

*In Council packets 11/24/97*



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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
ROBERT W. HEALY  
City Manager

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November 21, 1997

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached for your information a transmittal of materials on homelessness, received from Assistant City Manager for Human Services Jill Herold.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy".

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec  
attachment

# Department of Human Service Programs



RECEIVED  
97 NOV 11 AM 10:13  
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager  
From: Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services  
Date: November 10, 1997  
Subject: Transmittal of Materials on Homelessness

Jill Herold  
Assistant City Manager

Ellen Semanoff  
Deputy Director

Care

Commission for  
Persons with Disabilities

Community and Youth

Community  
Learning Center

Coordinating Council for  
Children, Youth and Families  
Kids Council

Council on Aging  
Elder Services

Low Income  
Housing Assistance

Multi-Service Center  
Business Services

Office of Workforce  
Development

Planning & Development

Recreation

On November 5, 1997, Department of Human Service Programs staff made a presentation with written materials at the Human Services Commission meeting on the recent Cambridge Homeless Census, the regular operations of the Multi-Service Center, and a status report on the work of the New Lease project in preventing homelessness. The Commission found the discussion both moving and informative, and we would like to share the attached written reports with you and the City Council. Included in this package are:

(1) Statistics summarizing the work of CDBG-funded staff at the Multi-Service Center. Please note that this only represents a portion of the work done by the Multi-Service Center. A brochure is also included, and a more complete summary covering the efforts of all staff will be produced at a later date.

(2) A summary of the Homeless Census conducted in Cambridge on October 8, 1997, under the direction of the DHSP.

(3) A summary of the work to date of the New Lease Program, operating jointly out of the Multi-Service Center and the Senior Center. Funded by the City for one year beginning in March 1997, the New Lease Program assists low and moderate income tenants who had protected status in formerly rent controlled apartments and who are facing possible displacement as a result of unaffordable rent increases or a landlord's effort to prosecute an eviction.

(4) A one-sheet summary of guidelines used by the various rent subsidy programs for which Cambridge (and other Massachusetts) residents can apply, and a summary of the eligibility guidelines for protected status (used by the former Rent Control Board in 1995 and 1996, when protected status was available).

Please let me know if we can provide additional information.



## Cambridge Census of Homeless Persons -- October 8, 1997

After years of relying on incomplete information about the number of unsheltered homeless people, the Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP), working in conjunction with staff and volunteers from local organizations serving homeless persons, planned and implemented the City's first ever comprehensive census of homeless persons on December 16, 1996. That first census counted 478 homeless men, women, and children, including 76 persons who were unsheltered and living on the street. Recognizing that cold temperatures might have driven homeless persons from the streets into more protected sleeping locations where they could have been overlooked by this first census, the City decided to conduct its second census on an Autumn night, when temperatures would still be relatively mild.

A second census was conducted on October 8, 1997, counting 541-564 homeless men, women and children, including 122-145 unsheltered persons. (As explained elsewhere in this report, the difference between the lower and higher figures reflects uncertainty about 23 persons reported by a census volunteer to be sleeping in undisclosed locations whose existence could not be verified.)

The following narrative describes the methodology and findings of this second census.

### Methodology

The count of sheltered homeless persons was conducted by telephone, primarily by Maria Melo from the City's Multi-Service Center for the Homeless, who called shelters and transitional housing programs. Gail Enman, director of CASPAR, called in the counts of Cambridge homeless in her agency's various residential substance abuse treatment programs. Cheryl Wold, from the City's Public Health Commission called in data from the City's three hospitals.

The count of unsheltered homeless was conducted by four teams, composed of staff and volunteers from the DHSP and local providers serving homeless persons, including Bread and Jams, On the Rise, Solutions at Work, CASPAR, Greater Boston Rehabilitation Services, and Professional Ambulance. Each team included at least one street outreach worker with expertise in its assigned survey territory, and each team was supported by an EMT from Professional Ambulance, who could offer first aid, if needed.

