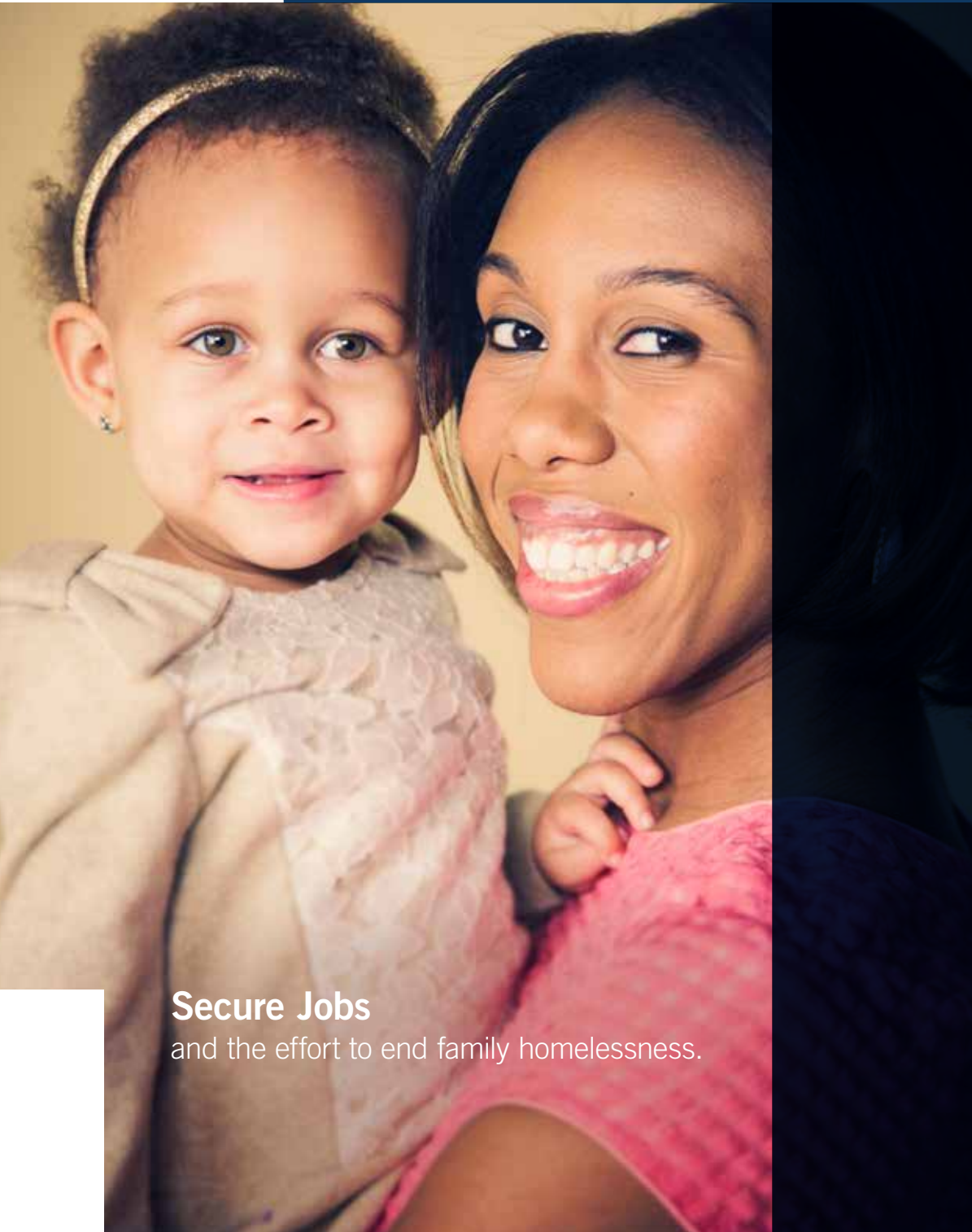


The **Paul and Phyllis Fireman** Charitable Foundation



## **Secure Jobs**

and the effort to end family homelessness.

**Ready. Willing. Able.**



# Letter from the Fireman Foundation

More often than not, families end up homeless for one simple reason: they do not make enough money to afford a place to live. As obvious as that fact seems, it is surprising how little impact it has on traditional approaches to family homelessness. Stabilization and rapid rehousing programs provide vouchers and subsidies — which are crucial — but miss a key factor. Families who are homeless need good jobs: jobs that fit the realities of people's lives and pay enough for them to take care of themselves.

In 2013, The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation partnered with the state of Massachusetts to launch the Secure Jobs pilot with the goal of addressing both homelessness and joblessness. We recognized that while one quarter of families who are homeless in the United States receive a permanent housing subsidy, the other three quarters are forced to secure permanent housing on their own. It is for many of these families that Secure Jobs has made a significant and lasting impact.

By collaborating with the Massachusetts government and many direct service agencies, Secure Jobs has been able to provide participants with an arsenal of resources to combat barriers to childcare, transportation, and transitional assistance. The collaboration offers access to real solutions and support that help families regain financial stability as they secure employment.

