

March 20, 2018

Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course  
c/o Dr. Ira Silver  
Framingham State University, Department of Sociology  
100 State Street  
P.O. Box 9101  
Framingham, MA 01701-9101

Dear Dr. Silver:

Heading Home is delighted to submit a full proposal to the Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course, seeking a \$10,000 grant in support of our Economic Mobility Center. It was a pleasure to speak with Tiffany Evens; it is so inspiring to see college students engaging in philanthropy on behalf of our greater community. We feel that the Center's daily activities, and Heading Home's mission, both strongly align with the Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course's mission to support organizations fighting to equalize access to opportunity.

### **Heading Home: Brief Background**

By way of background, Heading Home's mission is to end homelessness in Greater Boston by providing a supported pathway to self-sufficiency that begins with a home, together with critical services such as life skills, financial literacy and job training. Since 1974, Heading Home has been ending homelessness in Greater Boston. An organization of firsts, we introduced the area's first family shelter and pioneered Housing First locally. (Housing First offers homeless people permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible, and then the supportive services and connections to the community supports to help maintain tenancy and avoid a return to homelessness.) Over the past decade Heading Home has quadrupled in size. Today, under the leadership of CEO Danielle Ferrier, Heading Home is one of the Boston area's largest providers of housing and shelter, annually serving 1,500 homeless individuals and families. We provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing, and supportive services to homeless and formerly homeless families and individuals in Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Quincy, Revere and Somerville. We stress permanent housing with wraparound services as the best model for disrupting the cycle of homelessness; our permanent housing programs have achieved a 90+% retention rate for 12 straight years.

### **Homelessness in Massachusetts: Brief Background**

**Families and homelessness.** Persistent homelessness affects Greater Bostonians of all ages, and families with children have been the hardest hit in recent years. According to HUD's "2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress"

- Between 2007 and 2016 Massachusetts experienced one of the nation's largest changes in number of homeless people in families with children: up 6,339 people and representing a 93% increase.
- More than half of all homeless American people in families with children were concentrated in 5 states: New York, California, Massachusetts, Florida and Texas.

For the 3,500+ Massachusetts families who are in shelter awaiting a housing placement, unprecedented market conditions involving high rent, high demand and low stock increase difficulty to find permanent, affordable housing. Today, most families are in Heading Home's shelters anywhere from 12 to 24 months, when just a few years ago families were staying in the same shelters for about 10 to 16 months.

**Poverty and homelessness.** In the Boston area, many low-income families pay the majority of their monthly income on rent alone. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition's "Out of Reach 2017" report, in Massachusetts a parent must work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, at an hourly wage of \$27.39—more than double the minimum wage—to afford the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment without paying more

than 30% of income. Other necessary expenses such as food, transportation and clothing put each family chronically on the edge of crisis.

**Homelessness and students.** In the 2016-2017 school year, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reported a total of 21,112 homeless students in grades pre-K through 12. In August 2016, the *Boston Herald* reported that nearly 4,000 students in Boston Public Schools (BPS) are homeless — roughly 1 in 14 students. Beyond those who are officially documented as "homeless," tens of thousands come from families who struggle to make ends meet or who do not report their homeless or housing instability. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DOE) "2015-16 Selected Populations Report," 49.5% of BPS students are considered "economically disadvantaged," amounting to 26,486 children.

### **The Economic Mobility Center**

**Overview.** In these challenging conditions, we must be smarter about how we help our clients to prevent a fall back into homelessness, and gain better opportunities. Research shows that providing housing alongside supportive services is much more effective than just providing one or the other. As cited earlier, Heading Home's housing-plus-services model has resulted in a 90+% retention rate in our permanent housing programs for 12 consecutive years. We also know that employment and financial-literacy can combat poverty and homelessness. In response, in 2015 Heading Home leveraged funding from the state to open an Economic Mobility Center in Dorchester. The Center provides approximately 130 homeless and formerly homeless families with specialized services in financial education and career development, filling a local void as one of few such service hubs.

**Financial education and career development.** Services at the Center are delivered both one-on-one and in a group setting. The initial intake measures a family's needs using a solutions-focused approach, later used to help parents to establish goals. Accommodations include in-house child care for parents participating in services and phone interpreters to provide counseling and class materials in a parent's native language. The Center delivers two levels of financial-education courses and covers a wide variety of topics, including monthly budgeting, credit history, debt reduction and first-time home ownership. In addition, our programs offer matched savings accounts and in some cases monetary rewards as goals are met. Our staff also provides assistance in career direction, resume preparation, employment readiness and job search. As needed, we help parents pursue educational degrees, professional certifications, and English language classes through outside partners. We believe in working with clients until they have completed the goals they have set for themselves and/or they have achieved a level of comfort and success.

