

Request for Proposal from Family Promise Metrowest
Framingham State University
Nonprofit Giving Course

An introduction to Family Promise Metrowest

Our Mission: To transform the lives of families with children who are homeless by mobilizing a diverse community to provide shelter, education and comprehensive support.

The idea for Family Promise Metrowest (FPM) was originally conceived in 2003 when members of the local community became aware of the growing rate of families becoming homeless in the metrowest area. A five-year process of development followed with the first family welcomed into shelter in October 2008. Since our inception, we have provided support and resources for 121 families.

Family Promise Metrowest is a community response to families who are homeless with a unique approach. Families enter shelter provided by 19 host congregations who convert their classrooms into bedrooms for our families one week at a time, 3-4 weeks a year. An additional 31 congregations and volunteers from the community assist in providing meals and supporting our families as they are embraced by a community of people who care.

Yet we are so much more than a shelter.

We believe our families can move themselves from poverty if they identify their root causes of homelessness and set realistic goals to address them. During the day at our Day Center, case managers support families in creating goals addressing financial literacy, health, transportation and parenting. All families are required to be employed to ensure long-term sustainability. To maximize their earnings, our **Steps to Success program** offers support in reaching goals surrounding education and employment.

Once goals are met in shelter, eligible families move into the community and receive case management and support for 1-2 years through our **Transitional Living Program**. This program has allowed us to serve more families as we provide subsidies for one year to assist families in moving out of shelter who are not quite ready to assume their rent in total. In 2018 we are also opening our first transitional home; a duplex being built in partnership with the Natick Affordable Housing Trust. This duplex will provide two families affordable housing for up to three years while they pursue further education to increase their earnings.

Our most recent program is **the Local Initiative for Family Empowerment, LIFE**, a homelessness prevention and sustainability program that supports families who are not yet homeless but are at risk of eviction. When initially entering the program, subsidies are available to pay rent in arrears while advocacy is offered with the landlord to prevent eviction. FPM also developed a partnership with Metrowest Legal Services to provide legal assistance for families as needed.

Once the crisis is addressed, families are supported with two years of case management, creating goals that address the root causes of their near eviction. Monthly group meetings provide an educational

component as speakers and trainers from the community address a variety of topics that address essential life skills necessary for sustainability.

The LIFE program is the newest addition to our continuum of services allowing FPM to serve more families and offer an alternative for those eligible to remain in their homes. Classes in the program will also be offered to all families who have graduated from our transitional living program and are now living independently in the community.

To accommodate our expansion of services over the past several years, in 2017 we purchased a new day center in Natick and will be moving into our new building by April 1, 2018. The new space will take us from approximately 1,600 square feet to over 4,500 square feet, allowing families the privacy and dignity they deserve while giving the staff space to do their jobs. A larger facility will also enable our volunteers to share their skills with our families and the organization more effectively. Additionally, a large conference room will encourage deeper collaborations with other organizations that serve families, enabling us to further expand our services.

To address our growth and ensure the future success of our we are requesting \$10,000 in operational funds from the Nonprofit Giving Course.

A detailed breakdown of how the funding will be used.

Our 2018 operational budget is \$681,176 including \$68,000 designated for guest subsidies as follows:

Area	Description	2018 Budget
Guest Supplies	Personal items for adults and children	2,000
Guest Clothing	Seasonal clothing for all family members and adult clothing for employment	3,000
Guest Medical	Out of pocket medical; first aid kits when leaving shelter	1,000
Guest Travel	Gas and public transportation	5,000
Guest Childcare	After school care; babysitters while job searching or attending trainings; summer camps.	12,000
Guest Education	Skills training; Certificates; Drivers Education; college level courses	5,000
Guest Housing	Rent subsidies for families in transitional living and to pay rent in arrears for families in the LIFE program	40,000
	TOTAL	68,000

The \$10,000 from this grant will specifically be used to support our guest subsidies.

Your organization's short-term and long-term goals.

Short Term Goals

To move into our new day center and complete the capital campaign. Since August 2017 we have received pledges of \$710,000 towards our campaign goal of 1,200,000 to pay off the mortgage and building costs.

To further establish our LIFE program, initiated in December 2017 with a projection of serving a minimum of 10 additional families in 2018.

To strengthen our board of directors and infrastructure by using outside consultants. In the past 5 years FPM has grown; we have purchased a new building, expanded staff and programming. In January 2018 consultants facilitated a Board Retreat and they will be providing additional leadership and executive coaching in 2018.

Long Term Goals

To reduce the length of stay for families in shelter to an average of 4 months.

Once families have met their goals in shelter they begin to look for affordable units in the community but are often challenged by the lack of affordable units. By expanding our transitional living program and increasing the stock of affordable rental units we will be able to expedite the move of families from shelter when they have met their goals and are ready to move out of shelter.

To increase the stock of permanent affordable housing through partnerships in the community.

In 2014 we began facilitating an affordable housing committee with members of the community all committed to increasing the stock of affordable housing. A current project is building a duplex for transitional living in Natick and we are working on a long-term project of creating a small group of affordable apartments on land owned by a local congregation.

To increase the number of families served.

By reducing the length of stay in shelter, increasing the stock of transitional housing units and further establishing the LIFE program our long-term goal is to increase the number of families served by FPM.

Indicators of success – statistics and personal stories.