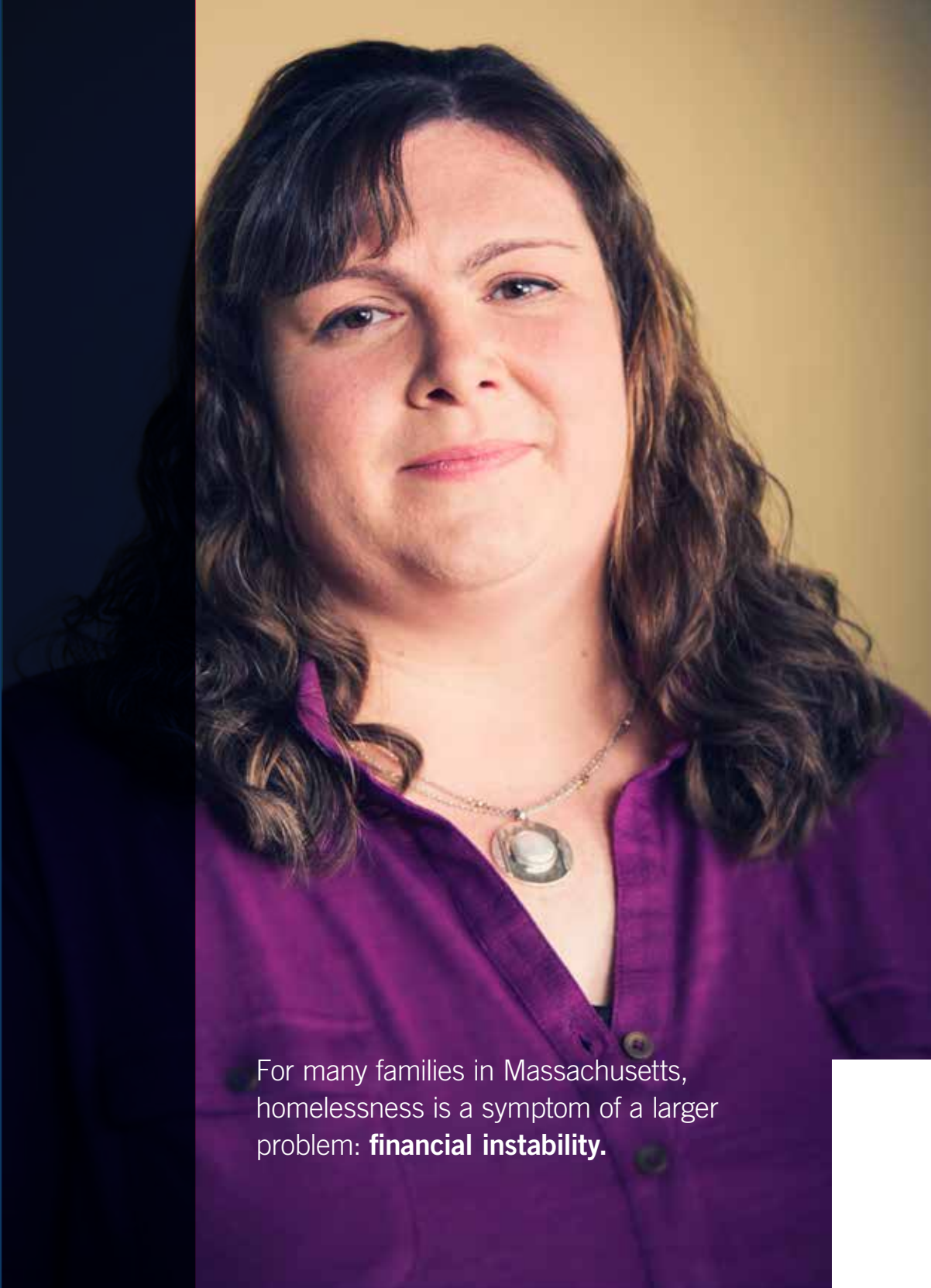
While our efforts are evident in the lives of Secure Jobs participants, some of whose voices you will hear in this report, we know the amount of work that still needs to be done to put an end to homelessness in Massachusetts. We ask that you not only join us in celebrating the progress, but also in bringing your focus to the future of Secure Jobs. The relationships that have been built these past three years are at the core of Secure Jobs' success – and the success of the participants.

Our goal is to make Secure Jobs the vision that drives a rapid stabilization services model for families experiencing housing instability or transitioning out of homelessness. As the Fireman Foundation continues the fight against the homeless epidemic, we ask that you continue to support our commitment to help families stay housed.

**JANICE ELLIOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
MELVILLE CHARITABLE TRUST**

“At the heart of Secure Jobs is the very simple idea that in order to thrive, every family needs both a roof over their head AND economic security. And as any working person knows, childcare, transportation, education, and training are essential ingredients to keeping a working household afloat. Today, these supports are often very fragmented. Secure Jobs is about re-envisioning how service delivery agencies and systems can work together effectively and efficiently to increase the income and housing stability of families who were formerly homeless. Secure Jobs is now being replicated in Connecticut.”

# Facing the Problem



For many families in Massachusetts, homelessness is a symptom of a larger problem: **financial instability**.



“After a trip to the hospital around Christmas I decided I had to get out of this abusive relationship. So I packed up my kids and we drove back to Massachusetts, but I had nothing – no job, no husband to help out, and no confidence.” –**MARIA E.**

## **FAMILY HOMELESSNESS AND FINANCIAL INSTABILITY**

There are many reasons why people become – and remain – homeless. But for many families in Massachusetts, homelessness is what happens when you find yourself on the edge financially, and life gives you a push. You get laid off. Your child gets sick. You need to get away from an abusive partner. When you are living paycheck to paycheck, or have to rely on someone else, all it can take is a bit of bad luck to lose your home.

What is more, once you are homeless, it becomes much harder to regain the financial stability you need to get back on your feet. Lack of childcare and transportation, gaps in work history, no permanent address – these barriers can feel impossible to clear on your own. As one single mother puts it: “You don’t have the resources, you don’t know what to do! And then you’re back at square one.” And the longer you stay homeless, the more difficult it is to break out of the cycle.

Over the last decade, Massachusetts has created many programs – and spent millions of dollars – trying to help families who are homeless: from emergency assistance to voucher-based programs for housing, childcare, and transportation. However, despite the effort and money put forward, since 2007 Massachusetts has experienced a dramatic increase in family homelessness (see below). A safe place to stay is essential, but clearly, for many families, finding their way to a stable home takes more than a handout: they need a new approach, one that addresses the root of the problem (poverty) and helps them to regain their confidence and start on the path to increasing their level of economic self-sufficiency.

