

Photo by Joe Santa Maria - Kill the Ball Media



LEADING THE WAY

HOME

cmhaonline.org

2019 annual report



A Message from the Interim Executive Director



On behalf of the staff at CMHA, I offer a sincere thank you to all of our supporters, volunteers, Board Members and our many community partners who make our efforts to improve lives throughout the communities of Worcester and Worcester County. The impact of just one kind action can directly improve the quality of life for a family or

an individual while the collaborative effect of so many pitching in profoundly increases that impact.

Safe, quality, affordable housing is the center that grounds a family and allows them to thrive and in turn there is a ripple that spreads and in turn allows neighborhoods and communities to thrive. CMHA is looking forward to continuing and growing the collaborations through joint planning, coordinated programming and services, and robust advocacy to remove barriers that those

we serve face in obtaining and retaining housing and income stability throughout the year. We applaud the strength, resilience and determination of the families and individuals we are blessed to meet and to assist. We are deeply grateful for the efforts of the CMHA staff on a daily basis to make so many opportunities possible for so many on a day to day basis. You are truly agents of change and a powerful positive force throughout the communities we serve.

As we embrace another year of great work and tremendous outcomes in our community's shared effort to reduce and eventually bring an end to homelessness, we must all sit back, and recognize with great gratitude, Grace Carmark, as if it was not for her deep devotion, steady hand and unwavering commitment for over 26 years; CMHA would not be where it is today.

Thank you Grace!

Looking forward,

Ann Gibbons Smith –Interim Executive Director



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Congratulations to the 2019 Award Recipients Honoring Everyday Heroes



We recognize the following people for their commitment to our community and who share the spirit of CMHA:

The David G. Palmgren Outstanding Business Leader Award

Matthew Wally, UniBank

Janice Nadeau Award for Housing and Community Service

Etel Haxhiaj

Judy Brown Cahill Award

Leonor Cintron



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A Message from CMHA Board President



It is an honor to have served as a Board member for CMHA for more than a decade and to have served as Board President of CMHA for the past six years. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who helped make 2019 such a successful year in bringing help and hope to thousands in Worcester County in collectively meeting our shared mission across so many sectors. Our staff, board, and each of our programs are grounded in flexibility, respect for all served, and positive determination and collaborative efforts to achieve positive change in our communities. Our successes are shared with so many across multiple sectors who support our work through volunteering, donating and offering guidance on the best ways to make a positive impact in the lives of our neighbors in need.

I am especially moved by the diverse staff team at CMHA that pushes the mission and goals forward on a daily basis through creating creative strategies, building solid relationships with those served across an array of programs and maintaining strong community partnerships for the betterment of our communities and our neighbors in need. Thank you each and all for being a part of this incredible team effort.

“Not everyone can do everything but all of us can do something” – Matt Ryan, Former CMHA Board member and Founder of Hope For Housing

Sincerely,

Sam Bitar – President

Board of Directors

Sam Bitar
– President

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Johnson
– Vice President

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– Treasurer

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– Clerk

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Gordon Hargrove

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Tom Holland

Michael Martin

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the mission

Prevention • Self-sufficiency • Advocacy and Education • Collaboration • Resources

“Recognizing the dignity of all, CMHA leads a collaborative response to homelessness that fosters long-term housing stability through prevention, quality services, education and advocacy.”

Convening the Worcester County Continuum of Care (CoC)

CMHA is the convener of the Worcester County Continuum of Care and fosters long term planning to develop the most effective and humane approach to reducing homelessness in the region. Efforts include planning and ongoing collaborations with all service providers, stakeholders and government partners. In 2019, CMHA secured over 6 million dollars to fund 22 vital homeless services and supportive housing projects across the county. Utilizing three full time staff members, CMHA also manages a county wide data collection and reporting system for all homeless continuum programs to track success and unmet needs in addressing homelessness. A diverse and broad range of community-based stakeholders serve on the CoC Advisory Board to ensure that services and housing provided by the CoC are the best match to community needs. The CoC provides 450 units of housing annually. A Coordinated Entry system of all providers meets bi-weekly with all relevant providers in order to ensure a reduction of homelessness and more successful and timely placements into safe and affordable housing. We are pleased to partner with the City Manager's Housing first Coordinating Council through providing data and insight in how to address the needs of homeless individuals in our community. A total of 2,250 were assisted through CoC programming in 2019.