Carberry's, Dunkin Donuts (two local cafes/bakeries), and Food for Free (a local food gleaning agency) donated refreshments for the volunteers and for homeless persons that might be hungry. At the request of the North Cambridge Crime Task Force, Tags Hardware donated flashlights for each team. The Bread and Jams van stood by in case any homeless persons on the street wanted a ride to a shelter.

The street count was conducted from approximately 10:30 PM until 2:00 AM. Survey locations were chosen based on discussions with the street outreach staff and other homeless service providers. An attempt was made to route the survey teams through these sites in a sequence which allowed them to visit first the more remote sites, where homeless people were most likely to bed down early, and to visit last the places where homeless persons were most likely to settle down after midnight or 1:00 AM.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Rather than guessing about the relationship between the location and bedtimes of unsheltered homeless persons, it might have been better to begin the street count after, say 3:00 AM, when all such persons could be presumed to be settled wherever they were planning to spend the night. By beginning the street count earlier, the Census was bound to miss some people. For example, the team that surveyed the Cambridge Common between 1:00 and 2:00 AM counted only eight persons/empty bedrooms; however, a Census volunteer passing through the Common on his way to work the next morning counted 15 persons sleeping there.*

Surveyors counted the number of males and females they saw; the number of persons of unknown gender; and the number of apparently active "empty bedrooms" -- places marked by blankets or cardboard beds or bundled possessions where a homeless person was likely to be sleeping that night.

Added to the counts of persons and empty bedrooms were the names of 25 unsheltered homeless men and women known to street outreach staff, but not encountered by any of the survey teams. In addition, one census volunteer reported having recently delivered blankets to a group of 19 homeless persons staying in a building, and stated knowledge of another four homeless persons living on the street near the Lechmere MBTA station. Because the identities and/or exact locations of these 23 persons were undisclosed, it was impossible to know whether any of them were counted on the street or as empty bedrooms; thus the total number of homeless persons is expressed as a range, and not as a single number.

Some uncertainty about the gender, age, and number of homeless persons is unavoidable, given the City's intention of counting homeless persons in the least intrusive manner possible. Surveyors did not uncover sleeping persons to figure out if they were male or female; did not creep close to makeshift tents or "mobile homes" to try and discern whether more than one person lay within; did not ask young people if they were under 18 or in their early 20s; and did not venture beyond subway platforms or into buildings searching out hidden bedrooms -- even if outreach workers had reason to think someone might be there.

In the interest of respecting the privacy of the homeless people being surveyed and the confidentiality of their relationships with street outreach workers, and in the interest of avoiding possibly dangerous confrontations, surveyors counted only homeless persons visible from the street, from the public portions of MBTA stations, in public parks, cemeteries, railroad rights-of-way, and similar sites.

For the 12/96 census, the City was divided into three sectors; each of three teams was assigned to one sector. The 10/8/97 census, which surveyed more locations, deployed four teams, each of which traced a route starting at a more remote site (where homeless people were more likely to bed down early) and ending at a hub of nighttime activity (where homeless people were more likely to bed down late):

- Team 1: Mount Auburn Star Market and the train tracks behind it; Mount Auburn Hospital grounds; Memorial Drive from the Eliot Bridge to the River Street Bridge, and the parks on the opposite side of the street; Longfellow Park; Radcliffe Yard; the Cambridge Common; and the streets of Central Square
- Team 2: the Fresh Pond area, including Kingsley Park, ball fields, and surrounding trails; Linear Park from the Cambridge line to Alewife; Donnelly Field; Sennott Park; and parks at Broadway and Columbia Street, Hampshire and Elm Streets, and near the main library
- Team 3: the bike trail toward Belmont from Alewife; the Alewife garages and MBTA station, and the pond just west of the station; Porter Square, including St. James' Church, the area behind the Star Market, and the MBTA and commuter rail stops; and the Harvard Square area, including Old Cambridge Baptist Church, University Lutheran Church, St. Pauls' Church, First Church, Christ Church, the Seminary, the Burying Grounds, and area streets
- Team 4: Memorial Drive from the River Street Bridge to the Longfellow Bridge, and the nearby canal; Albany Street and the Conrail tracks from near the River to near Lechmere; the MIT student center; the Kendall Square MBTA area; and the Inman Square area.

