

# FamilyAid

## Newton Family Navigation Center and Temporary Housing Project FAQs

### **Who is FamilyAid?**

Founded by clergy, Newton resident John Arnold Lowell and other prominent families in 1916, FamilyAid (formerly Travelers Aid Society) has—over its 100-plus year history—provided education, training and a wide array of social services and temporary and permanent housing to Massachusetts citizens and new immigrants struggling with poverty and housing instability.

A multi-faceted agency, FamilyAid supports its clients with education and training, homelessness prevention and diversion services and stable housing support to create bridges from temporary to permanent housing. In addition to these services, FamilyAid operates more than 150 temporary and permanent housing units throughout Greater Boston, working in collaboration with the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). FamilyAid also provides anti-poverty/homeless prevention education and training programs and housing services to families enrolled with Boston Public Schools, Boston Children's Hospital, Boston Medical Center and Boston Housing Authority.

### **What are FamilyAid's vision, mission and approach?**

FamilyAid's vision is to end homelessness before it begins by combating poverty through education and empowerment of families struggling with housing instability and homelessness. Its mission is to empower parents and caregivers facing homelessness to secure and sustain housing and build strong foundations for their children's futures.

Through its expert use of structured training and tested educational models, FamilyAid ensures that each of its clients—children and parents—have the resources, training, education and tools they need to be successful and self-sufficient in the long term.

FamilyAid's tested, proven programs serve as a national model to reduce the cause, scope and impact of homelessness on children and parents, now and in the future.

The agency is considered among the nation's best charities, maintaining the highest ratings by independent national nonprofit evaluators, including [Candid/GuideStar](#) and [Charity Navigator](#).

### **Why and how was the Newton location chosen?**

FamilyAid's proposed Family Navigation Center will be located within a former nursing home at 1650 Washington Street, Newton, Massachusetts. The 1.8-acre site abuts the Warren House playing fields and Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The existing building is already configured to provide group and individual educational spaces, kitchen/nutrition education training and dining areas, study lounges and indoor and outdoor play areas and 42 temporary housing units.

The location offers families several benefits, including walking proximity to transit (bus, MBTA Green Line and Commuter Rail), stores (grocery and pharmacy) and healthcare services.

### **How will families be selected for the Navigation Center?**

The Commonwealth's Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) determines families' eligibility for emergency assistance. Families will be assigned to the Navigation Center by EOHLC based on available rooms and proximity to their home community, which includes Newton.

### **Who are the families coming to the navigation center?**

All 1650 Washington Street residents will be families with children. Eighty-five percent (85%) of FamilyAid clients are single mothers with young children. The majority of children are ages zero to four. The vast majority of parents are single mothers. All parents must be working, in school or attending job employment programs. Some families may be refugees/asylum seekers whose head of household may not yet be eligible for work or permanent housing.

### **How is the Center staffed?**

Trained FamilyAid professionals—educators, navigators, housing specialists, case managers, facilities and residential services employees—staff the Center 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **What are the services provided at the Navigation Center?**

FamilyAid staff and partners will provide educational services to parents and children between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Services include job training and employment preparation, financial literacy classes, housing search and placement, technology education, tenancy skill development, parenting education, adult basic education (e.g., ESL, GED/HiSET) and cooking and nutrition education.

The second and third floors will house 42 units of temporary housing that are supported 24/7 by trained FamilyAid employees. Each unit is typically occupied by one parent and one to two children.

### **Why temporary housing?**

High housing costs are typically the greatest barrier for families struggling with poverty. Temporary housing provides families with an opportunity to save money while FamilyAid educates and helps them increase their employment and other assets.

With FamilyAid's support, client families typically move from temporary housing to permanent housing within 11 months. FamilyAid continues to support its permanently housed families for up to two years as they get back on their feet, with 99% of families maintaining their permanent homes.

## **What is the difference between a shelter and a family navigation center?**

Shelters are often places where people get a cot for the night with no obligation to participate in education and training programs to help them become self-sufficient.

In FamilyAid's Navigation model, each enrolled parent must attend onsite education programs and pursue formal matriculated education, training or community service programs based on eligibility. Parents typically spend 30 hours a week attending classes and other self-sufficiency activities led by professional educators, social work staff and community navigators. Classes include job training and employment preparation, financial literacy classes, housing search, technology education, tenancy skill development, parenting education, adult basic education (ESL, GED/HiSET) and cooking and nutrition education.

FamilyAid also works with parents to obtain appropriate short- and long-term developmental, educational and recreational resources for their children.

## **How will the Center affect the Newton school system?**

Families residing at 1650 Washington Street will have the option to maintain their school-age child's enrollment in their local schools. FamilyAid understands that for each child who attends Newton Public Schools, the Commonwealth's Department of Education will provide The City with an initial \$1,000 and an additional \$100 per day per student.

## **Who is paying for the Family Navigation Center?**

Funding for the Navigation Center will be provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), the Newton Affordable Housing Trust (NAHT), the Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and charitable contributions to FamilyAid.

## **Who else is involved?**

The Planning Office of Urban Affairs for the Archdiocese of Boston is partnering with FamilyAid to manage the building's renovation. The agency will also work with its long-term community partners, including Newton-based [Cradles to Crayons](#) and [Horizons for Homeless Children](#) to provide on-site support to Center families.

## **When will the building be operational?**

Pending municipal approval and modest renovations, the Center is expected to open in Fall 2024.

## **How can I help?**

FamilyAid is seeking qualified educators, case managers and housing experts to join its staff. Current job openings and qualifications can be found [here](#).

FamilyAid depends on and appreciates community support to help homeless children and parents build a better future. Donations can be made on the FamilyAid website, [www.familyaidboston.org](http://www.familyaidboston.org), or mailed to the Advancement Office at 3815 Washington Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02130. You are welcome to direct contributions to the Family Navigation Center. For more information about ways to help, please go to [familyaidboston.org/get-involved/](http://familyaidboston.org/get-involved/). Thank you for your support!