



mbhp UPDATE

Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership • 125 Lincoln Street, 5th Floor • Boston, MA 02111-2503 • (617) 859-0400 www.mbhp.org

FALL 2011

MISSION STATEMENT

MBHP's 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 the 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.

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Oak Foundation Supports MBHP's Hoarding Initiative

The Oak Foundation, located in the United Kingdom, has presented MBHP with a grant to provide support to individuals in jeopardy of losing their housing due to hoarding behaviors. MBHP, in partnership with Bay Cove Human Services, will use the four-year, \$685,666 grant for its Hoarding Intervention and Tenancy Preservation Project. The project's goal is to reduce evictions and prevent homelessness caused by hoarding.

Hoarding has been a hidden disorder for many years. Before the early 1990s, there was little research on hoarding. Since then, interest has

increased dramatically both among researchers and clinicians. Recent media coverage has increased awareness and interest among the general public, family members and human service personnel who often deal with the problem. In the United States, 3–5% of the population has a hoarding disorder. In Massachusetts, hoarding is a leading cause of eviction.

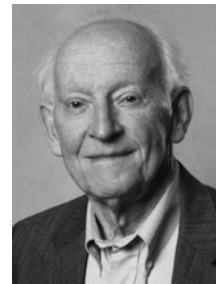
The project will expand existing efforts by MBHP and Bay Cove's Tenancy Preservation Project through coordinating and promoting a multi-level approach to hoarding

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Join Us at Our Fourth Annual Founders Event



CORCORAN
JENNISON
Companies



At our Fourth Annual Founders Event on Wednesday, Nov. 9, MBHP will honor the accomplishments of two individuals and one company. Each represents MBHP founder William S. Edgerly's concept of government, nonprofit and for-profit partnerships to develop, promote and preserve affordable housing in Greater Boston. Our honorees are:

Government

Mary-Anne Morrison—Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development's Section 8 program in Massachusetts from its

inception until her retirement earlier this year. She has worked for 40 years to provide decent and affordable housing for the Commonwealth's poorest residents and secure opportunities to increase income and assets.

Nonprofit

Robert B. Whittlesey—former Executive Director and Board President of MBHP and one of the visionaries who created the private-public-nonprofit partnership that became MBHP. He was one of the founders of the Housing Partnership Network

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MBHP'S PROGRAMS

• **Rental Assistance:** Section 8 housing voucher and other subsidy programs working with 4,300 property owners and serving 7,600 disabled, elderly, formerly homeless, and other individuals and families throughout Greater Boston. Included are subsidies for people with special needs requiring both housing and support services. Other voucher initiatives target tenants striving for greater economic self-sufficiency.

• **Housing Supports:** Programs that serve tenants, property owners and others with securing, stabilizing, or improving their housing. These include:

HomeBASE: A short-term housing assistance program for families otherwise eligible for shelter; serves families who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness with housing rather than a stay in shelter.

Housing Consumer Education Center: An integrated network of services that provides housing-related information, workshops, programs and emergency financial assistance.

Specialized Intensive Programs and Services: Individualized assistance to residents who have faced domestic violence, mental health or substance abuse issues, chronic homelessness, hoarding issues and other traumas.

Fair Housing Technical Assistance: Trainings and technical assistance to tenants and property owners on their rights and responsibilities under federal and state fair housing laws.

Foreclosure Prevention and Tenancy Preservation: Serves property owners facing foreclosure and tenants facing eviction due to foreclosure.

• **Real Estate Services:** Includes an apartment listing service, a loan program that keeps homes accessible for elders or people with disabilities, and affordable home ownership opportunities.

Hoarding Initiative *(continued from cover)*

issues. Areas of focus will include advanced education for key stakeholders including housing court personnel, state agencies and other service providers; comprehensive direct service; and system change recommendations that can be replicated and implemented in communities throughout the country.

The project seeks to:

- Increase public and professional understanding of hoarding.
- Dispel myths that sensationalize the issue and stigmatize those suffering from the behavior.
- Increase the number of professionals available to provide intervention both in the court system and in the community.
- Influence public policy to result in resource allocation and institutionalized protocols that promote access to and availability of services.