Representatives from The Department of Human Service Programs, Bread and Jams, and Professional Ambulance remained behind at the Multi-Service Center to staff a "communications center." (Two of these individuals helped out a time-constrained team by surveying the MIT student center and Inman Square.)

## Findings

The following table describes the findings of the October 8, 1997 Cambridge Census of Homeless Persons:

	Men	Women	Children	Gender/Age Not Available	Empty Bedrooms	Turned Away <sup>1</sup>
<b>Individual Shelters</b>						
Shelter Inc.	15	6				
CASPAR	80	11				
Salvation Army	49					
First Church	15					
University Lutheran	0	0				
Saint Patrick's		29				4
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>46</b>				<b>4</b>
<b>Cambridge homeless transported to Boston overflow shelters by Bread and Jams' van (see note 1)</b>	<b>9</b>					
<b>Family Shelters</b>						
Transition House		8	9			
Hildebrand Family (12 families)	1	12	19			
YWCA-Bigelow Family (9 families)		9	10			
Crittenton Hastings (8 families)	1	8	15			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>53</b>			
<b>Transitional Programs</b>						
YMCA Transitional	24					
YWCA Transitional		5				
CCAA Transitional	4	1				
CASPAR residences: YMCA Transitional	3					
Womanplace		27				
Clinton St	18					
Highland/Kidder	8					
Shelter Inc.		5				
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>38</b>				

	Men	Women	Children	Gender/Age Not Available	Empty Bedrooms	Turned Away <sup>1</sup>
Street Census						
Street Team 1	12	2	0	12	7	
Street Team 2	10	1	0	0	5	
Street Team 3	11	3	0	3		
Street Team 4 (plus Stephanie & David L)	6	5	0	4	16	
Specifically Identified Unsheltered Homeless Persons Known to Street Outreach Staff, But Not Counted by Census Teams	12	13	0			
Unnamed Homeless Persons Reported to Be Living On the Street, Whose Existence Could Not Be Substantiated					23	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28-51</b>	
<b>Hospitalized Homeless<sup>2</sup></b>						
Cambridge and Somerville Hospitals	5	3				
Mt. Auburn Hospital	1					
CASPAR Detox	3	2				
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>				
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28-51</b>	<b>4</b>

Notes:

1. When shelters are full, they actively discourage referrals for beds, so that only occasionally are people actually turned away at the door. In most cases, when Cambridge shelters are full, homeless people find out via telephone or through informal channels that they need to go elsewhere. Persons homeless in Cambridge either find their own way to Boston shelters, or access the Bread and Jams van, which picks people up after the evening meal (served at a different church each night). On October 8, 1997, the van took 9 men to Boston shelters. Rather than maintaining a first-come, first-served admissions policy, the Saint Patrick's Shelter uses a 4:00 PM lottery to determine which women will be receive lodging when the demand for beds exceeds capacity. On October 8, 1997, four (4) women "lost" the lottery, and so, are counted in this Census as having been "turned away" by the shelter.

2. There were probably additional homeless persons from Cambridge in one of the several detoxification programs serving the metropolitan Boston area (e.g., Marathon (Long Island), Dimock, Shattuck, and River Street (Mattapan)).

## Discussion

As described in the preceding table, the 10/8/97 census counted 541-564 homeless persons, including:

- 159 men and 46 women in individual shelters;
- 8 women and 9 children in a shelter for battered families;
- 29 families, including 29 women, 2 men, and 44 children in family shelters;
- 57 men and 38 women in transitional housing programs;
- 9 men who were closed out of Cambridge shelters and transported by van to Boston, and 4 women who were sent away from the St Patricks van pick-up site;
- 51 men, 24 women, and 19 persons of unidentified gender/age who were unsheltered;
- an estimated 28 additional unsheltered persons whose sleeping places were noted, but who were not present when the surveyors came by; and
- at least 9 homeless men and 5 homeless women from Cambridge in local hospitals and detoxification facilities, and an undetermined number of homeless persons from Cambridge in detoxification programs serving the metropolitan area.

