



COMPASS for homeless families Community College Collaborative

A partnership between Parenting Resource Associates COMPASS for homeless families program and the Executive Office of the Massachusetts Community Colleges/Welfare to Work Programs, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), pursuant to the recommendations of the Report of the Special Commission Relative to Ending Homelessness in the Commonwealth (December 2007).

Helping single mothers in family shelters develop their abilities to reach individualized self-sufficiency goals for work, community and home, via a coordinated program of Community College based education and support services, critical information and long-term coaching.

The problem addressed is the persistently growing number of homeless families in Massachusetts and the Commonwealth's long term solution of shelter. Two thousand families now stay in state funded emergency assistance shelters each night. 96,000 children are homeless in Massachusetts each year. Shelter stays have lengthened over the past decade and now average between one and two years. Children are growing up in over-crowded, challenging living conditions - far from home. Many parents – and children - in shelter are not getting the education, support and services they need to do better going forward.

The Collaborative brings together COMPASS for homeless families, directly serving families in shelters since 2002, and the Commonwealth's Community Colleges, a powerful education resource and a natural gateway to a better future for homeless single mothers. The Community Colleges have a long history of providing welfare to work job training, GED services and a broad range of higher education options for all citizens, including those trying to find their way out of poverty.

In order to provide innovative, comprehensive programming in support of ending family homelessness, COMPASS and the Community Colleges work together to:

- Conduct participant outreach and intake
- Facilitate childcare for participants
- Support participant success
- Engage participants in getting involved
- Work with DTA, shelters and housing agencies
- Procure funding
- Engage service and advocacy partners
- Ensure that families are successful in housing

The Community Colleges provide:

- Workforce Development Training
 - Mornings daily for 8 weeks
 - Some training provides college credit
- Basic education for the workplace
 - English, Math and Computer
- GED programming
- ESOL education
- Internship site identification and placement
- Supported job placement

COMPASS for homeless families provides:

- Intensive Self-Sufficiency Workshop Training
 - Afternoons daily for 8 weeks
 - Workforce self-sufficiency
 - Financial and Economic Literacy
 - Family Strength
 - Personal Strength and Trauma Remediation
- Weekly Individual and Group Coaching
 - 12 weeks-through completion of internship
- Continued coaching support for one year

The COMPASS Community College Collaborative is currently serving 40 single mothers staying with their children in very under-resourced shelters in Waltham, MA. We are proposing to serve 500 families at 5 Community College campuses next year. The CCCC is in the process of building additional partnerships with like-minded organizations, in an effort to support families and end homelessness throughout Massachusetts. So far, connections have been forged with One Family Scholars; Little Sprouts - leaders in High Quality Early Childhood Education since 1982; CTI and Shelter, Inc. Many individuals and corporations are on board as well. Please join us!