Change in the number  
of homeless families  
with children



Source: The 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress

**“I was living in a motel with my four kids, but I was going to do what I had to do to get my family to a better place.” –JAMILA W.**

## **BEING “READY, WILLING, AND ABLE”**

Nevertheless, when you talk to many families facing homelessness, what often comes across is a strong determination to make things better. Even when they seem depressed or hopeless, there is often something within them – call it a survival instinct – that keeps them moving forward. Some parents spend hours a day shuttling between shelters, day care programs, and low-wage jobs and then back again. Others manage to attend training and vocational programs, even as they are barely eking out a living. In fact, research confirms what is seen on the ground: people who are homeless want to work. These are the “ready, willing, and able,” and they make up a surprisingly large proportion of the homeless family population.

Many also bring job experience and professional certifications – even college degrees – to the table. These are families that do not fit common perceptions of the homeless. Their unique situations present both a challenge and an opportunity. A challenge because they often fall through the cracks in the system: too poor to afford housing, too capable to get the assistance they need from state and private agencies. But also an opportunity, because, for those who are ready, willing, and able, the right support at the right time can make all the difference in the world.

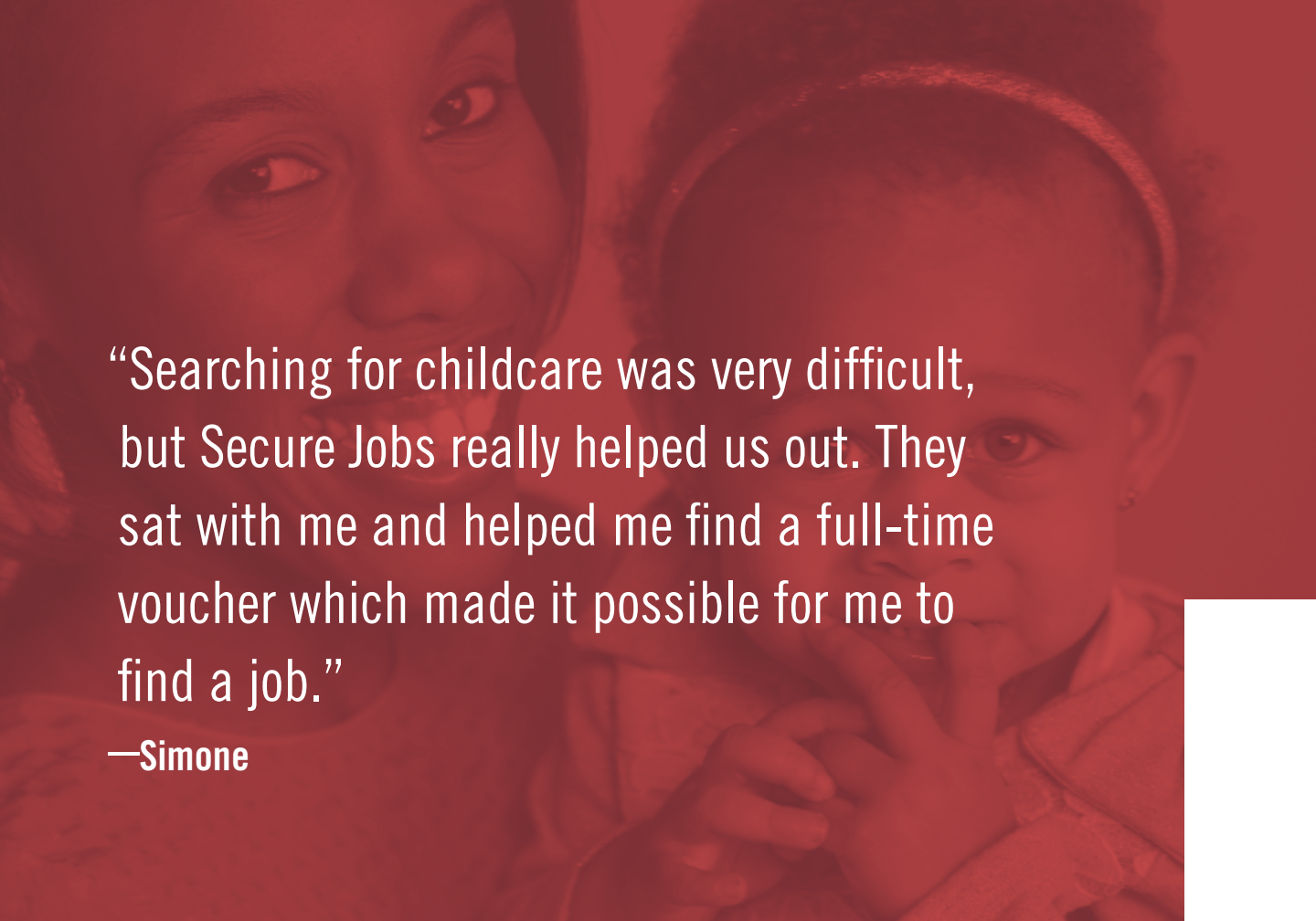
## **BARRIERS TO A HOME**

Even when they are motivated, families who are homeless often struggle with serious obstacles when they try to increase their level of economic self-sufficiency:

**Childcare:** To work, parents need safe, affordable childcare. Under the best circumstances, finding a provider is challenging; when you are homeless, cut off from your personal networks and with little income, it can be almost impossible. Government programs can help, but they often come with difficult requirements, long wait times, and limited availability.

**Transportation:** Perhaps you do not have a car. Public transportation is expensive, unreliable – or, outside of a city, unavailable. How do you get yourself to a job or a training program consistently especially when you are also dealing with child-care? Families who are homeless often find themselves missing out on opportunities simply because they cannot get to them.