(As noted previously, the difference between the lower and higher census counts reflects the 23 persons reported by a census volunteer to be living in an unnamed building and other undisclosed locations, whose existence could not be corroborated.)

This year's count is 13-18% higher than the 12/16/96 count of 478 homeless persons in Cambridge:

- Even though one of the shelters surveyed last December was not yet open (University Lutheran) when this year's census was undertaken in October, there were more persons counted in shelters and transitional programs this October, because overall, Cambridge-based programs have greater capacity to provide interim housing for homeless people, in part thanks to federal grants.
- The number of unsheltered homeless counted this year was 60-90% higher than last year's totals. This increase is, at least in part, probably due to the warmer weather in October, as compared with December. Whether other factors were at work in producing a higher count of street homeless (e.g., an increased number of homeless young adults, an additional survey team (4 vs. 3), a better census design informed by one more year of street outreach experience) is a matter of speculation.

How do these numbers compare with other estimates of homelessness?

- In last year's report on the 12/16/96 Census of Homeless Persons, the counts in Cambridge were compared to the counts in Boston for that same night. This year's census was undertaken independently, and so there is no comparable Boston count for this time of year.
- As noted last year, the U.S. Bureau of the Census counted 252 homeless persons in Cambridge on "Street and Shelter Night" on March 20, 1990. The Census Bureau acknowledged that their effort was flawed and under-counted homeless persons; they have not done a more recent count, however.
- Drawing upon service utilization rates and other data available at the time, the City of Cambridge Continuum of Care, prepared for HUD in June, 1996, estimated that 1,237 homeless men, women and children lived in the City over the course of a year. The Continuum estimated that on an average day, 314 persons needed emergency shelter (most of whom would find shelter) and 464 needed transitional housing (most of whom would have to wait for such programming).

Although the exact size of the homeless population may be difficult to ascertain, there is little argument that homelessness continues to be a serious problem in Cambridge. The census count only begins to paint the picture of need:

- **By its very nature, a one-day census is unable to measure the extent of homelessness in a community.** Consider, for example, how a one-day census of MBTA commuters would undercount the number of people who depend upon public transportation for rush hour travel. Such a one-day tally would miss all the people who are sick, on vacation, or traveling to work by different means of transportation that day; would fail to count part-time employees who have the day off; and would overlook all the people who are temporarily unemployed. Dennis Culhane, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania who has conducted extensive statistical studies of homelessness, has published data suggesting that the number of homeless persons in a community could easily exceed four times the number of persons counted on any given day.
- **The census only counts persons who are literally homeless; however there are other people who are precariously housed -- living in extremely overcrowded situations, on the verge of eviction, etc. -- and who would be counted as homeless under the federal McKinney definition.**
- **Statistics de-personalize the experience of homelessness.** Although cumulative counts are necessary in planning service strategies, they mask the individual circumstances of people whose paths to homelessness -- and possible ways out of homelessness -- may be very different. The ranks of the homeless include elders whose incomes have not kept up with their rent, young families who were unprepared for financial independence, people with mental health or substance abuse problems, women and children who have fled domestic violence, middle-aged men and women whose lack of marketable skills have rendered them unemployable, men and women starting over from scratch after a failed relationship, men and women who are unable or unwilling to make the personal compromises attendant to functioning in mainstream society, children who have run away from difficult home situations or aged out of protective custody, persons being released from prisons with no resources and insurmountable obstacles to gaining employment, and on and on.

Despite these shortcomings, these first two census counts provide graphic evidence that Cambridge is home to a large number of people whose lives have gone so wrong that even the most basic of needs -- a sheltered place to sleep -- is, at least temporarily, out of reach. Future counts, in warmer weather and later at night, and continued improvement of outreach programs will help evolve a more accurate picture of homelessness in Cambridge.

