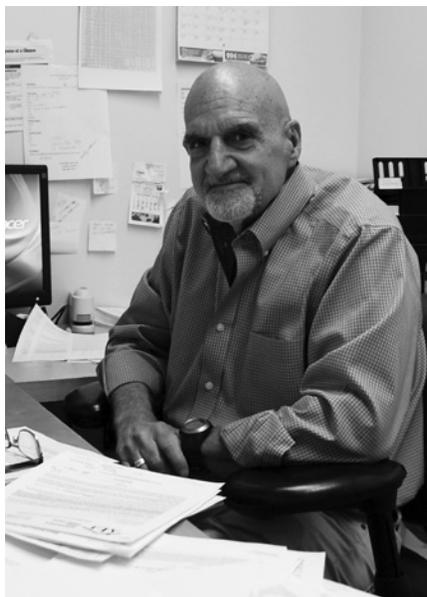
[www.theworkplace.org](http://www.theworkplace.org)

Monday–Wednesday 9 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Thursday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

## MEET MBHP: Howard Wensley, Property Owner Services Manager

The first thing Howard Wensley does every morning at work is meet with MBHP inspectors before sending them out on their routes. As Property Owner Services Manager, he works closely with tenants and property owners, addressing their concerns about inspections, unit conditions, or their relationships with each other. He also reviews property owner documentation on important health issues such as lead compliance, pest control, and asbestos. And some days find him out in the field, working alongside inspectors. Before coming to MBHP, Howard spent 35 years with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health, making him a valuable asset to MBHP's Inspectional Services and Property Owner Resources team.

**Hometown:** My childhood through high school graduation was spent in Newton, Mass.



**Hobbies:** Being with family, traveling, running, biking, and beach sitting.

**Food:** There is no food I do not like. I am partial however to good ice cream.

**Values:** A willingness to go all out to assist those individuals who are not able to help themselves, especially children.

**Motivation:** The need to address a disparity.

**Accomplishments:** My family and being recognized by several professional organizations, including the Massachusetts Public Health Association, Massachusetts Health Officer's Association, and Massachusetts Environmental Health Association, for contributions made to public health.

**Personal heroes:** MBHP's Special Intensive Programs and Services Specialist Sylvia Kelly.

**Personal motto:** "Don't ask anyone to do anything I wouldn't do" and "What can we do to help you?"

### Upcoming Workshops at the MBHP Office

The following workshops will be held at the MBHP office:  
125 Lincoln Street, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02111-2503.

#### Affordable Housing Basics

*June 10, July 8, August 12; 10 – 11:30 a.m.*

This workshop is for tenants who can afford a market-rate apartment or who have a housing voucher and are seeking information about criteria, wait lists, and how to apply for affordable housing.

#### Housing Strategies Clinic

*June 18, July 15, August 19; 10 – 11:30 a.m.*

Learn to become empowered and effective in meeting your housing goals.

Reservations are recommended for all MBHP workshops. To attend, call (617) 425-6605 or email [workshops@mbhp.org](mailto:workshops@mbhp.org). You can also register online at [www.mbhp.org](http://www.mbhp.org).

For all reasonable accommodation requests, including sign language interpreters, the use of the building wheelchair platform lift, or the need for an interpreter in a language other than English, please contact us at (617) 425-6605 or [workshops@mbhp.org](mailto:workshops@mbhp.org) at least **two weeks prior** to the scheduled date of the workshop.

### Upcoming Workshops at Colocations

The following workshops will be held at our colocations in Boston, Chelsea, and Somerville.

#### Affordable Housing

*June 13, 1 – 2 p.m.*

Bunker Hill Community College/Single Stop USA  
250 New Rutherford Avenue, Boston  
To register, contact Lisa Johnson at [ljohnson@bhcc.mass.edu](mailto:ljohnson@bhcc.mass.edu) or (617) 228-3330

#### Apartment Search and Utilities

*June 23, 6 – 7:30 p.m.*

CONNECT  
4 Gerrish Street, Chelsea  
To register, contact Elsa Jimenez at [ejimenez@connectnow.org](mailto:ejimenez@connectnow.org) or (617) 889-1375, Ext. 45

#### Fair Housing Information for Tenants

*June 24, time TBD*

Saint Polycarp Village Community Room  
480 Mystic Avenue, Somerville  
To register, contact Sigourney Norman at [sigourney.norman@mbhp.org](mailto:sigourney.norman@mbhp.org) or (617) 425-6703 or email Lisa Davidson at [ldavidson@shcinc.org](mailto:ldavidson@shcinc.org)

## FSS Update: The Compass FSS Program in Partnership with MBHP

Do you have a Section 8 voucher from MBHP? Are you looking to improve your economic situation and achieve your life goals? If so, we are pleased to announce a new, free opportunity for you to do just that: you can sign up to receive financial coaching services from trained professionals, specifically designed for you and your family, thanks to a partnership with Compass Working Capital.

