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Subject: MAYOR WALSH ANNOUNCES CITY HOUSES 1,700 CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOUSING INSTABILITY THROUGH BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY VOUCHERS

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**MAYOR WALSH ANNOUNCES CITY HOUSES 1,700 CHILDREN  
EXPERIENCING HOUSING INSTABILITY THROUGH BOSTON HOUSING  
AUTHORITY VOUCHERS**

*Through city and state partnerships, more than 1,000 Boston area families experiencing homelessness received affordable housing assistance in 2020*

BOSTON - Friday, January 15 2021 - Mayor Martin J. Walsh today celebrated a significant milestone in the City of Boston's housing work, as the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) has provided housing choice vouchers to more than 1,000 Boston families experiencing homelessness with school aged children, since December 2019. The 1,000 families represent more than 1,700 children who will now have much needed housing stability, an effort made possible through partnerships with Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the state's Department of Housing and Community Development.

"Being able to offer safe and stable housing for families is one of the most important things we can do as a city government, and I am so glad that these students and families all now have a place to call home," said Mayor Walsh. "Homelessness creates barriers for our students to grow, learn, and succeed, which is why these vouchers are critical to our efforts of ending homelessness in Boston."

The BHA partnership with BPS and its non-profit partner FamilyAid Boston integrated established partnerships, including the Family Led Stability Pilot, which worked with seven BPS schools to house homeless families in public housing units, as well as Boston Children's Hospital and the Boston Medical Center, which enabled a true continuum of wraparound services, such as housing search assistance, case management, and access to health and behavioral health services. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, BHA was able to uphold its commitment to provide assistance to homeless BPS families. As part of this process, BHA made operational changes that allowed eligibility determination to be completed remotely with smartphone applications and electronic signatures.

"This is an investment in Boston's future. Stable housing is essential to any effort to empower Boston's students to succeed in school and beyond," BHA Administrator Kate Bennett said. "We're proud that we were able to step in and make a difference at a time when so many families are pushed to their limit."

The vouchers expanded the capacity for the BPS network of 175 school-based homeless liaisons, with each school across the district having at least one homeless liaison. Homeless liaisons were able to refer over 700 families through an efficient and easy to access referral process. Also benefiting was the Family Led Stability Pilot (FLSP), a collaborative of four nonprofit organizations and five public sector partners launched in 2018 to address the growing challenge of youth homelessness in Boston schools and demonstrate the positive impact of stable housing on educational outcomes, starting with families connected to seven key BPS schools. The goal is to find homes for 100% of the students needing housing. With the help of BHA, FLSP has housed 75% of students experiencing housing instability at these seven schools.

Bolstering the BHA housing vouchers, BPS and its partners have offered a range of complementary services to families during the pandemic. This includes case management and wraparound services provided through its partnership with FamilyAid Boston, as well as distribution of laptops and wireless technology to ensure internet access. BPS secured \$150,000 in CARES Act funding, which enabled BPS families to receive financial assistance and enhanced housing search services provided by FamilyAid.

BPS students and families experiencing homelessness receive meal delivery if they reside more than one mile from a pick-up site. Hygiene items and school supplies are also available at BPS meal sites through a partnership with [Boston Resiliency Fund](#) grantee Catie's Closet. FamilyAid supplements this service for BPS families participating in the voucher program with their own food delivery program. In addition, FamilyAid leveraged their partnerships with Boston Children's Hospital and the Boston Medical Center to increase access to health care, behavioral health services, and other case management services for participating families. In spring 2020, 80 BPS families experiencing homelessness received financial assistance through a \$250 gift card, also made possible by Catie's Closet, while more recently, 50 BPS families received a \$200 gift card from Wayfair to purchase a desk or workstation for their children's learning as they move into their new home.

"As a child who grew up in public housing, I know firsthand the tremendous importance of stable housing on a child's academic and life outcomes. In the Boston Public Schools we are committed to supporting the health and well-being of our students and families in every way we can, particularly during this challenging time," said BPS Superintendent Brenda Cassellius. "This incredible partnership ensures that more Boston children have a safe, stable environment to learn, grow and thrive. I applaud Mayor Walsh, the Boston Housing Authority, and all our city and state colleagues for helping us confront youth homelessness to make permanent, affordable housing accessible to our families."

The vouchers allow Boston families experiencing homelessness to seek housing in the private market with a significant rental subsidy. Under the Tenant-Based Housing Choice Voucher Program, families who receive a housing voucher pay 30 percent of their adjusted income for rent, while BHA provides federal funds to the landlord to cover the difference between the tenant share and the Fair Market Rent (FMR). Property owners interested in making their housing units available to BHA voucher families can list them [here](#).

"This program helped my family to find a good, stable home at a difficult time," said Said Talaa, a parent of two Boston Public School students in East Boston. "These vouchers are a huge lifeline for families like mine."

Today's announcement builds on the goals of [Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030](#), the Walsh administration's plan to stabilize the housing market, accommodate growth, improve housing accessibility, and increase affordability. Since the release of the original *Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030 plan* in 2014, 26,124 new units of housing have been completed. With an additional 9,204 units currently under construction, the City has secured housing for an estimated 52,300 residents, making significant progress in meeting Boston's rapid population growth. Income-restricted housing stock has grown along with overall new production, with nearly 5,500 income restricted units completed and over 1,700 units under construction. Approximately 20 percent of all newly-developed housing units and 25 percent of new rental units in the City are designated as income-restricted. For more information on the City of Boston's work to create more housing, please visit [Housing A Changing City: Boston 2030](#).

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