In the meantime, hundreds of staff and volunteers will continue to provide shelter, food, health and social services, employment and educational services, and help finding and securing housing for the City's homeless, and the City will continue to work with non-profit providers to develop additional program resources needed to reduce the incidence of new homelessness in Cambridge, and to help existing homeless persons transition into more stable and suitable lifestyles.

## Multi-Service Center CDBG-Funded Program Statistics 7/1/96-9/30/97

Includes: Men's and Women's Transitional Housing Programs, Elderly/Disabled Homeless Case Management, Emergency Homelessness Case Management.

Does Not Include: Family Housing Search, Haitian Services (omitted in error), New Lease Program, and to the extent that these services are provided to clients not referred by CDBG-funded staff, services rendered by the substance abuse counselor on contract with The Cambridge Hospital, the mental health counselor funded by Tri-City Mental health, and the Individual Housing Search worker funded through HomeStart.

	Q1 FY 97	Q2 FY 97	Q3 FY 97	Q4 FY 97	Q1 FY 98
<b>New Clients Served</b>	225	187	232	244	423
<b>Total Clients Served</b>	225	284	297	324	423
<b>Of the New Clients Served...</b>					
% with earned income	42%	27%	24%	17%	30%
% with unearned income	35%	54%	45%	51%	34%
% with no income	12%	19%	31%	32%	31%
<b>Of the New Clients Served...</b>					
% Black/African American	31%	36%	35%	37%	32%
% Latino/Hispanic	12%	4%	19%	17%	13%
% Caucasian	51%	55%	35%	37%	46%
% Portuguese Speakers	0	2%	3%	5%	2%
% Haitian Kreyol Speakers	3%	3%	4%	8%	5%
% Other / No Data	3%	2%	4%	7%	9%
<b>Of the New Clients Served...</b>					
% Female Head of Household	10%	30%	21%	30%	33%
% 62 Years of Age or Older	6%	14%	25%	16%	7%
% persons with a Disability	22%	31%	35%	36%	31%

	Q1 FY 97	Q2 FY 97	Q3 FY 97	Q4 FY 97	Q1 FY 98
<b>Housing Placement Outcomes</b>					
shelter	15	7	48	56	97
transitional housing	8	3	39	56	36
halfway house/substance abuse treatment program	0	1	15	20	9
relative or friend (as a guest)	2	1	10	20	7
SRO subsidized	3	1	5	5	10
SRO unsubsidized	2	0	7	6	10
sober house	0	0	2	4	4
nursing / rest home	1	1	0	0	0
public housing	0	2	4	8	28
congregate housing	0	0	6	4	2
subsidized private housing	4	3	12	5	23
unsubsidized private housing	3	5	14	14	19
detox	3	0	0	0	0
other	0	0	2	1	30
<b>Total Placements</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>Units of Service Rendered (total client population)</b>					
Mental Health Referrals	160	235	24	108	49
Public Benefits Assistance Contacts	185	233	57	83	57
Employment Assistance Contacts	587	382	473	438	278
Substance Abuse Assistance Contacts	563	448	466	364	188
Personal Counseling Contacts	922	933	692	619	358

## New Lease Program Progress Report - Seven Month Update (10/17/97)

### Evolution of the Mission

The original intent of the program was to assist a targeted subset -- elders, persons with disabilities, and families with minor children -- of formerly protected tenants of formerly rent controlled apartments. The Rent Control Board gave the New Lease program a list of 680 unduplicated households<sup>1</sup> that constituted this target group.

As the program evolved, we expanded our scope to include other at-risk households, as well:

- We attempted to reach all of the 834 protected households whose occupants were neither elders, persons with disabilities, or families with minor children. As will be described below, most of the households that became clients from this population sought us out; by the time we called the remainder, few others were interested in client status.
- Although we had no way of directly reaching out to them, we began getting calls from/about households who had been eligible for protections, but who hadn't applied because they didn't think they'd need them, or because they didn't want to antagonize their landlord, or because they hadn't understood the process. Some of these folks -- primarily elders, persons with disabilities, and families with minor children -- were now facing the same kinds of problems as their peers who did apply for protections.
- Likewise, although we had no way of directly reaching out to them, we began getting calls about households living in apartments in formerly rent controlled buildings where landlords were raising their rents beyond the limits set by the Section 8 or MRVP programs, so that households holding leases under those programs were being forced to move.
- Finally, we received calls about a handful of formerly protected households that had been forced to move from their formerly rent controlled apartment before our program came into existence, or before we were able to contact them, and who continued to be at risk due to circumstances which we could have helped address, had we been in touch with them prior to their move. We have helped stabilize two such households, to date.