**Work history:** When your experience is in low-wage retail or service jobs, it is tough to find professional work that pays a living wage and gives you the job security you need to achieve financial stability. Gaps in employment, a lack of relevant work experience, not owning appropriate work clothing – even not being able to afford a haircut – can put you at a disadvantage in the marketplace.



“Searching for childcare was very difficult, but Secure Jobs really helped us out. They sat with me and helped me find a full-time voucher which made it possible for me to find a job.”

—Simone

**Lack of flexibility:** When you are homeless, you often lead a surprisingly regimented life: shelters have curfews, childcare is available only at particular times, buses stop running. Unfortunately, the rest of the world does not work that way. Dealing with a limited schedule can put a great job or training program out of your reach.

**CORI and bad credit:** If you have ever been charged with a crime, whether you were convicted or not, you have a Criminal Offender Record Identification (CORI) record. This means that you may not be able to work in hospitals and other human service jobs – which are the biggest industries in the state. And having bad credit, which is also common among families who are homeless, can keep you from the financial and other industries as well.

**Lack of network:** It is easy to take social networks for granted: many people do not think twice about reaching out to a relative for emergency babysitting, or asking a neighbor for a ride to work. Becoming homeless, however, can cut you off from family and friendship networks, which makes it that much harder to get the help you need, when you need it.

“I had no transportation. I had no childcare. I had CORI issues and my self-esteem was low.”

—JENNIFER C.

“[A] single mother might secure housing subsidies from the state [...] but then have to wait a year or more to receive child care subsidies [...].” —THE BOSTON GLOBE

## THE PROBLEM WITH SILOS

Families face many barriers at once when they are homeless. This makes it surprising that, traditionally, for reasons ranging from varying funding sources to program requirements, services are delivered in isolation from each other, with little or no integrated case management. If you need housing vouchers, you go to a housing agency. If you need a better job, you go to a career center. As a staff member at a state agency puts it: “[It was as if each agency is saying] we’re the ‘housers.’ we’re the shelter providers, we’re the daycare people...”

Not only is this siloed approach costly and inefficient for the state, it also makes families have to double or triple their efforts to get the support they need. Worse still, it prevents agencies from drawing upon each other’s expertise and tailoring their services to the realities of family homelessness. And because many career centers are funded based on how many people they place, the ability of these centers to serve some of the more challenging cases requires additional resources.

Clearly, there needs to be a better way to deal with the problem.

### CHRISTOPHER T. NORRIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, METROPOLITAN BOSTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP (MBHP)


One of the most important factors impacting housing stability and self-sufficiency is wages earned through employment. Through Secure Jobs, MBHP and Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) have developed an important partnership, allowing our MBHP clients the opportunity to access effective education, training, and employment services.

Prior to the partnership, MBHP and JVS had intermittent interaction, but no ongoing communication or formal relationship that

could effectively target employment services for MBHP clients. Secure Jobs has changed that dramatically.

Both MBHP and JVS are committed to addressing homelessness and housing insecurity by helping individuals gain new skills, new careers, and become economically self-sufficient. We are both focused on preparing clients, making them the best candidate possible for any opportunities—housing, employment, or otherwise—that come their way.





Silos prevent agencies from drawing upon each other's expertise and tailoring their services to the realities of family homelessness.

# Developing Agency



The Secure Jobs Initiative is about treating families who are homeless as **individuals, not problems.**

**“Connecting families to employment opportunities is an essential element to ending family homelessness.” –FUNDERS TOGETHER TO END HOMELESSNESS**

## **SECURE JOBS: INTEGRATING EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING**

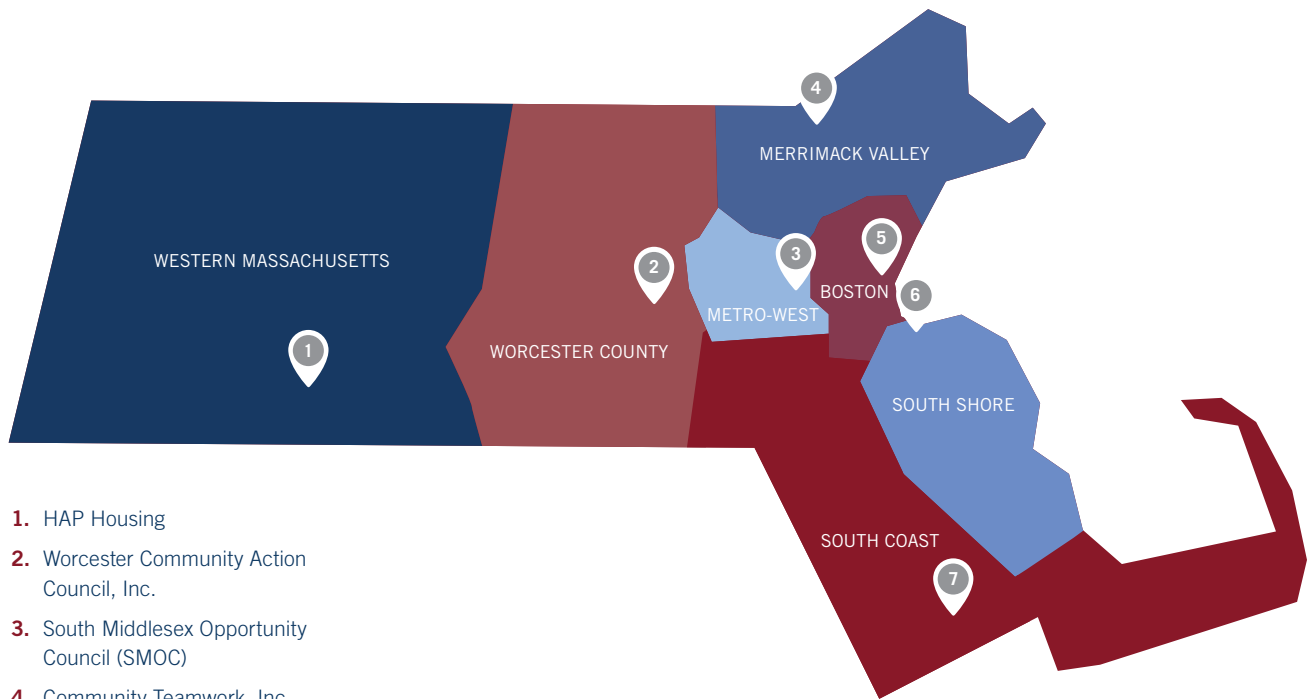
Designed by the Fireman Foundation and the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness, Secure Jobs brings together employment and housing agencies from across the state for a singular purpose: to help families who are homeless increase their level of economic self-sufficiency.