Public Education & Advocacy

Public Education & Advocacy (PE&A) is at the heart of CMHA's mission in addressing the root causes of homelessness. It works to raise awareness of the real issues of homelessness and lack of affordable housing opportunities. This is done through community education, coalition building, and mobilizing support for policy and budget initiatives resulting in real system changes for those we serve. Recently, over 100 frontline service providers from 43 different agencies attended the Family Housing Information Forum to share and learn about resources available for families in the Worcester County Area. In the spring, PE&A send advocacy action alerts to our partners, supporters and the Worcester Area State Legislative Delegation to support key housing and homelessness prevention initiatives. Along with other state wide advocacy partners, PE&A was a part of a success campaign to expand the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program to include all populations, including elders, youth and disabled households. Additionally, CMHA staff partnered with the City of Worcester's Housing First Coordinating Council to engage broadly supported outcomes; that protect those who are vulnerable, homeless or at risk within the community.

\$25,139

AMOUNT
DISTRIBUTED FOR
HOMELESSNESS
PREVENTION
THROUGH HOPE
FOR HOUSING

52%

DECREASE IN
UNSHELTERED
CHRONIC
HOMELESS
PERSONS

23%

DECREASE
IN CHRONIC
HOMELESS
PERSONS IN
SHELTER

13%

DECREASE IN
HOMELESS
FAMILIES IN
WORCESTER
COUNTY

7,283

HOUSEHOLDS
WERE ASSISTED
BY THE HOUSING
COUNSELING
PROGRAM

199

FAMILIES HOUSED
OUT OF SHELTER

545

HOMEOWNERS
ASSISTED BY THE
ELDER HOME
REPAIR AND
MAINTENANCE
PROGRAM

504

FAMILIES
ASSISTED BY THE
DONATIONS
CLEARINGHOUSE

Public Education & Advocacy Continued

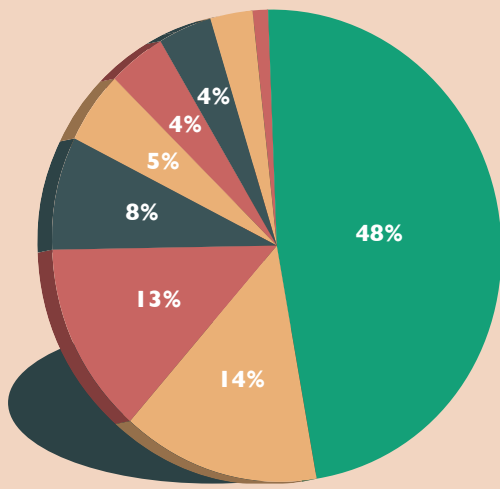
Most importantly, the program works with at-risk and formerly homeless families and individuals to influence decision makers and educating the public as to the barriers they face and puts a human face on the issue of homelessness.

Youth Against Homelessness

Youth against Homelessness (YAH) is comprised of area high school faculty and students joining together to cultivate an atmosphere of engaged learning and positive engagement. CMHA works with area high schools to increase students' knowledge of current issues in the community and work collectively to explore real solutions that they can initiate within their schools and neighborhoods. We are thankful for the support of Hanover Insurance Foundation, UNUM, and Joseph D. Early Jr., Worcester District Attorney, and the Worcester Public Schools for their support for the "Visions of Change" Youth Summit for the youth in our community. Area high schools who participate include Abby Kelley Foster High School, Burncoat High School, Claremont Academy, Doherty Memorial High School, Holy Name CCHS, North High School, Notre Dame Academy, Shepard Hill High School, St. Peter Marian CCHS, South High Community School, University Park Campus School, and Worcester Technical High School. Throughout the school year, these schools hold winter coat drives, hat and mitten drives, dimes for diapers drives, school supplies and book drives, participation in the WALK for the Homeless and time spent volunteering at the local Shelters holding arts and craft activities for the children and refurbishing furniture for the DCH which is then given to those in need to help make a house a home. YAH plants a seed for young people to become active and involved citizens in the betterment of their community.

Hope for Housing

Hope for Housing (HFH) is a partnership developed with the Interfaith Coalition to Prevent Family Homelessness and CMHA. HFH raises community awareness and utilizes the collective buying power of congregations to prevent family homelessness. Currently 29 Worcester area congregations partner with local retailers who donated 3-10% of all sales to CMHA's HFH homelessness prevention funds. In FY 2019, HFH prevented 41 families from becoming homeless with an average grant of \$613.00 per family. Since inception HFH has distributed \$331,454.99 throughout the community for homeless prevention. In addition to providing homeless prevention support, HFH also increases awareness, understanding and advocacy around the issues of homelessness amongst the 29 participating congregations.