For the next three years, MBHP and Compass will work together to administer the Family Self-Sufficiency program as part of a new pilot program. Compass will provide ongoing, customized financial coaching for FSS participants focusing on five core areas: (1) income and employment; (2) credit and debt; (3) savings; (4) utilization of high quality financial services; and (5) asset development. Through this collaboration, MBHP and Compass will bring their individual strengths to improve services, helping more participants improve their economic situation.

Compass is a nonprofit organization that provides financial coaching and saving programs that empower low-income families to build assets, achieve their financial goals, and become financially secure. Compass launched its innovative FSS program through partnerships with local housing authorities in Lynn and Cambridge and is looking forward to the opportunity to expand their reach to offer services in MBHP's entire region, which includes Boston and 32 surrounding communities. MBHP is the state's largest regional provider of rental housing voucher assistance, which includes regional administration of the Housing Choice

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## COMPASS WORKING CAPITAL

The Compass FSS Program in partnership with MBHP is now recruiting. For more information, including how to apply, visit [www.compassworkingcapital.org](http://www.compassworkingcapital.org) or contact Ann Lentell at 617-790-0810.

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Voucher Program, commonly known as Section 8.

The collaboration between MBHP and Compass was first suggested by Thomas Graham, director of the Bureau of Rental Assistance at the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

"Compass and MBHP are a natural fit as partners," said Graham. "MBHP's expertise in providing rental assistance and the number of people they serve, coupled with Compass' experience in the financial services field, gives more Housing Choice Voucher Program participants the opportunity to tap into resources that were previously unavailable to them."

"We are very excited to partner with MBHP for this pilot FSS program," said Sherry Riva, Compass' founder and executive director. "For the last few years, Compass has been grateful for the opportunity to partner with housing authorities in Lynn and Cambridge that share our vision for promoting economic mobility for low-income families,

and MBHP's presence in the Greater Boston area allows us to expand our reach and continue to refine the services we offer."

"MBHP is pleased to be working with Compass," said MBHP Deputy Director Sue Nohl. "This new model fits right in with our executive director's and board's drive to think outside the box and look at this program from a fresh perspective. MBHP has had great success with its FSS program—over the past three years increasing income within the Fairmount Corridor by \$1,000,000 and helping more than 480 participants and their families on their path to self-sufficiency. Working with Compass, MBHP will reach more people and help maximize asset development for participants in its region."

The Compass FSS program launch in Boston is funded by Citi. "We are grateful for the generous support provided by Citi, which has provided the critical resources necessary to launch this partnership," said Riva. "Citi's support reflects their commitment to funding innovative, effective programs dedicated to expanding economic opportunities for low-income families in the city of Boston."

MBHP also continues to concentrate specific FSS program efforts in the Fairmount Corridor with a generous grant from The Boston Foundation.

Newly recruited FSS participants will automatically receive Compass' financial coaching. Current MBHP FSS participants will continue to work with their MBHP adviser, but will also have the option to take part in Compass' services as well.

**Family Self-Sufficiency Programs** offer Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) participants the opportunity to improve their economic situation and achieve their life goals. The program helps participants save money by setting up an escrow account—as their income, and rent, increases, a portion of this is put into the account. Upon completion of the program, participants can use these savings to go back to school, put a down payment on a home, or otherwise advance their financial goals. For more information on MBHP's FSS program, visit [www.mbhp.org](http://www.mbhp.org).

## DHCD Announces Changes to Utility Allowance Policy

A recent decision by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), led to many tenants who have Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) seeing a change in the amount of rent they need to pay. Those impacted were notified by mail earlier this year about the change.

This policy change only affects Section 8 voucher holders. If you have a Shelter Plus Care, Families at Home, or MRVP voucher, there will be no change.

Not all Section 8 voucher holders are affected by this policy. Those who have all utilities included in their rent saw no change.