The resulting comprehensive, resourced and knowledgeable system of care will benefit first responders, court personnel, property owners and managers, service providers, other public stakeholders, and residents in need.

First Justice of the Boston Housing Court, Honorable Jeffrey Winik, has been a long-term partner of both agencies, and he sees first-hand the complexity of these cases and the importance of early intervention to prevent eviction. Judge Winik states, "This funding

will provide a significant number of tenants with an opportunity to retain their homes. MBHP and Bay Cove have been in the forefront of community-based education and training for many years, and this new funding will enhance their ability to carry out these important public education functions."

MBHP and Bay Cove will expand services available to the criminal and civil cases that come before the Boston Housing Court. The project aims to serve as many as 200 tenants during the first three years of the initiative, plus another 30 in the fourth year. The goal is a 50 percent reduction in court-ordered evictions due to hoarding, and an 85 percent reduction in non-court evictions due to hoarding.

MBHP's existing trainings and technical assistance will be expanded with trainings for more than 425 stakeholders including first responders, court staff and housing inspectors. A best practices manual will be developed and, in year four, training and technical assistance will be expanded to communities outside Massachusetts that are interested in adopting an effective harm-reduction model.

MBHP and Bay Cove staff will work with state-level policy-makers, increasing their awareness of the project and encouraging the development and adoption of laws and policies that support best practices in hoarding intervention.



Three years ago, an MBHP inspector identified a family of five who needed help to address hoarding since the rooms in their home could not be used for their intended purpose (left). By the end of the program, the family's apartment passed inspection (right). Three years later, the family is still successfully maintaining their apartment.

Join Us at Our Fourth Annual Founders Event *(continued from cover)*

and is known as a point man to get things done in the affordable housing field.

For-Profit

Corcoran Jennison Companies pioneered the development and management of mixed-income housing—a feat they consider their most rewarding accomplishment. Named “Development Company of the Year” by the National Association of Homebuilders, and recognized for national excellence by organizations such as the Urban Land Institute, Corcoran Jennison is one of the country’s leading developers, builders and property management companies.

Event co-chairs are *Lawrence H. Curtis*, President and Managing Partner, WinnDevelopment, and *Jerry Sargent*, President, Citizens Bank, Massachusetts; both have longstanding relationships with MBHP. WinnDevelopment has been recognized by MBHP at the Annual Property Owner Event for providing, developing, preserving and managing decent, affordable housing. In addition, WinnDevelopment participated in last year’s Founders Event as a Platinum Sponsor. Citizens Bank and Citizens Bank Charitable Foundation have been a corporate partner and long-time supporter for

more than two decades providing funds for programs and services.

This year’s celebration will take place at State Street Financial Center on Lincoln Street in Boston from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The revenue raised provides the resources MBHP residents need to retain their homes, remain in a stable environment, and create nurturing and safe places for children and seniors.

If you would like to join us at this gala, please call MBHP Director of Development Carla Bennett at (617) 425-6705.

Moving to Work Program—Serving Tenants and Property Owners Since 1999

Moving to Work (MTW) is a demonstration program to design and test innovative, locally designed housing and self-sufficiency initiatives in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCVP) and federal public housing programs. The program permits participating agencies to waive certain statutes and U.S. Housing and Urban Development regulations in order to achieve the demonstration’s statutory MTW objectives that:

1. Reduce cost and achieve great cost effectiveness in federal expenditures;
2. Give incentives to families with children whose heads of household are either working, seeking work, or are participating in job training, educational or other programs that assist in obtaining employment and becoming economically self-sufficient; and,
3. Increase housing choices for low-income families.

MBHP has administered a small MTW work-linked housing program for the Department of Housing and

Community Development (DHCD) since 1999. In 2008, DHCD amended its MTW program to allow flexibility in administering its entire HCVP portfolio including the 5,757 HCVP vouchers administered by MBHP.

Under MTW, MBHP is working with DHCD to implement changes to advance administrative efficiencies and support economic self-sufficiency. For example, MBHP will transition to biennial reexaminations for some tenants. Until now, an HCVP tenant’s household composition and income were reexamined annually. With the implementation of MTW, program participants will now complete household composition and income reexaminations biennially. This will not only advance administrative efficiency but encourage economic self-sufficiency by temporarily removing a disincentive to increasing income as any increases will not be counted toward the tenant rent share until the next reexamination.

