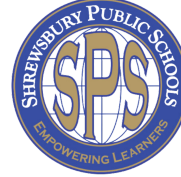


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PRESS RELEASE

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May 25, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Homeless/Migrant Family Assistance in Shrewsbury

TOWN OF SHREWSBURY, MA - On Friday, May 19, 2023 at approximately 4:30 PM, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), contacted the Town of Shrewsbury to inform Officials of the temporary placement of 12 families at a lodging facility in Shrewsbury until May 29, 2023. As of Wednesday afternoon, May 24, 2023, the DHCD has provided more updated information that there are 16 families being moved to the Shrewsbury lodging facility until further notice.

The families are being supported by a third-party contractor of the State for food and other needs they may have while staying at the lodging facility. Per the law, with the length of the term they will be residing in Town, any school-age children either will be attending Shrewsbury Public Schools to continue their education during this time of transition, or may be transported daily back to the school they have been attending if feasible. The Shrewsbury Public Schools are working with the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure the proper support of our new students.

Massachusetts is a Right to Shelter state and the DHCD is obligated to find shelter for eligible families. Per Section 30 of Part I, Title II, Chapter 23B of the General Laws: “the department shall administer a program of emergency housing assistance to needy families with children and pregnant women with no other children. The department shall administer the program throughout the commonwealth at locations that are geographically convenient to families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and shall administer the program in a fair, just and equitable manner.”

DHCD currently has approximately 3,600 shelter units across the state, nearly all of which are currently occupied. While DHCD is seeking to expand its portfolio of more traditional shelter settings, the agency has needed to use nontraditional facilities more frequently, including two Extended Stays in Westborough in addition to this lodging facility in Shrewsbury, though this is not a desirable option for families.

The Town is working closely with DHCD, Representative Hannah Kane and Senator Michael Moore, and our local social services agency, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services, to ensure the needs of the families are met. For those who would like to provide assistance or additional support to the families, the Town of Shrewsbury will be accepting monetary donations to support the individuals and families at the shelter. Checks can be made out to the *Town of Shrewsbury* and should note *Migrant/Homeless Shelter* in the memo and sent to, or dropped off at, Town Hall, 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545. Monetary donations will also be accepted online through [this portal](#) or www.shrewsburyma.gov/Donations. If in-kind donations, such as clothing or hygiene products, are needed in the future, the Town will notify the public and set up a collection process for these donations.

For more information, please see the Frequently Asked Questions below or contact the Office of the Town Manager at (508) 841-8508 or manager@shrewsburyma.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Massachusetts is facing a critical shortage of affordable housing, and that shortage is contributing to housing instability among our neighbors. To address this shortage, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) – in partnership with nonprofits Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA) and South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) – intends to use a Shrewsbury lodging facility as temporary shelter for Massachusetts families.

How has DHCD been in communication with Town Officials?

The State DHCD contacted Town Officials regarding the use of a lodging facility in Shrewsbury as a temporary emergency shelter at approximately 4:30 PM, Friday, May 19, 2023.

How many families will be sheltered in Shrewsbury?

DHCD is planning to place approximately 16 families as of 1:00 PM Wednesday, May 24, 2023.

Who will be staying at the family shelter?

All shelter guests will be low-income families with children under 21 or pregnant women who qualify for the state [Emergency Assistance Program](#), with a priority for families from Shrewsbury.

What can we do as a community to support these families?

There has been an outpouring of offers to support the family shelter and its residents since news of the family shelter was announced. We are pleased to report several ways to help. The on-site service providers, CMHA and SMOC, are working with the Town to identify opportunities to donate in meaningful ways. *Service providers have requested that no donations be dropped off directly at the lodging facility.*

For those who would like to provide assistance or additional support to the families, the Town of Shrewsbury will be accepting monetary donations to support the individuals and families at the shelter. Checks can be made out to the *Town of Shrewsbury* and should note *Migrant/Homeless Shelter* in the memo and sent to, or dropped off at, Town Hall, 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545. Monetary donations will also be accepted online through [this portal](#) or www.shrewsburyma.gov/Donations. If in-kind donations, such as clothing or hygiene products, are needed in the future, the Town will notify the public and set up a collection process for these donations.

Will the children enroll in Shrewsbury public schools?

Some school-aged children may enroll in Shrewsbury public schools, while others may remain enrolled in other area schools. The school district will be reimbursed for transportation, enrollment, and other extra costs incurred that are associated with educating our new students.

Why is an emergency family shelter necessary?

There is a critical shortage of shelter beds in Massachusetts. For the past few months, DHCD has been experiencing record numbers of entries into the system, which, coupled with low exits, have led to this critical shortage.

What is “Right to Shelter”?

Massachusetts is the only state in the country with a “right to shelter” law, meaning low-income Massachusetts families who meet certain eligibility requirements have a legal right to shelter. Because of this law, Massachusetts has one of the lowest rates of unsheltered family homelessness (i.e., sleeping outside) in the country.

What is the DHCD’s role in addressing family homelessness? What role does the town play?

The Massachusetts family homelessness system is called the Emergency Assistance (EA) program. DHCD oversees the EA system and manages placements of new families into the system, while shelters are operated by non-profit service providers from the community. All services at the site will be coordinated and paid for by DHCD, and the agency will coordinate closely with the town throughout the process.

How long will families stay at the shelter?

CMHA and SMOC, the onsite service providers, will work with families to help rapidly place them into stable housing of their own. There is no minimum or maximum length of stay.

How is the family shelter managed?

Every DHCD shelter has an on-site service provider. In this case, the on-site service providers are CMHA and SMOC. CMHA, SMOC and state partners will provide clients with case management, connections to resources, housing search assistance and the coordination of direct care.

How is the family shelter funded?

The Emergency Assistance program is fully funded by the state. Governor Healey has made affordable housing her first legislative priority. She recently signed a supplemental budget that prioritizes additional funds for emergency shelters across the state. For those interested, more can be read about this here: [Governor Healey Signs \\$389M Supplemental Budget](#)

How will meals be provided?

CMHA and SMOC are working with local vendors to provide food service for family shelter residents.

How will individuals and families in temporary shelters receive the resources and support they need?

CMHA and SMOC will ensure families have meals and necessities, provide case management and connection to resources, assist with housing searches, and provide routine cleaning, maintenance, and security of the property.

Can a town refuse a shelter?

DHCD does not require local approval to site a shelter.