In 2017:

- 85% of Transitional Living Program (TLP) graduates pursued education while in shelter or TLP
- 100% of shelter graduates were employed; 100% of TLP graduates were employed
- 100% of guests in the shelter program took advantage of the FPM network by using volunteers for babysitting, tutoring, or employment skill coaching.
- 10 families with 21 children needing health insurance and doctors when entering shelter all reached this goal. An additional 7 families had both health insurance and doctors when coming into shelter.
- 96% of families improved their physical and mental health by addressing outstanding health issues while in shelter. This included 16 families, with 26 individuals.
- 100% of children with identified special needs accessed resources while in shelter. This included 11 children needing special needs services.

Personal Stories

Mona

In the summer of 2016, Mona and her sons arrived in our shelter after moving here from Florida. Despite Mona's optimistic and hard-working nature, she was unable to find a job with sufficient income, and the family found themselves homeless.

Mona's determination was evident from the start, and with the support of our Steps to Success program she quickly secured a full-time certified nursing assistant position with one of our network employers. Since it was summer vacation, FPM helped the boys find camps, join local soccer teams, and enroll in school for the fall. Mona also began working with an English tutor through the local library.

With her new income, Mona established a budget with her case manager and reached her savings goal within a few months. At the same time, Family Promise was meeting with Habitat for Humanity to learn more about potential opportunities for families to apply. With employment and savings in place, Mona was eligible to enter their lottery for a new home being built in a nearby town. The lottery was held in December 2016, and while staff tried to prepare Mona for the slim likelihood of winning, her strong faith led her to believe otherwise. We are thrilled to say that Mona's unshakeable faith *did* win out and she and the boys won the lottery and a new home in December 2016.

Yet the story doesn't end there. For many families, moving from shelter to home ownership would be daunting, but Mona's determination and focus has inspired us all. Every week she spent her days off working at her house, while also taking the time to complete home ownership courses and prepare herself financially for this new phase of her family's life. Even the boys pitched in on the family's "sweat equity" requirement for Habitat by earning good grades and taking leadership and babysitting classes.

With delays in construction, we reached out to our network and someone offered their rental home for only \$450 month so that the boys could start school in the fall of 2017 in Holliston. On March 2, 2018 we celebrated with Mona and the boys when they entered their beautiful new home, proving that with hard work, determination, and faith in a better future, dreams really can come true.

Kristen

In November of 2017 we met Kristen who was in the process of being evicted with her 5-year-old son from their apartment in Milford. Kristen is a full time working mother with a bachelors and master's degree yet despite her income she had fallen behind in her rent. She had recently separated from her partner who was helping with the rent and she had incurred costs for speech therapy for her son who had been diagnosed with a language and speech delay. As the bills began to increase, she found herself heading for eviction and homelessness.

At the time, we were developing our new LIFE program based on a model from City Mission in Boston and asked if they were willing to work with us in bringing Kristen into the program. Through our collaboration, City Mission's staff advocated with her landlord and we shared the cost of her rent in arrears to prevent the eviction. Kristen was informed several weeks before Christmas they would be safe and secure in their home for the holiday and new year.

Kristen is now being supported by FPM as the first official family in our new LIFE program. Our case manager assisted her in finding a beautiful apartment that reduced her rent by \$245/month. She has also been working with her insurance company to obtain reimbursement for her son's speech therapy. With her advanced education, our Steps to Success Coordinator is helping her pursue other career options that would maximize her earnings.

The LIFE program allowed us to keep Kristen and her son in their home preventing the trauma and upheaval that results from a family experiencing homelessness. We have since accepted another family into the program and look forward to serving more families in the months ahead.

Evidence of your organization's sustainability.

In 2013 our operating budget was \$248,241 and in 2018 it is projected to be over \$680,000. Over the past several years we have seen a steady increase in our income and future sustainability as our network of support has grown. Specific indicators include:

Our annual walkathon growing from 400 walkers and \$80,000 gross income in 2013 to over 1,000 people in attendance and over \$150,000 raised in 2017.

Congregations growing from the initial recruitment of 21 congregations to 50 congregations representing a diverse community. In 2017 our congregations donated over \$250,000 worth of in-kind service to run our shelter and donate meals while also donating \$87,000 in funds to support our programs.

Grants received has also grown from \$11,000 received in 2013 to \$128,000 in 2017 with an additional \$77,000 in receivables for 2018. Included in these grants is a 4-year grant from the Cummings Foundation totaling \$100,000.

Individual donors have increased donations from \$135,000 in 2013 to \$321,560 in 2017. Individuals have not only increased in terms of financial donations; in 2017 alone we had over 500 new volunteers trained to support our programs and the families we serve.

We are a community committed to addressing the issue of homelessness together and the growth of our network of support over the years ensures our future sustainability.

Demographics

Our families

Family Promise Metrowest serves families with children who are homeless yet committed to addressing the individual root causes of their homelessness. Families are most often referred by the designated homeless coordinator from the school districts; the Department of Transitional Assistance when denied state shelter; emergency rooms where families have sought housing for the night; other agencies serving those who are homeless such as SMOC; Natick Service Council; or MASS 211 (the emergency hotline for the homeless).

In 2017 we served a total of 17 families including 24 adults and 34 children. The average age of adults was 35 years old while the average age of our children was 6 years old. Our parents included 41% two-parent families and 59% single parent families. The 58 individual adults and children included 42% male and 58% female with 45% self-identified as Black or African American and 40% identified as Hispanic or Latino.

Our Staff includes 12 individuals. We are 91% female and 8% male. We have two staff who self-identify as Hispanic and bilingual and one staff self-identified as Haitian and trilingual.

Our Board includes 12 directors. We are 58% female and 42% male. We have two directors who self-identify as African American.