**Equal access.** In a variety of ways, the Economic Mobility Center fights to equalize access to opportunity. A typical homeless family consists of a single mother in her 20s with 1-2 children under the age of 6. Some parents at the Center are the same age as the students reviewing this grant request, and many are undereducated. According to multiple sources, more than 50% of homeless mothers lack a high school diploma. Further, many have lived in poverty for extended periods or even a lifetime, often resulting in a crisis mentality and underdeveloped executive function. In addition to the Center's core services in financial education and career development, our staff works with community partners who provide access to HiSET/GED courses and provides in-house trainings to help parents develop basic life skills. Alongside stable housing, a solid education, a career path, and an ability to save can create a lifetime of opportunity for a population that otherwise does not have equal access to these opportunities.

At a time of great need for local homeless families, the Economic Mobility Center is equalizing access to opportunity and a \$10,000 grant from the Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course would ensure our reach in service delivery at the Center.

## How the Funding Will Be Used

### Economic Mobility Center Budget for fiscal year 2018 (7/1/2017 – 6/30/2018)

Based on 130 Families/300 people

<b>Personnel Costs</b>		
1 FTE Program Manager		\$55,000
2 FTE Economic Mobility Specialists	<i>THIS REQUEST \$10,000</i>	\$87,000
.2 FTE Director of Family Services		\$17,280
29% Fringe		\$46,191
<b>Program Costs</b>		
Rent & Occupancy		\$50,800
Travel		\$1,200
Phone & Internet		\$800
Postage		\$400
Printing & Copying		\$1,200
Office Supplies & Materials		\$600
Client Matched Savings		\$30,000
Client Incentives		\$5,000
<b>Other Costs</b>		
Childcare		\$7,200
Midas Collaborative (client savings management)		\$53,000
<b>Indirect Costs</b>		
15% Overhead		\$53,351
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>		<b>\$409,022</b>

### Indicators of Success

Despite the complexity and persistence of family homelessness, our Economic Mobility Center continues to provide more than 130 local families with effective services that produce measurable gains in income and savings. Highlights from the Center's fy2017 outcomes include:

- A total of \$14,132 deposited into personal savings accounts.
- A total of \$29,810 deposited into client Individual Development Accounts/IDAs.
- A total of \$11,722 in debt repaid.
- A total of \$45,636 in student loan debt rehabilitated. (This refers to loan debt that was past deferment and on the brink of garnishment, which our staff taught clients to renegotiate back to income-based payments.)
- 37 instances of a client opening a bank account for the first time.

### A Personal Story

"Marlena" and her daughter entered a Heading Home shelter in 2016. Marlena works 30 weekly hours as a school van driver. She came to us with utility debt and long-term housing instability. First and foremost, our staff assisted Marlena with getting on waiting lists to be placed into permanent housing and oriented her on the often long road they would face together as she got back on her feet. From the start, Marlena worked with the staff at our Economic Mobility Center and set up an individual development account /IDA. She diligently deposited a percentage of her monthly income into that account which was then matched by Heading Home. Continuing to work and save full-time but still feeling overwhelmed and unsettled, Marlena worked closely with our staff to focus more on paying her debt. Together, they wrote proposals so Marlena could receive grants to put toward

her debt, and worked with the utility company to set up a payment plan. As a result, her debt has decreased considerably. In April 2017, Marlena and her daughter moved out of shelter and into their own permanent apartment in Dorchester. Today, Marlena and her daughter are safe and healthy on many levels. Her daughter is thriving in school and Marlena feels good about the future. She is still employed and working closely with her case manager, focusing on long-term life goals.

### **Heading Home's Short- and Long-Term Goals**

Following are desired outcomes for fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018).

