



MetroWest Outreach Connection, Inc.
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“Every family needs a home...every child deserves a home.”

Health Through Housing - A Program to Help Victims of Domestic Violence

The connection between domestic violence, homelessness, and poor health is well documented and makes evident the need for communities to support the development and implementation of programs to help victims and their children acquire long term housing stabilization in order to reverse the negative health consequences of homelessness and trauma. Since we began this program in June 2007, we have provided financial assistance to 54 victims and their families with an expenditure of \$80,203. We received a Continuation Grant in June 2009 from MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation to extend the Health Through Housing Program until May 2010. We were informed in June 2010 that we would be receiving our second Continuation Grant for \$21,000 that will ensure the program will continue through June 2011. We have already started to pursue future funding for this program.

According to a February 2007 report published by the National Law Center On Homelessness and Poverty entitled “*Lost Housing, Lost Safety: Survivors of Domestic Violence Experiencing Housing Denials and Evictions Across the Country*”, **domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness nationally**, with 50% of cities surveyed reporting *domestic violence as the primary cause of local homelessness*. Victims and their children become homeless when they flee abuse or they are either evicted or denied housing because of violence perpetrated against them. Once homeless, the path toward long-term, stable housing is fraught with a constellation of barriers.

There is no other current source of direct assistance funds to help victims and their children who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless because of domestic violence. For victims fleeing violence, the options are limited and poor. Most are unable to pay arrearages and have no immediate way to pay first, last month or security deposits to obtain new housing. Victims who are forced to leave their home and have no other viable choice but to enter the shelter system, could remain there for as long as ten months. Less than 10% of the victims seeking shelter space in Massachusetts can be accommodated due to a severe shortage of rooms available.

The purpose of the MWOC program is to help victims of domestic violence and avert homelessness.

Client assistance funds may be utilized for, but not limited to:

- Moving expenses
- Arrearages in rent/mortgage, utilities, childcare
- Assistance with initial expenses involved in acquiring utility services
- Assist in paying for storage facilities
- Miscellaneous emergency expenses such as medical prescriptions or car repairs
- Emergency housing assistance provides funds to temporarily house a family in a motel until a space in an appropriate shelter can be obtained.

Eligibility:

- Applicants must be victims of domestic violence
- Their status as a victim has directly impacted their financial stability
- Applicants must complete an application for financial assistance

The **Health Through Housing Program** and the **Homeless Prevention Program** serve the following communities:

Acton	Ashland	Bellingham	Dover	Framingham	Franklin	Holliston
Hopedale	Hopkinton	Hudson	Lincoln	Marlborough	Medfield	Medway
Mendon	Milford	Millis	Natick	Needham	Norfolk	Northborough
Sherborn	Southborough	Stow	Sudbury	Wayland	Wellesley	Westborough



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