### Policies and Procedures

We developed and implemented standard procedures for telephone screening and follow-up intake. The City Manager approved general guidelines for use of the Fund, and we developed and implemented Fund application and landlord/mover contracting protocols. Although the Fund guidelines provide general guidance on the use of the City appropriation, we have occasionally encountered circumstances which dictate alternative use of the Fund in order to facilitate transitions to stable and affordable tenancies. An Advisory Committee, consisting of the Deputy Director of the DHSP, the Division Head of Planning and Development of the DHSP, the Director of the Council on Aging, the Director of the Multi-Service Center, the Housing Planner of the Department of Community Development, and the Manager of the New Lease Program, helped draft Fund use guidelines, and has met to review use of the Fund. The Committee concluded that planned use of the Fund was consistent with those guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup>As noted previously, this number differs from original estimates because earlier totals double-counted persons who appeared on two or more lists (e.g., elderly and disabled), and inappropriately counted households that the Rent Control Board had removed from the protected list.

## Phase 2: Other Protected Households

We found phone numbers for 299 of the 834 "other" protected households. Of the 299 households:

- 32 (11%) households confirmed that they had moved, some into a new apartment, others into a home that they had purchased.
- 117 (39%) households indicated that they were managing well in their formerly rent controlled apartment, and didn't need help for the foreseeable future. Since, by definition, the households in this segment of the protected population included a higher percentage working adults (i.e., no elders, persons with disabilities, no minor children), it seemed reasonable to expect that a large percentage of these households would have found a way to cope with higher rents, and, indeed, that was what we heard from many of them.
- 22 (7%) households were at risk of losing their housing either because they could no longer afford the rent, or because they had been asked by their landlord to leave. Most of these households had become clients before we even got to this portion of the outreach; that is, they had been referred or had found us on their own earlier on. The remainder gained client status and are currently being served by New Lease Program case managers.
- 49 (16%) of households where we left a message about our program (i.e., where a person took a message or where a machine confirmed that we had the right household) never returned our call, presumably because they are managing without assistance.
- We were unable to contact 79 (26%) of these households, either because the phone number listed in the phone book had been disconnected, re-assigned to another person by the phone company, or was otherwise not in service, or because there was repeatedly no answer or a machine that did not identify the owner ("Hi, you've reached 354-1234. Please leave your message...")

We presume that most of the 535 households for whom we could not find phone numbers have moved. We have received back only one or two "undeliverable" letters sent out to the "other" protected households whom we could not reach by phone.

### Client Contact

To date, 146 households have been screened in as program clients:

- 65 of these clients were formerly protected households that included either an elder, a person with a disability, or a minor child;
- 24 of these clients were other formerly protected households;
- 57 of these clients were households who had never applied for protected status, who were referred to us or came to us on their own. Most of these households had been eligible for protected status but either hadn't thought they would need the protections, or hadn't been aware of or understood the process (especially non-English-speaking households). A small number were households holding Section 8 or MRVP leases in apartments in formerly rent controlled buildings.

(Another 17 households who were not on any of our outreach lists -- households that never applied for protections even though they were eligible to be protected -- received short-term case management only.

For many of our clients, the end of rent control and the one or two years of protections was the single most important factor in their housing crisis:

- Some clients received very substantial rent increases (up to 300%). Other clients facing relatively small increases (10%) nonetheless found themselves being pushed beyond their financial limits, if their income was limited to a pension, Social Security, SSI, or TAFDC. Nearly all of these clients were paying well above 50% of their income for shelter costs, or facing a rent increase which would push their shelter costs over the 50% threshold. Some landlords have been willing to postpone increases while clients wait for subsidies, others have not.
- In some cases, the immediate issue was not a rent increase, but rather the planned renovation of the building. Some landlords attempt to empty their buildings in order to sell or renovate; others undertake piecemeal renovations or have bought or sold buildings without displacing tenants.

