

FamilyAid

Newton Family Navigation Center and Temporary Housing Project Background

Vision

As the leading provider of solutions to family homelessness in Greater Boston, 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. Its 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.

Mission

Through structured training and tested educational models, FamilyAid empowers parents and caregivers facing homelessness to secure and sustain housing and build strong foundations for their children's futures.

Background and Current Work

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.

Impact

FamilyAid's impact is tangible and long-lasting: it serves over 5,000 children and parents annually in 33 Massachusetts communities. 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.

Family Navigation Center and Temporary Housing Approach

FamilyAid provides children and parents with safe places and a path to permanent housing via educational programs, housing search and placement services and connections to vital resources they need to return to a home of their own. Throughout their time in temporary housing, FamilyAid teaches parents how to address their financial issues, obtain or increase their employment and overcome the barriers they face to return to stable housing quickly. We also work with parents to obtain appropriate short- and long-term developmental, educational and recreational resources for their children. FamilyAid has run a Family Navigation Center in Brookline's Coolidge Corner since 2019.

Family Navigation Center at 1650 Washington Street

FamilyAid's Family Navigation Center is located within a former nursing home at 1650 Washington Street, Newton, Massachusetts. The 1.8-acre site abuts the Warren House playing fields, several residences on Oldham Road and Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. No additional buildings will be constructed. The existing building is already configured to provide group and individual educational spaces, kitchen/nutrition education training and dining areas, study lounges, indoor and outdoor play areas and 42 temporary housing units to be typically occupied by one parent and one to two children.

FamilyAid will maintain a daily onsite presence of certified case managers, housing specialists and service navigators who will help families build the skills needed to achieve self-sufficiency and quickly find and sustain permanent, stable housing. Additionally, the site will be supported 24/7 by trained FamilyAid resident services and facilities staff.

Prior to opening in 2024, the property is undergoing moderate rehabilitation managed by FamilyAid's project partner, the Planning Office for Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese of Boston. Modest renovations include new flooring and wallpaper, the addition of child-safe showers for parents in each existing unit and upgrades of existing common, education, administrative and dining spaces.

FamilyAid will lease and operate the site for up to 55 years. Renovations will take approximately five (5) months.

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.

Education Programs

Each parent must attend onsite education programs and pursue formal matriculated education, training or community service programs based on their 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.

Housing Placements

FamilyAid typically houses client families within 11 months. Once enrolled with FamilyAid, families learn how to apply for various housing opportunities, including low- to moderate-income and market-rate housing. Under federal and EOHLC guidelines, families retain housing placement opportunities and priorities within their original home communities.

Family Demographics

All 1650 Washington Street residents will be families with children under the age of 18. 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.

School-Age Student Support

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 school-age student who attends Newton Public Schools, the Commonwealth Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will provide The City with an initial \$1,000 and an additional \$100 per day per student.

FamilyAid Project Team

Three members of the 1650 Washington project team are Newton parents:

- Larry Seamans, President and CEO (Newton Ward 1)
- Alicia Ianiere, Chief Advancement Officer (Newton Ward 5)
- Eva Barnes, Engagement Officer (Newton Ward 6)
- Carla Richards, MPH, Vice President for Programs
- Matthew Miller, M.Ed, Director of 2Gen Resources
- Masami Dustin, Project Manager

Project Management

- Planning Office of Urban Affairs for the Archdiocese of Boston

To learn more about FamilyAid, visit FamilyAidBoston.org.

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