For many tenants, the changes went into effect on April 1. However, for tenants who will see a significant change in their rent share (\$100 or more), the change will not go into effect until July 1, in order to allow them more time to adjust their household budgets. The average increase in rent share for MBHP tenants was \$60.



This change was due to a change in DHCD's Utility Allowance policy. For a while now, DHCD had intended to modify the Utility Allowance policy in order to make it easier for tenants and landlords to understand. When sequestration hit and the state was left with a \$10 million funding gap, it expedited the process. DHCD needed to make a quick decision in order to achieve cost savings and ensure that agencies like MBHP could continue to serve families. After looking at all the

available options, changing the Utility Allowance policy was deemed the most fair and equitable solution.

Please see the table below for an explanation of how this policy change will affect tenants and property owners. If you are a Section 8 tenant looking for more information on this policy change, please refer to the fact sheet you received in the mail from MBHP or contact your Section 8 program representative.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR	TENANTS	PROPERTY OWNERS
If all utilities are included in rent	No change in rent share	No change in amount from MBHP
If tenant pays for heat only	Will see change in rent share based on new heat allowance	Will see change in payment from MBHP based on new heat allowance
If tenant pays for any utilities other than heat	Will see significant change in rent share as other utilities no longer merit an allowance	Will see significant change in payment from MBHP as other utilities no longer merit an allowance

The excitement of Fenway is coming to a park near you! Watch the Red Sox game on the big screen and enjoy refreshments, balloon animals, face painters, and more. You can even meet Wally the Red Sox mascot!

**DATES AND LOCATIONS**

Sunday, June 22, 4:05 p.m.	Franklin Park The Playstead, Pierpont Road, Dorchester
Sunday, July 27, 1:40 p.m.	Boston Common Corner of Charles and Beacon Streets

*Questions? Please call Highland Street Foundation at (617) 969-8900 or visit [www.highlandstreet.org/ootp](http://www.highlandstreet.org/ootp).*

# BE COOL! SUMMER SAFETY TIPS FROM THE BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

## Window Fall Prevention

Falls are the leading cause of injury to children age five and under. It only takes seconds for a fall to occur.

Window falls can cause serious injuries, yet they can be prevented.

## Kids Can't Fly Safety Tips

1. Lock all unopened doors and windows
2. Keep beds, furniture, and anything a child can climb on away from windows
3. Open windows from the top, not from the bottom
4. Install child safety window guards
5. Be sure children are always supervised

For more information on window guards and window fall prevention, visit the Boston Public Health Commission's website at [www.bphc.org](http://www.bphc.org).

## KIDS CAN'T FLY.



## SPORTS SAFETY TIPS

### Helmets & Wheeled Sports Safety

The most effective way to reduce head injury and death from bicycle crashes is to provide helmets and insist that children wear them every time they ride a bike, in-line skate, skateboard, or scooter.

- Wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent.
- Massachusetts law requires any person under 17 years old to wear a helmet while riding a bicycle, a skateboard, a scooter, or in-line skating.
- Look for the CPSC certification on helmets. This is the U.S. government safety standard for helmet design and integrity.

### Bicycling Rules of the Road

- Ride with traffic, not against it. Ride as far to the right as possible.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic signals. Stop at all stop signs and red lights.
- Stop and look left, right and left again before entering a street.
- Look back and yield to traffic coming from behind before turning left at intersections.
- Avoid riding when it's dark. If riding at dusk, dawn or in the evening is

unavoidable, wear retro reflective material on clothing or bike, and use lights on the bike.

- Cyclists should be restricted to sidewalks and paths until they reach the age of 10 and can demonstrate they know the rules of the road. Supervision is essential until children develop the necessary traffic skills and judgment.

**For more health and safety tips, visit the Boston Public Health Commission's website at [www.bphc.org](http://www.bphc.org).**

### PROTECT YOUR HEAD—WITHOUT SPENDING AN ARM AND A LEG

*Individuals can purchase helmets for \$5 at the Boston Medical Center Gift Shop, 840 Harrison Avenue, Menino Lobby. Call (617) 534-5197 or visit [www.bphc.org/injuryprevention](http://www.bphc.org/injuryprevention) for more information about the helmet program and other safety resources. Sponsored by the Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Medical Center Trauma Team, and BMC Gift Shop.*