HOW OUR DOLLARS PREVENT FAMILIES FROM BECOMING HOMELESS – FY 2019 IMPACT

Rental Arrearage	48%	Subsidy.....	4%
First/Last Month's Rent.....	14%	First Month's Rent	4%
Security Deposit	13%	Last Month's Rent.....	3%
Utility Arrearage.....	8%	Other	1%
Furnishing.....	5%		

345 households 458 adults 404 children \$2,071 average assistance \$712,700 total assistance

Family Shelter

The largest segment of the homeless population in Worcester County and across the nation continues to be families with school age children. While in shelter, families are assisted and supported to access tools and services in order to overcome barriers and move from homelessness to self-sufficiency and to achieve independent living in their own homes. Services provided to families in and moving from shelter include workforce readiness, budgeting skills, housing search, and parenting skills and support. In FY 2019, CMHA provided emergency shelter and support services to 269 families and of those, 185 families were successfully housed out of shelter with follow up services. In partnership with the Worcester Community Action Council's Secure Jobs Program, 169 residents of family shelter were assisted in seeking employment opportunities.

Family Emergency Shelter and the HomeBase Program

CMHA provided emergency shelter services to 269 families in the past fiscal year and housed 166 families from shelter utilizing state HomeBASE flexible assistance resources working with local housing authorities and private landlords. This coordinated Rapid Re-Housing Strategy has proven to be a critical piece in reducing the costs of housing families in emergency shelter for long stays and eliminating the practice of housing families in hotels. The resources allow families to quickly move to sustainable housing with follow up case management and supportive services. 199 families were successfully housed out of shelter with this resource in FY 2019. The average assistance per family of \$5,000 makes good fiscal and moral sense in preventing families from languishing in shelter for 6 months at a cost of \$3,000 per month and most importantly promotes the independence and quality of life for families to move to self-sufficient living. More than 500 households received ongoing stabilization supports.

Elder Home Repair & Maintenance

The program coordinates closely with partners in the Elder Service and Health Care Network to allow elder homeowners to remain living independently in their own homes through providing repairs and routine maintenance to keep elders safely and independently housed while preventing long and costly institutional stays. 545 unduplicated senior homeowners were served in FY 2019. The program promotes healthy independent living for senior homeowners through a strong partnership with elder care agencies, health care providers and councils on aging. The program is critical for hundreds of senior homeowners and works to protect their safety and quality of life as well as protecting valuable affordable housing stock for the long term.

Housing Counseling and Homelessness Prevention

Housing Counseling is the longest standing and highest volume CMHA program as the point of entry for those facing a housing crisis and saw 7,283 clients in the past year. Rooted in a prevention first model, the program provides counseling, education, and mediation to tenants and landlords as to their rights and responsibilities. Community resources, state and local prevention funds, and other resources are brought together in a holistic approach to address issues that place families at risk of homelessness. Mediation and problem solving is used to resolve housing issues and homeless prevention assistance is made available where the intervention will lead to housing stability. A total of \$712,700 in prevention resources were distributed in 2019 to prevent homelessness for 345 households consisting of 404 children. An average intervention cost of \$2,072 prevented these households from entering shelter at a cost of \$3,000 per month with an average shelter stay of 6 months. Homelessness prevention is the most cost effective and best approach for families to achieve income and housing stability. The average income of those assisted with prevention was \$19,547.

Donations Clearinghouse

The Donations Clearinghouse (DCH) provides an extraordinary service to families and individuals who have lost their homes and belongings, and are ready to begin anew. The program gathers reusable furniture and home goods from residents of Worcester County who no longer have a use for them, and offers them, free of charge, to those who need them desperately. Rotmans Furniture and Carpet Store is a key partner in providing this service, as are local churches and businesses who hold drives and perform service projects throughout the year.