- Directly serve at least 1,500 unduplicated people in one or more programs.
- Place at least 90 families and 50 individuals into permanent housing.
- At least 90% of families and individuals in permanent housing programs will remain successfully housed one year later.
- At least 130 families will engage in financial-education services at our Economic Mobility Center through 4+ hours of direct financial-capability services and 10+ hours of group classes.
  - A total of \$14,500 will be deposited into personal savings accounts.
  - A total of \$30,000 will be deposited into client individual development accounts/IDAs.
  - A total of \$12,000 in debt will be repaid.
  - A total of \$46,000 in student loan debt will be rehabilitated.
  - 37 parents will open a bank account for the first time.
- At least 130 families will utilize career-development services at our Economic Mobility Center.
  - At least 20% will secure employment and increase their income, earning on average between \$13.00 (part-time) to \$15.00 per hour (full-time).
  - At least 50% will engage in educational goals.
  - Of this group, 40 will work to earn a high school equivalency certificate and 60 will pursue further education through occupational training and college degrees.

### **Sustainability**

**Your impact.** To date, Heading Home has raised a total of approximately \$388,000 in public and private funding for the Economic Mobility Center. Committed funders include: Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) (approximately \$300,000), United Way of Massachusetts Bay (\$68,000), Citizens Bank (\$10,000), Linde Family Foundation (\$10,000). This is a highly sustainable program with long-committed funding from DHCD. However, if we relied on public support alone, we would be lacking critical staff positions at the Center, whose presence has ultimately led to stronger outcomes. While the model is sustainable with significant funding secured, the Nonprofit Giving Course's complementary support helps keep the Center running at the same high level.

**Funding.** On a broader level, Heading Home's fiscal year 2018 annual budget of \$16,322,004 includes 81% public funding from local, state and federal housing organizations, such as U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and DHCD. Private supporters—individuals, foundations, corporations and community organizations—contribute approximately 16% through our essential, complementary fundraising efforts. With ending homelessness as a major priority both locally and nationally, we do not anticipate losing our public funding.

**Heading Home's leadership enhances its sustainability.** CEO Danielle M. Ferrier brings an important blend of strategic business leadership and deep clinical experience to her leadership of Heading Home. With strong background in social services and organizational management, Danielle has developed a keen ability to lead with efficiency and decisiveness. Prior to joining Heading Home, Danielle was at the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families as a Deputy Commissioner, overseeing a \$400m budget and several hundred employees. Her extensive tenure in child welfare and clinical social work brings a critical lens to the unique

challenges and complex circumstances of our client population, with the compassion and experience to be a strong advocate on their behalf. To date, Danielle's focus has been to deepen and increase infrastructure, policies and processes with plans for strategic agency growth and continued innovative programming. Danielle's efforts are supported by a seasoned senior leadership team and committed board of directors. Danielle earned her Master of Business Administration from Simmons School of Management and her Master of Social Work from Boston University.

### **Demographics of Recipients, Staff and Board**

**Clients.** During fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017) Heading Home directly served nearly 1,500 people ranging from infants to elderly in: Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Quincy, Revere and Somerville. Most of our Boston programs are concentrated in Dorchester and Roxbury. Last year 34% of our clients self-identified as Hispanic and 66% as non-Hispanic. 53% were Black/African American, 44% White, and less than 3% total self-identified as other races; 60% were female.

All clients are very low-income. Depending on the program, income status is measured as either a percentage of the federal poverty level or a percentage of the area median income.

Of the 670 youth we serve in Heading Home's programs, the average age is 8 years old. Across all Heading Home programs, the average age is 18.

**Board.** Our Board of Directors has 20 members: 5 women and 15 men; Caucasian and African-American representation with a wide range of expertise including: nonprofit management, organizational development, education, finance/investment, law, community planning, public relations and marketing, human resources, real estate development, government and public policy, substance abuse and elder issues. When recruiting for our Board of Directors, Heading Home seeks diversity in many regards, including background and socioeconomic status. Currently, one of our board members is formerly homeless. We see opportunity for continued recruitment in this area.

**Staff.** Heading Home has a professional staff of 122 full-time and 68 part-time employees. Nearly all of our senior managers are female. We do not track staff ethnicity. Several staff have disclosed that they have personal experience with homelessness, either individually or through family members, and the same is true with many of the other challenges our clients face, including mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, food insecurity, and poverty. It is reasonable to assume that there are other staff (and/or board members) who have similar experiences but have chosen not to disclose them.

I hope this proposal provides all the details the Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course is seeking for Heading Home's \$10,000 request to support the critical operation of our Economic Mobility Center, an essential opportunity equalizer for local homeless families. Please feel free to contact me directly at 617-864-8140 ext. 102 or [spicher@headinghomeinc.org](mailto:spicher@headinghomeinc.org) with any questions.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing back from you, and providing you with a tour of the Center in April!

Warm regards,



Suzanne Picher  
Senior Director of Development

Enclosures