# FREE FUN FRIDAYS!

## 66 MUSEUMS & CULTURAL VENUES OPEN FOR FREE ON FRIDAYS ALL SUMMER



JUNE  
27<sup>TH</sup>

FRANKLIN PARK ZOO  
CAPE COD MARITIME MUSEUM  
WORCESTER ART MUSEUM  
TANGLEWOOD  
THE SPORTS MUSEUM  
MASS MOCA  
MIT MUSEUM

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM  
COMMONWEALTH SHAKESPEARE COMPANY  
AMERICAN TEXTILE HISTORY MUSEUM  
THE DISCOVERY MUSEUMS  
HANCOCK SHAKER VILLAGE  
CONCORD MUSEUM  
MAHAWE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



AUGUST  
1<sup>ST</sup>



JULY  
4<sup>TH</sup>

HERITAGE MUSEUMS & GARDENS  
EDWARD GOREY HOUSE  
JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL  
AMELIA PARK CHILDREN'S MUSEUM  
FALMOUTH MUSEUMS ON THE GREEN

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK  
CLARK ART INSTITUTE  
WENHAM MUSEUM  
USS CONSTITUTION MUSEUM  
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM AT HOLYOKE  
VOLLEYBALL HALL OF FAME  
FULLER CRAFT MUSEUM



AUGUST  
8<sup>TH</sup>



JULY  
11<sup>TH</sup>

JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM  
PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM  
WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
FRUITLANDS MUSEUM  
CAPE COD CHILDREN'S MUSEUM  
NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
PILGRIM HALL MUSEUM

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART/BOSTON  
PLIMOTH PLANTATION  
GARDEN IN THE WOODS  
MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ICONS  
FITCHBURG ART MUSEUM  
HISTORIC DEERFIELD  
REAGLE MUSIC THEATRE



AUGUST  
15<sup>TH</sup>



JULY  
18<sup>TH</sup>

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON  
OCEAN EXPLORIUM  
THE ERIC CARLE MUSEUM  
LARZ ANDERSON AUTO MUSEUM  
SPRINGFIELD MUSEUMS  
MASS AUDUBON'S BOSTON NATURE CENTER  
SANDWICH GLASS MUSEUM

BOSTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM  
MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY  
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM  
OLD MANSE, TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS  
BERKSHIRE MUSEUM  
EMILY DICKINSON MUSEUM



AUGUST  
22<sup>ND</sup>



JULY  
25<sup>TH</sup>

THE FREEDOM TRAIL FOUNDATION  
BATTLESHIP COVE  
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM IN EASTON  
TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN  
ARNOLD ARBORETUM OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
CAPE COD MUSEUM OF ART  
DANFORTH ART

BUTTONWOOD PARK ZOO  
ECOTARIUM  
CAPE COD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM  
THE MOUNT: EDITH WHARTON'S HOME  
GRIFFIN PHOTOGRAPHY MUSEUM



AUGUST  
29<sup>TH</sup>

PLEASE VISIT [HIGHLANDSTREET.ORG](http://HIGHLANDSTREET.ORG) OR CALL **617.969.8900** FOR MORE INFORMATION

 [facebook.com/HighlandStreet](https://facebook.com/HighlandStreet)

 [@HighlandStreet](https://twitter.com/HighlandStreet) | [#freefunfridays](https://twitter.com/HighlandStreet)





### Connect with MBHP!

MBHP updates can come to you! Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to stay up-to-date on MBHP happenings and the latest news on affordable housing.



[www.facebook.com/MBHPHome](http://www.facebook.com/MBHPHome)



[@MBPHousing](https://twitter.com/MBPHousing)

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Free Family Fun! (Pages 5 & 7)

*All summer long, you can enjoy Friday free admission at museums around the state. Also, enjoy baseball on the big screen!  
Sponsored by the Highland Street Foundation*

### Visit MBHP Near You (Page 1)

*Colocations—local agencies where MBHP staff work in the community—make it easier to access our programs and services.  
Learn more and find one near you.*

### Utility Allowance Policy and Schedule Change (Page 5)

*Important news for Section 8 voucher holders who pay for their heat.*

### FSS Update (Page 4)

*MBHP is teaming up with Compass Working Capital to bring financial services to MBHP Section 8 tenants.*

### Summer Safety Tips (Page 6)

*Stay safe during the hot summer months!*

### Career Spotlight (Page 2)

*Learn about The Work Place, a resource for Boston job seekers.*