To work with Secure Jobs, programs have to offer integrated housing and employment services, using a case management approach that provides the kind of long-term, personalized support that families need to find their way to financial stability – and a home. These partnerships make it possible for Secure Jobs programs to make use of their own networks, judgment, and expertise to support families in ways that are tailored to their specific needs. They are completely focused on breaking barriers in childcare, transportation, and more. While they chart their own course, all local programs follow the same basic Secure Jobs model:

- They assess families to find the most ready, willing, and able to become self-sufficient.
- They work with participants to develop short- and long-term Individual Employment Plans.
- They assign participants into one of three employment tracks (see page 13).
- They provide ongoing support as participants work on training and job searches.
- They work with employment and housing case managers to break through barriers.
- They provide at least a year of retention support for all participants.

More than just a set of basic guidelines, Secure Jobs is a model for challenging the status quo and bringing about change at the system level. The model is designed to develop productive partnerships, support the whole person, and solve real human problems.

**“Secure Jobs’ innovative approach to housing and employment could benefit families who are homeless across the nation.” –NAN ROMAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS**



1. HAP Housing
2. Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.
3. South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)
4. Community Teamwork, Inc.
5. Jewish Vocational Service/ Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (JVS/MBHP)
6. Father Bill's and MainSpring
7. SER—Jobs for Progress, Inc.

“[We] have [referrals] who have a four-year degree, great candidates, but [who] struggle finding work because of childcare issues, can’t get to work, things like that.”

— SECURE JOBS COORDINATOR

## FINDING CANDIDATES

It all starts with the right candidate. Referrals usually come from agencies providing emergency services and include people with a variety of needs: from families living in shelters to those whom are barely holding on to their own housing. Some have little formal education, while others come with college degrees. English language skills can be a challenge; some are struggling with psychiatric issues. As a site coordinator tells it, “I’ve enrolled people who have so many barriers, [but I] saw something in them [that made me think they would succeed.]” If there is one characteristic that Secure Jobs agencies look for, though, it’s willingness. Candidates who consistently make it to appointments, who follow through with coordinators and put in the effort, are the most likely to succeed.

“[Training] helped me get my foot on the first rung to having self-confidence and self-respect [which is] really, really important right now.” –**SECURE JOBS PARTICIPANT**

THREE TRACKS TO A SECURE JOB

Once a candidate has been accepted into a Secure Jobs program, they go through an assessment process that includes one-on-one interviews, goal setting, and, in most sites, standardized and career assessment tests. The purpose is to discover: what level of service makes the most sense for this individual? Based on the answer, the participant is placed on one of three tracks:

**Job Readiness Training:** In the past, job readiness was all about technical skills. These days, it’s important to work on “soft” or interpersonal skills: attitudes and behaviors that say I am reliable, motivated, and a team player. As it happens, employers put more weight on these skills than on technical knowledge, which employees can pick up on the job. Beyond employer preference, job readiness training is also about restoring self-confidence, which is easy to lose when you’re homeless and under/unemployed.

**Skill Training:** Participants who are “job ready” can focus on developing the professional skills they need to get better jobs– work that is stable, pays more, and provides health benefits for their families. Training areas include medical (for example, elderly care, and EMT), technical (computers, machinist, electronic assembly), and services (automotive, notary public, cosmetology). Case managers work with participants to make sure that training programs are a good match for their existing skills, interests, and, especially, current CORI status.

**Job Search/Placement:** Even when they have the right skills, families need support as they go out to the marketplace. Secure Jobs programs keep Employment Specialists to help participants navigate through online job listings, write effective cover letters and resumes, and fill out applications. They also conduct mock interviews, advise on wardrobe, and even arrange for transportation and childcare. This is a hands-on, long-term approach: the goal is to keep participants engaged for as long as it takes to find the right job.

ASSESSING PARTICIPANTS

For the most part, Secure Jobs sites use standardized testing to tailor their programs to the specific needs of their participants. Assessment tools like the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE) allow sites to gauge a participant’s grade level in reading and math, and whether they should take GED courses. Other tests are meant to help participants figure out their job skills and career preferences; at Secure Jobs, the goal is not to find any work for families, but the job that best fits their abilities and interests.

20%

LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

53%

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

20%

SOME COLLEGE

7%

COLLEGE DEGREE

Educational background of Secure Jobs participants



“We found that if we know the employer, if we’ve met somebody at a job fair, and they remember our face, they know that we’re going to give them [a good candidate].”

#### MASSACHUSETTS STATE EMPLOYEE

“Secure Jobs is a partnership by design, not just a service or program we’ve heard about and are referring people to... It’s easier to refer people when you know you can follow up in the next meeting... In other programs we feel like we send a referral into the abyss and just hope for the best. [Also, with dedicated employment staff] I can focus on other important issues with them, like housing, because I don’t have to focus on the job search.”