In the future, MBHP hopes to move toward biennial inspections for some property owners. MBHP is working with the state and other Regional Housing Network members



This spring, MBHP visited Chelsea Neighborhood Developers and met with rental assistance tenants to process their reexaminations. Here, tenant Nubia Rodriquez is working with MBHP Program Representative Julissa Vera.

to develop a process to select apartments that would need to be inspected only every other year.

MBHP looks forward to continuing our work on these and other targeted initiatives to increase efficiencies and better serve tenants and property owners participating in the voucher programs we administer.

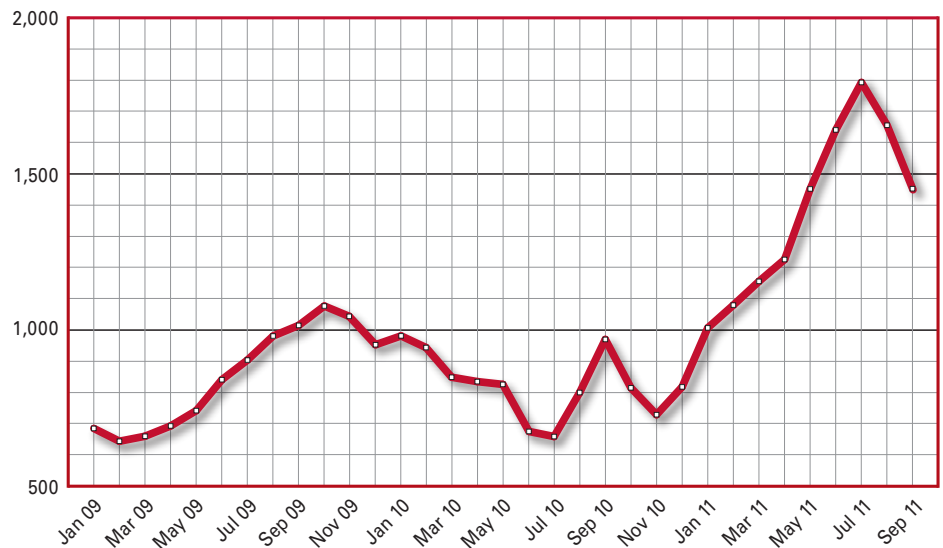
(Source of some of the MTW information used in this article—DHCD website. See site for more information)

HomeBASE Starts Strong

First proposed in Governor Deval Patrick's House 1 budget in January, MBHP was one of eleven regional agencies that started HomeBASE (Building Alternatives to Shelter) on August 1. Families facing homelessness have enthusiastically embraced this housing response to homelessness. In the first two months, MBHP and our subcontractors served hundreds of families in the Greater Boston area. Some of the August and September accomplishments included:

- 2,321 families seeking Emergency Assistance (EA)/HomeBASE were prescreened in the Dudley, Revere and Malden Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs).
- 523 families were determined EA eligible by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) staff at the Dudley, Malden and Revere TAOs and, of those, 400 were referred to HomeBASE.
- 133 families referred to HomeBASE, who had no place to go

FAMILIES SHELTERED IN MOTELS – JANUARY 2009 TO AUGUST 2011



that night, were served with Temporary Accommodation Placements; other families were able to find someplace else to stay while looking for housing.

- 485 families sheltered in motels were assessed for HomeBASE resources.
- 173 families have moved into short-term housing with HomeBASE rental support.

- 103 families have transitioned from other short term housing assistance programs to HomeBASE.

Working with DHCD to continue to improve this new response to homelessness, we anticipate fewer families in motels and many more in housing. Our subcontractors include Heading Home, HomeStart, Project Hope, Action for Boston Community Development and Just-A-Start.

Back to School Help

Each year our corporate partners participate in the MBHP Back to School Backpack Initiative by providing new backpacks complete with school supplies for children returning to school. This year our partners Cradles to Crayons, Pegasystems, Inc., Ropes & Gray and Shawmut Design & Construction donated more than 400 backpacks. On behalf of the children and families, we thank them for their ongoing support and commitment to MBHP.



