

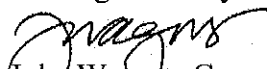

Continued from Page 1

These numbers prove what many of us already know: making monthly and even weekly outreach visits to shelters, transitional programs, treatment facilities and day programs; providing walk-in hours to enroll clients that have been referred to the Project by other Project participants; and responding quickly to our clients' expressed interests are key factors in increasing an individual's income and in stabilizing lives.

As Project T.E.A.M. continues to take root, our Housing and Homeless Services Unit has been involved in another recent initiative called Project SAFE (Safe Assistance to Further Economic Empowerment). This is a new initiative for homeless TAFDC families that have a history of violence or trauma, unsafe home situations, substance abuse or mental health issues. The Project gives these clients the opportunity to develop the confidence and skills necessary to get and keep a job. Voluntary participation in Project SAFE will be included as an activity in the client's EA self-sufficiency plan. Upon completing the activity, it is the AU Manager's responsibility to meet with the client and then enroll him or her in one of our ESP components to prepare for a job and economic self-sufficiency.

Project SAFE is supported by our Department's Domestic Violence Unit, our Housing and Homeless Services Unit as well as ESP. The new initiative is currently helping TAFDC families residing in the David Jon Louison Shelter in Brockton, Millennium House in Boston and the House of Hope in Lowell. Other nonprofit partners include the IMPACT Program and HarborCOV Personal Economic Planning (PEP). The Institute for Community Inclusion will be evaluating the initiative via interviews with all participants and will check participation at three- and six-month intervals. The training and support services offered through Project SAFE will provide practical skills such as safety planning, self-defense and economic literacy training. In the near future, TAOs will receive a "New Initiative Memo" which will provide more detailed information.

Both of these new collaborations recognize the connections between maintaining stable housing and keeping pace with the rising costs of good nutrition, as well as the imperatives of being safe and prepared before starting a job. In providing food and nutritional assistance, housing services and job training referrals, our Department continues to eliminate barriers between homelessness and permanent housing. Thank you for all of your help in this effort.


John Wagner, Commissioner
August 2006 



From the Hotline

Q. A mother and her daughter were receiving Emergency Assistance (EA) benefits until four months ago when they were able to relocate to their current apartment. Today, they came into the office again to apply for EA benefits because there was a fire at their apartment last night, and as of this morning, the apartment is uninhabitable. Is this family eligible for EA due to this fire even though they have received EA benefits within the past 12 months?

A. Although our current regulations do not provide for exceptions to the 12-month rule in the event of a fire or natural disaster, there may be other exceptions that could apply to this family. Refer to 106 CMR 309.040(A) to review the 12-month rule exceptions.

Also, remember that if there is an SSI member in the EA Assistance Unit, then SSI disaster benefits may apply. For more information on this topic, refer to the *EA User's Guide: Emergency Assistance, SSI Benefits and BEACON*, Chapter XII.