For some of our clients, the end of rent control was only one of several precipitating factors to their housing crisis. A fair number of our clients were only barely managing under rent control and subsequent protections. Some had accumulated arrearages of up to a few thousand dollars before they ever received a "big" rent increase. Some had been barely managing on incomes derived from public benefits programs (TAFDC, SSI, Social Security); others had eked by on small incomes derived from part time or erratic employment. Some had been without an income for from several months to a year. A substantial number of our clients came to us with utility arrearages and/or bad credit, including outstanding debts to credit card companies, the Housing Authority, etc.

### Services Provided

The most common -- and, given our clients' dependence on subsidies and subsidized housing to stabilize their situations, perhaps the most important -- form of assistance that we have provided has been help with applications to the Cambridge Housing Authority for participation in the Section 8, AHVP, and public (elderly and family) housing programs. In addition to helping clients submit first-time applications to the CHA, we conduct routine and regular check-ins with CHA staff to ensure that applicants receive the ranking preference and expedited assistance that their situations merit. The CHA has been a supportive and invaluable partner in addressing the needs of our clientele: As described in greater detail below, almost 60% (33) of the 56) clients whose situations we helped stabilize either (a) moved into public housing, (b) were able to use a Section 8 or AHVP subsidy to remain in their existing housing, (c) received a Section 8 or AHVP subsidy which they were able to use in a new apartment, or (d) were able to use an existing Section 8 or MRVP subsidy in a new apartment.

In a number of cases, we have been able to work with clients' landlords to temporarily extend their threatened tenancies at rents below what they otherwise would have had to pay. In some cases, we have been able to negotiate with landlords to stabilize ongoing tenancies with the use of CHA subsidies. The New Lease Fund, which can help address arrearages and or interim (pre-subsidy) rents that are beyond the means of a tenant, has been an important tool in helping to leverage landlord participation.

Almost a third 47 of our 146 clients have needed legal assistance. Six came with their own lawyers. The contract with CASLS has enabled 27 clients to receive representation in court. Other CASLS lawyers have helped 7 clients, while CLSSC lawyers have represented another 8 clients.

Over 85% (48) of the 56 households that have stabilized their housing situation have used New Lease Funds to help cover some of the costs. To date, we have paid movers and landlords \$34,000 (an average of slightly over \$700 per client). As prescribed by the advisory committee to the project, the Fund has been used to cover transitional rent costs, court settlements, moving costs, and arrearages in conjunction with agreements to stabilize ongoing tenancies. We will break new ground when we soon contract with an elder services provider to help a tenant clean out her apartment so that it will pass a Section 8 inspection, enabling her to remain in place at an affordable rent.

Of the 59 clients no longer in the active caseload, 44 (75%) are now stably housed in Cambridge:

- 12 were assisted in remaining in their apartments, eight with help paying arrearages, and nine with the help of a Section 8 or AHVP subsidy from the Housing Authority.
- 16 moved into public housing
- 7 used Section 8 subsidies to move to apartments in Cambridge
- 5 moved to un-subsidized apartments in Cambridge
- 3 moved to Just-a-Start apartments in Cambridge (one of whom holds a Section 8)
- 2 bought condos in Cambridge

Of the other 12 stabilized clients:

- 2 used a Section 8 certificate or MRVP voucher outside Cambridge
- 7 moved to un-subsidized apartments outside Cambridge (one near family in New Hampshire)
- 2 bought condos outside Cambridge
- 1 found live-in work as a nanny

Three clients had less permanent outcomes.

- A drug-addicted client transitioned to a drug treatment program. New Lease paid moving costs.
- Two clients who had had no income for the past 6-12 months were evicted and moved into shelters. New Lease paid to move their possessions into storage and for a few months of storage until they can get back on their feet.

