**HomeBASE Updates**

1/10/12

Jim Reis, HAPHousing

1. Large Decrease in “Front Door” Referrals to HomeBASE - because of the restriction after October 28th in the type and amount of assistance (see the other side of this sheet) that can be provided to families presenting as homeless at the local DTA/DHCD offices, the staff have seen a large reduction in families being referred to HomeBASE. Most of the families are now choosing to go into the DHCD shelter/motel system but unfortunately they now are not eligible for any rental or other assistance.
2. Increase in the Shelter/Motel Families – not surprisingly these numbers are going up because of the change described above. In addition to this factor these numbers historically spikes in January and February, and all the regional agencies including HAP have now had a maximum “cap” placed on the number of placements is can make for the rest of this fiscal year because of budget constraints.
* 1344 families in motels statewide
* 413 families in W. Mass motels; 21 added to the shelter/motel system last week
1. There is HOPE – Aaron Gorstein, the Executive Director of the Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) has been appointed by the Governor as the new DHCD Director and will assume his duties in late January. Aaron is extremely well respected and knowledgeable, and this appointment has been very well received by housing professionals. He recently chaired a HomeBASE Working Group to make recommendations to the state about changes in the HomeBASE program in FY13.
2. HomeBASE Working Group Recommendations – as mentioned above CHAPA convened a diverse group that included representatives from shelter providers, Regional Housing Agencies, DHCD, MassCAP, One Family, ICHH, Mass Coalition for the Homeless, House Ways and Means, Lt. Governor Murray’s office and others. This Working Group has submitted its recommendations to the state that includes a number of significant changes including substantially increasing prevention and diversion assistance. There wasn’t consensus on a number of other issues (i.e. rehousing assistance for shelter/motel families, young mothers programs, overflow shelter, etc.), but this is a good start in the re-thinking and planning process for FY13.
* One very interesting fact contained in this CHAPA report that is a major factor along with other federal cuts, the economy, etc. contributing to the housing crisis, is that in 1990 2.5% of the entire state budget was spent on housing, and in 2010 that number has dipped to below 0.5%.
1. Motel Families admitted after October 28, 2011 – these families are not eligible for any type of re-housing assistance, and it is not clear when they will be eligible. Only the few Department of Public Health “FOR Families” staff are regularly available to try to assist these families with their basic needs, referrals for other services, housing search, etc. Given this bleak picture for these families
* What services or other supports can our agencies or other groups in the community provide?