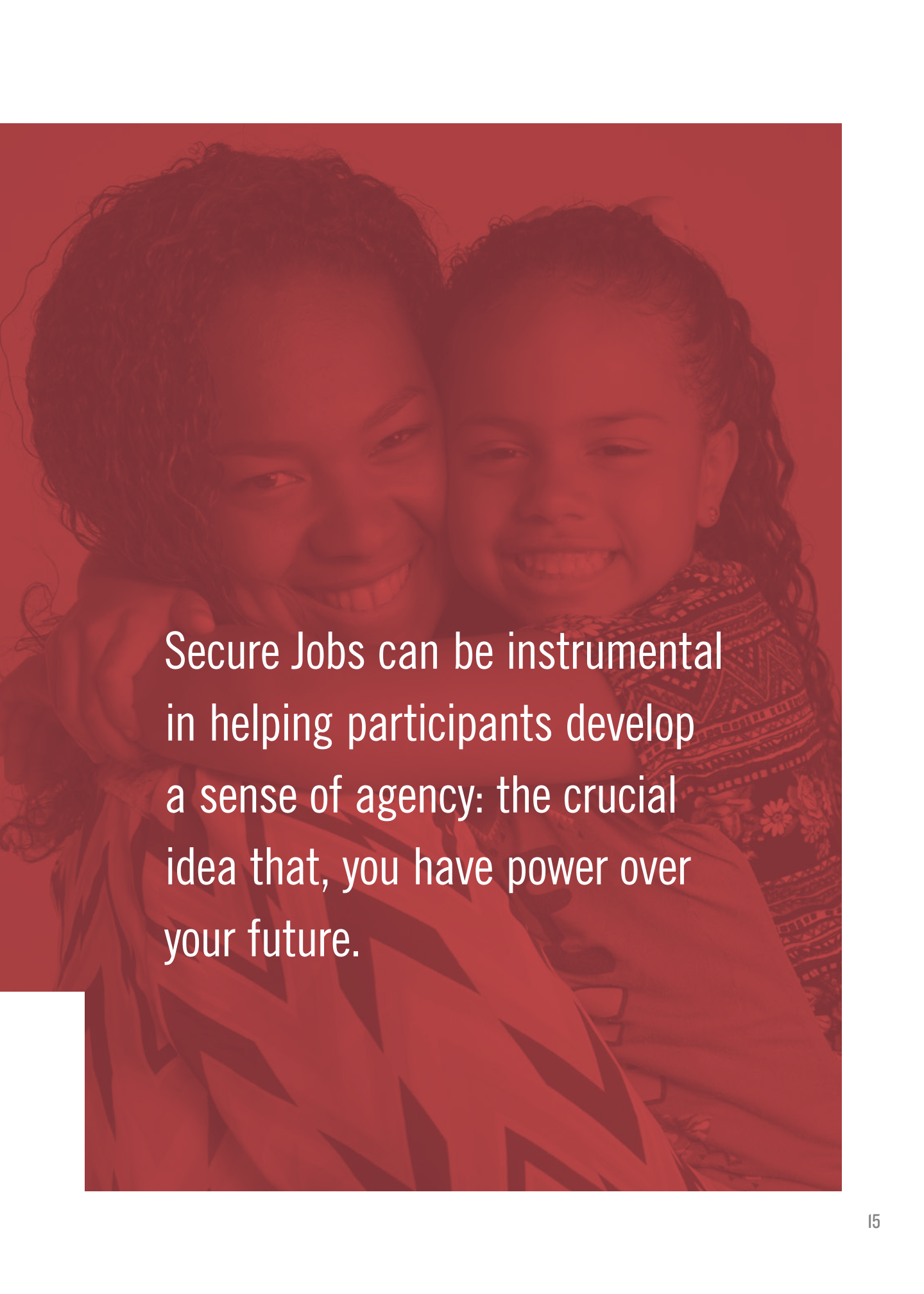
#### MAKING WORK HAPPEN: THE IMPORTANCE OF JOB DEVELOPMENT

All this effort would be wasted, of course, if the jobs are not there. That is why job development is one of the most important pieces of the Secure Jobs model. In fact, most Secure Jobs sites came into the Initiative with employment partners. Even with that head start, job development is still a time consuming process that involves not only maintaining personal relationships with potential employers, but also providing ongoing support and education once participants are hired. To this end, some sites keep full time Job Developers on staff; others take advantage of the expertise and contact lists of their local Career Center partners. This is one area of the Initiative that has produced much creative thinking and innovative approaches.

“We give [participants] options. We don’t necessarily say ‘you can’t do this.’ We never want to shut someone’s dreams out.” —EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST


#### THE READY, WILLING, AND ABLE APPROACH

Secure Jobs is a voluntary program: participants are there because they want to be, and many consider being selected an honor. By working with people who are ready, willing, and able – who have made the choice to better their situation – case managers can establish close, trusting relationships with participants and address their real needs. More important, it can also be instrumental in helping participants develop a sense of agency: the crucial idea that, you have power over your future.



Secure Jobs can be instrumental  
in helping participants develop  
a sense of agency: the crucial  
idea that, you have power over  
your future.

# Showing Results

A close-up portrait of a woman with dark hair and a slight smile, looking towards the camera. She is wearing a dark green collared shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown.

Relationships – with both participants and partners – are at the core of Secure Jobs' success.

“Every day when you call them and you’re down and out, all you can hear yourself say is ‘I can’t.’ They said ‘Yes, you can do this’ and ‘Yes, you can do that.’”

–SECURE JOBS PARTICIPANT

## PARTICIPANTS: BUILDING TRUST

Over the past three years, most Secure Jobs participants have been able to find better jobs – jobs with better pay, more hours, more access to sick leave, vacation, and employer-funded health insurance. Many have kept these jobs for over a year, building a record of employment that will serve them well in their careers. But these numbers speak only to one part of the story. What you hear from the participants is a profound change in perspective. They grow more confident, ready to seize opportunities as they present themselves. They do not let setbacks knock them down. They become more realistic about what it takes to succeed, but also more hopeful about their future. Secure Jobs encourages this transformation by building trusting, respectful relationships with participants in three ways:

**Individualized support:** Case managers get to know participants, first and foremost, as people. They ask about their personal history, their hopes for the future, the specific barriers they face day to day. And they use that information to craft an action plan that is unique to them.