Left to right: Shawmut interns Michael Brooks, Jonathan Hurdelbrink and Lacey Jay; MBHP Executive Director Christopher Norris; Shawmut intern Nick McInerney; MBHP FSS Advisor David Kelly; MBHP Self-Sufficiency Advisor Marshall James; and MBHP Assistant Director of Client Services Kate Fulton



Left to right: Nicole Svirsky, Tony Fazzone and Derek Clark of Ropes & Gray with MBHP Executive Director Christopher Norris

Citi Contributes to Advance Housing Stability

This year, MBHP received a \$15,000 contribution from Citi in support of our Housing Supports Programs. These innovative programs help the region's most vulnerable residents find and retain affordable housing. MBHP implements a unique "housing first, not housing only" approach and recognizes that many residents struggle with multiple barriers that make it difficult to maintain a home.

"Financial inclusion means not only access to responsible financial products and services but also the opportunity to live in an environment that is conducive to building a stable future," said Susanne Cameron, Massachusetts State Director for Citi Community Development. "Citi is proud to work with MBHP to provide essential, affordable housing and support that enables individuals and families to achieve financial stability."

During the recent economic downturn, many residents have been struggling to provide basic needs for themselves and their families. Each month, MBHP's

Housing Supports Programs receive more than 750 requests for assistance. Residents face numerous struggles including pending evictions, start-up costs to move to more affordable units, maintaining utility services, and supporting basic needs such as food, clothing, and furniture. MBHP's innovative programs and services help ameliorate the gap between supply and demand, and are often the essential link in helping the region's most vulnerable families find and maintain affordable housing.

These funds were also used to advance our planning for the new Massachusetts short-term housing transition program known as HomeBASE. To combat the rising number of homeless families in Massachusetts, the state established HomeBASE to provide alternatives to shelter. HomeBASE provides a housing response for families who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. Eligible families receive housing stabilization or rental assistance funds and services instead of moving into emergency shelter.



Susanne Cameron, Massachusetts State Director for Citi Community Development and MBHP Board Member

At MBHP, we recognize that housing stability requires more than just four walls and a roof. Housing is where our service begins, not where it ends. We are truly grateful for the support and commitment of Citi, and our board member Susanne Cameron, in providing funding to support this new initiative.

BNY Mellon Award Will Offer A Comprehensive Tenancy Education Curriculum

BNY Mellon Charitable Giving Program awarded MBHP a \$40,000 grant to initiate the new Housing to Home Initiative. Funding was made from the Peter E. Strauss Trust of which BNY Mellon Trust of New England, N.A. is Trustee. This new initiative will focus on several important aspects of effective housing stabilization by teaching residents the skills needed to maintain a stable tenancy and provide them with the support they need to pursue their self-sufficiency goals.

Partnering with other community-based programs, our staff will



develop a comprehensive tenancy education curriculum for residents with low incomes. Courses will be held in community centers throughout Greater Boston and will focus on key areas of effective housing

stabilization, using a cohort model of education that allows residents to learn from one another's experiences. This multi-part series will include sessions on learning how to be a good tenant, communication and housekeeping skills, income maximization services, education and training resources, financial fitness and credit improvement, and more.

Concurrently, again with local partners, we will develop a job readiness program for residents who are prepared to pursue their self-sufficiency goals. Participants will be

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BNY Mellon Award

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linked to appropriate community resources, including General Education Development (GED) courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, and other appropriate training and certificate programs. Staff will assist residents in preparing a résumé and cover letter, will conduct mock interviews, and will provide support through all aspects of seeking and acquiring employment.

MBHP will offer these services first to clients in BNY Mellon's service area—Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, and Medford. If space is available, clients in the other communities that MBHP serves will be able to access these resources. BNY Mellon's distinguished 225-year history brings with it a wealth of knowledge and experience, and we are grateful for their support to develop this new initiative.



This summer, Virginia Griffin, MBHP Stabilization Coordinator (left), received the MBHP Performance Award in recognition of outstanding achievement, superior innovation, and continued excellence; Kate Davis Jordan, MBHP HCEC Coordinator (right), received the MBHP Partnership award for exemplifying our commitment to working as a team. We congratulate both.

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