In FY19 The DCH Assisted 504 families through over 75 Worcester County agencies referrals and were busy with 589 furniture pickups from Worcester County homes, which was over 2,250 items, which kept the DCH well stocked with household items to help families make a fresh start and make a house a place to call home. We thank our partners who held drives for furniture and household goods, and lent their time and talent at the warehouse to repair and ready donated items:

- Ayer Recycling Committee
- National Grid
- People's United Bank
- St. James Parish of Grafton
- St. Mary's Parish of Shrewsbury
- St Peter-Marian Jr/Sr High School
- St. Michael's on the Heights of Worcester
- United Way of Central MA
- Unum
- Worcester Regional Association of Realtors

thank you. \$139,529 raised

Thank you for making our 34rd Annual WALK for the Homeless a great success! With your help we raised \$109,660 in cash and received in-kind donations valued at \$29,880. Nearly 80% of the proceeds raised went to vital programs in our community, including CMHA, Friendly House and the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), St. John's Food for the Poor Program and Hope for Housing (HFH). A big thank you goes out to our co-chairs, Father John Madden of St. John's Parish and Kevin O'Sullivan for their dedication, support and enthusiasm.

Photos by Joe Santa Maria - Kill the Bull Media



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**Save the date, Sunday May 17th
for the 35th Annual WALK for
the Homeless.**

**Contact Ann Gibbons Smith for more
information at agibbonsmith@cmhaonline.org**



A snapshot of families we serve through homelessness prevention funds:

Head of Household

Female	80.2%
Male.....	19.8%
Average Age.....	41
Employed.....	43.9%
Disabled.....	39.1%
Average gross annual income	\$19,547

Marital Status (%)

Single	66.4
Married.....	11.7
Domestic Partnership.....	8.2
Separated.....	5.6
Divorced	4.7
Widowed.....	3.5

Race (%)

White.....	69.8
African American / Black.....	27.9
Other	1.5
Asian.....	0.3
Client Refused.....	0.3

Ethnicity (%)

Hispanic / Latino	57.9
Non-Hispanic / Latino	42.1

Education (%)

High School or GED	51.9
Did Not Complete High School.....	24.2
Some College.....	14.3

College Degree	6.7
Certificate.....	2.3
Client Refused.....	0.6

Household Locations

North County.....	13
South County.....	23
Worcester.....	303
Other.....	4

of Housing Subsidies..... 91

Average Family Size..... 2.5

Households with Children.....59.0%

Single Parent Households 65.8%

Thank you to our supporters:

Alternative Technology
 Bay State Savings Bank
 Berkshire Bank
 Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging
 Charter TV 3
 Chuck and Mud Band
 City of Worcester Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development
 Coney Island Hot Dogs
 Cornerstone Bank
 CVS Health
 The Diocese of Worcester
 Elder Services of Worcester Area
 City of Worcester Division of Elder Affairs
 Fallon Community Health Plan
 Francis Asbury Palmer Fund
 George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
 Greater Worcester Community Foundation
 Hoche Scofield Foundation
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 Price Chopper/The Golub Foundation
 The Hanover Insurance Group
 MA Association of Realtors
 Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development
 MLS/Property Information Network, Inc.

People's United Bank
 Planting the Seed Foundation
 Polar Beverages
 Rainbow Furniture
 Reliant Medical Group
 ReMax Vision
 Rotmans Furniture and Carpet Store
 Saint Gabriel the Archangel Parish
 Saint-Gobain Abrasives, Inc.
 South High Community School
 The Stoddard Foundation
 TJX Foundation
 United Way of Central Massachusetts
 UniBank
 Unum
 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 WCVB Channel 5 TV
 Webster Five Cents Savings Bank Foundation
 Worcester Area Mission Society
 Worcester County Management Company
 Worcester Community Action Council
 All Saint's Episcopal Church
 Belmont AME Zion Church
 Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church
 Christ Episcopal Church

Christ the King Catholic Church
 Epworth United Methodist Church
 First Baptist Church of Holden
 First Baptist Church of Worcester
 First Church of Sterling
 First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury
 First Congregational Church Spencer
 First Congregational Church of West Boylston
 First Congregational Church of Worcester
 First Parish Church of Berlin
 Greendale People's Church
 Immaculate Conception
 Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church
 Our Lady of the Rosary
 Paxton Congregational Church
 St. Columba Catholic Parish
 St. Francis Episcopal Church Holden
 St. George's Catholic Church
 St. John's Church Worcester
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church
 St. Luke's Episcopal-Hudson
 St. Mary's Catholic Church
 Trinity Lutheran Church
 United Congregational Church
 Wesley United Methodist Church



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