**Flexible funds:** Sometimes a little money can make a big difference. A participant may need to pay for a state-licensing exam. Maybe she needs a haircut to look her best for a job interview. Or maybe she needs to pay for a babysitter or a RMV (Registry of Motor Vehicles) fine. Secure Jobs makes small, unrestricted grants available at all sites, which staff can distribute at their discretion to help participants deal with unexpected barriers (see examples at right). These funds turn case managers into problem-solvers and build trust with participants.

**Follow up/case management:** Self-sufficiency takes time. The Secure Jobs Initiative requires all sites to offer participants a year of follow-up services after they have been placed in new jobs. This is a crucial aspect of a holistic, case-management approach to family homelessness: it acknowledges that even when people are employed, they will often continue to struggle, especially as their financial situation improves and they become ineligible for government subsidies. Secure Jobs stays close as people take their first, tentative steps toward success.

## How flexible funds are used

Expense	Amount
 Licensure Exams	\$93–\$300
 Scrubs, shoes, etc. for health care jobs	\$50
 Steel-toed boots for warehouse jobs	\$47
 Textbooks for training courses	\$117–\$197
 RMV fees for driver's licenses	\$50–\$95
 Gas cards for two weeks	\$40
 Driving lessons	\$125–\$160
 MA IDs	\$40
 Hair styling for interviews	\$25
 MBTA Passes (one month)	\$18–\$70
 TB test to enroll in nursing courses	\$25

# Employment Outcomes








**~1000** NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS  
OVER 2.5 YEARS

**70%**  
EMPLOYED

## Employer Provided Benefits

**\$11.00** WAGE  
**25%** VACATION/  
SICK LEAVE

**10%** RETIREMENT  
**30%** HEALTH  
INSURANCE

Category	Occupations/Examples	
 FOOD SERVICE	Fast Food/Restaurant Grocery Food Prep	
 HEALTHCARE	Medical office or hospital Nursing home	Home HealthCare/ Personal Care Attendant
 OFFICE WORK	Administrative Assistant Shipping Clerk	Accounting Mail Room Office Manager
 TRANSPORTATION	Chauffeur Public Transportation Operator Bus Driver	
 SERVICES	Security Retail/Customer Service Cleaning	Hospitality Auto Related Funeral
 TECHNICAL	Electronics, Soldering Metalworking Auto Mechanic	
 SOCIAL SERVICES	Teacher Day care	Non-Profit Staff Service Provider



“Secure Jobs provides the link that advances our broader systems approach to ending and preventing homelessness for families.”

—FUNDERS TOGETHER TO END HOMELESSNESS

## PARTNERSHIPS: FOSTERING EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

One of the biggest accomplishments of the Secure Jobs Initiative is creating an effective network of providers, anchored around a central relationship between regional housing and employment service agencies, and supported by a roster of state agencies, employers, trainers, childcare providers, and other stakeholders. Costs are kept low by using existing resources – rather than inventing new ones – and sharing expertise across partners. More importantly, Secure Jobs is a model that gives partners the flexibility to deliver the right services at the right time: when they will make the biggest difference in the lives of families who are homeless or who have low incomes.

**For training/education:** Most Secure Jobs sites are led by employment agencies with little or no experience in housing services. Other sites, centered around homeless service providers, have either brought employment services in-house or are partnering with community colleges and local Career Centers. All sites benefit from sharing expertise which is why the Fireman Foundation in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) organizes quarterly Learning Labs, bringing together partners and stakeholders to compare notes, discuss best practices, and figure out what is working, and what is not. The Labs regularly cover topics such as summer childcare, resource allocation, recruitment and retention techniques, and engaging local government. The end result: better services for families in need.

**For employment:** All Secure Jobs sites have developed productive and creative partnerships with local employers. Trust is key: employers need staff that can deliver value, regardless of their housing status. As one employer partner puts it: “People tend to hesitate [...] because they assume ‘I’m going to have to do more work [if I choose to work with homeless people] ... and it’s going to be a headache for me.’” What makes the difference is the way that Secure Jobs programs stay involved with participants and employers, even after they have secured a position. Some sites go further, making use of flexible funds to support paid internships for participants. Maintaining close relationships with employers can also make it easier to deal with difficult barriers such as CORI status and gaps in job history. When Secure Jobs says a participant is ready for work, employers can count on it.

**For childcare:** For most participants, childcare is the most important barrier to stable employment. That’s why Secure Jobs sites partner with regional Department of Transitional Assistance offices, as well as Child Care Resource agencies and the Department of Early Education and Care to make it easier – and quicker – for families to get the childcare vouchers they need. These partnerships help participants stay focused on improving their financial stability, rather than on navigating a complicated state childcare support system.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

Documentation has always been a priority for Secure Jobs, both to ensure its success and to make it possible to replicate it in the future. That is why, early on, the Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP), a well-respected research institute based at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, was engaged. Working in close collaboration with the Secure Jobs partners, IASP has produced a wealth of information on many aspects of the Secure Jobs Initiative. This high-quality data plays a particularly critical role in deciding which program elements to bring to scale, and understanding the challenges involved in the process.

### SENATOR STAN ROSENBERG

“Secure Jobs offers Massachusetts families a real and lasting path to good jobs that make stable housing possible. Our children, our communities, and our economy all win with this investment. Its success provides a blueprint for our continuing efforts to end homelessness in Massachusetts.”


## LESSONS LEARNED

By focusing on documentation, Secure Jobs partners have learned, in real time, much about what it takes to reform a service delivery system. These lessons continue to inform the Secure Jobs Initiative and shape the partnerships among the Fireman Foundation, state agencies, and participating programs. Here are a few of the more important ones:

**Leadership matters:** You cannot have strong partnerships without strong leadership. In addition to providing more than \$2.7 million in funding, The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation has taken a significant role as convener, facilitating communication between the seven regional sites and relevant state agencies.

**Account for change:** The correct infrastructure will keep you abreast on what is happening on the ground and help you course correct if necessary. For Secure Jobs, Quarterly Learning Labs, IASP’s interim reports, and monthly conference calls all play a crucial role in keeping the Initiative on track.

**Plan to go national:** When a new model is working, people will notice. With strong support from the Fireman Foundation, Secure Jobs and its regional partners have brought the Initiative – and the link between housing and economic opportunity – to the national stage. Secure Jobs continues to present at federal and statewide conferences, as well as sharing best practices and technical support with programs across the country.



Secure Jobs and its regional partners have brought the Initiative — and the link between housing and economic opportunity — to the national stage.



## Call to Action

Two years in, the Foundation believes that the Secure Jobs Initiative is only a first step on the path to achieving housing stability for families in Massachusetts. The hope is for a Secure Jobs type of collaboration to become the vision at the core of a new, government-driven model for prevention, rehousing, and stabilization services – one that helps more families remain in their homes by focusing on economic opportunity and economic self-sufficiency.

## With that in mind, below are seven policy recommendations for consideration:

**1 Bring workforce development into housing stabilization.** Employment support helps families stay housed; it also lets them make longer-term plans so they never become homeless. When employment and housing support are brought together, case managers can deal with barriers holistically. Secure Jobs has shown that, with the right supports in place, families who are homeless can work to increase their level of economic self-sufficiency.

**2 Make quality and affordable childcare accessible.** Many jobs, particularly in the health care and retail industries, require staff to work some evening and weekend hours. A lack of childcare that supports non-traditional schedules shuts down many opportunities for parents. What is worse, families who are homeless that do not qualify for TAFDC (Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children) simply cannot afford the high cost of private childcare.

**3 Improve transportation options.** Many Secure Jobs parents find that their training and employment choices are limited by a lack of transportation. Increased public transportation, especially in rural areas, is critical. In addition, many families with cars cannot afford RMV fees and fines; keeping them off the road, and away from good jobs.

**4 Add flexible dollars to service provider funding.** Small expenses – often \$100 or less – can get in the way of a good job. Being able cover things like licensing tests, RMV fees, MBTA passes, career wear for interviews, and uniforms for jobs, can mean a lot to families trying to get back on their feet. These funds can be offered to participants as grants or as small interest-free loans.

**5 Extend housing supports.** High rents in Massachusetts make it nearly impossible for those in entry-level work to pay for housing. Extending housing subsidies and continuing employment support contributes to family stability and encourages participants to keep striving for economic self-sufficiency. Work should be rewarded.

**6 Ease cliff effects.** When people with low incomes start working, their benefits – including childcare, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,) and housing assistance – can drop off dramatically. This sudden change can leave families financially worse off than before they started working. The wrong message is being sent. Slowing down the loss of benefits as earned income increases can help to support parents as they work to build their careers and reward their effort to become self-sufficient.

**7 Improve and extend the EITC:** Last year, the State increased the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), impacting more than 400,000 working families across the Commonwealth. Considering how important the EITC is for low-income households, it is clear that more needs to be done. Increase the EITC again this year and make the tax code work harder for working families in Massachusetts.

**“Secure Jobs really helped me move forward with everything – my life, my school, with finding a job – it was really helpful.”**

**—KIMBERLY**



# Acknowledgments

**The Baker and Patrick Administrations** for their current and past support.

**The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development** for taking the lead to help coordinate resources across systems with the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance and the state's Executive office of Early Childhood.

**The Massachusetts Legislature** for their financial support.

**The Institute on Asset and Social Policy at the Heller School for Social Policy at Brandeis** for serving as the Secure Jobs evaluators.

Last, but not least, the well over **1,000 Secure Jobs participants** whose changed lives have helped shape our work together.

On behalf of our regional partners, we would like to thank their teams of dedicated service providers. Their day-to-day interaction with participants has made Secure Jobs the successful initiative that it is today.

## **BOSTON**

**Jewish Vocational Service/  
Metropolitan Boston Housing  
Partnership (JVS/MBHP)**

- CareerSolution
- Dress for Success
- Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston (JCRC)
- Just-A-Start
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

## **SOUTH SHORE**

**Father Bill's and MainSpring**

- CareerWorks
- Housing Solutions for Southeastern Massachusetts (formerly South Shore Housing)
- South Shore Regional Network
- United Way of Greater Plymouth County

## **WORCESTER COUNTY**

**Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.**

- Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance
- Montachusett Opportunity Council

## **WESTERN MASS**

**HAP Housing**

- BerkshireWorks
- CareerPoint
- Center for Human Development
- Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness

## **MERRIMACK VALLEY**

**Community Teamwork Inc. (CTI)**

- The Career Center of Lowell
- Greater Lawrence Technical School
- Greater Lowell Technical High School
- Nashoba Valley Technical High School
- Shawsheen Valley Technical High School
- Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School

## **SOUTH COAST**

**SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.**

- Career Centers of Bristol County
- Housing Solutions for Southeastern Massachusetts (formerly South Shore Housing)
- Justice Resource Institute and Catholic Social Services
- Greater New Bedford Career Center
- South Coast Regional Network to End Homelessness

## **METRO WEST**

**South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)**

- MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
- Natick Service Council
- United Way of Tri-County

Watermill Center  
800 South Street, Suite 610  
Waltham, MA 02453

617-482-5620  
info@ppffound.org

The **Paul and Phyllis Fireman** Charitable Foundation