Another 88 clients remain at various stages of progress in the active caseload. Some are in court; many are waiting for subsidies or subsidized apartments; and a few are in the midst of a housing search. Some of the clients looking for housing are able to look on their own, and simply need help with their transitional costs. Other clients need our help in finding a new apartment. Nearly all of those clients have expressed a strong preference for remaining in Cambridge.

Given the increasing cost of rental housing in Cambridge, our success with many of these clients has been and will continue to be dependent upon the help of the Cambridge Housing Authority, and their subsidy (AHVP and Section 8) and public (elderly and family) housing programs. Unfortunately, there are only a limited number of subsidies available, and, under normal circumstances, only occasional openings in public housing. However, the CHA has been very helpful in assigning many of our clients top priority for those limited numbers of subsidies and subsidized apartments. As promised, a disproportionate number of our clients received subsidy certificates this Summer. More are scheduled to receive Certificates by January. Later this year, a substantial number of our clients will be offered public housing in newly renovated units at Roosevelt Towers or Newtowne Court. (This unusual windfall of public housing vacancies is fortuitously (and serendipitously) timed to allow access to an otherwise very scarce and highly sought after resource, namely one and two bedroom apartments in family housing.)

In helping our clients with housing search, we have primarily relied upon listings in the paper, listings forwarded by the Metropolitan Boston Housing Board, and short listings prepared by the CHA for Section 8 subsidy holders. Over time, Program staff have developed relationships with a handful of landlords who have offered one or two affordable apartments to our clients. When clients have been pressured to find an apartment with little or no time left until their deadline (e.g., expiration of a Section 8 or AHVP, move-out deadline, etc.), we have referred them to local realtors who have previously indicated a willingness to work with our clients for below-market rates.

We are about to send out a mailing to all Cambridge landlords asking them for help in finding apartments for our clients and for other clients at the Multi-Service Center. As more clients receive subsidies and become ready for housing search, it will be critical to develop additional resources. Hopefully, our pool of subsidy-holders will be attractive to landlords and realtors looking to fill winter vacancies.

## ANALYSIS OF NEW LEASE FUND UTILIZATION

Including Fiscal Activity Forms submitted through the end of October, 44 clients have accessed New Lease Funds, as follows:

Purpose of Payments	# of Clients	Amount Spent	Average Cost	Total %
Arrearages	9	\$10,135	\$1,126	28%
Other payments to current landlords so clients could stay	5	\$2,561	\$512	7%
Moving costs -- all clients	25 <sup>1</sup>	\$11,868	\$505	33%
Moving costs -- clients who stayed in Cambridge	16	\$5,934	\$371	
Moving costs -- clients who left Cambridge	7	\$4,675	\$668	
Payments toward new housing (first month's rent, last month's rent, security deposit, etc.)	16	\$11,270	\$704	32%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>\$35,834</b>	<b>\$814</b>	

*1. A total of 44 New Lease clients have moved: 32 in housing in Cambridge, and 12 into housing outside of Cambridge. Only 23 of these clients have used the New Lease Fund to pay their moving costs. Another two clients used the New Lease Fund to cover the cost of moving their possessions into storage while they transitioned into a shelter and a treatment program, respectively.*

**Allowable Rental Rates for Section 8, AHVP, MRVP Programs**

	Section 8 FMR (Boston, Somerville, and other cities/towns)		Cambridge Rent Ceilings		AHVP and MRVP Rates				
	with utilities	w/o utilities	with utilities	w/o utilities	Cambridge	Somerville Malden	Boston Brookline	Arlington	Melrose Medford
SRO	425		510						
Studio	620	500	682	613	547	470	498	547	552
1 BR	697	555	803	729	608	518	614	620	591
2 BR	874	715	1,007	908	700	614	721	723	706
3 BR	1,092	905	1,258	1,143	830	760	902	921	894
4 BR	1,282	1,060	1,410	1,260 (?)	992	859	1,018	1,077	1,022
5 BR	1,475		1,622						
6 BR	1,667		1,834						

**How Income Eligibility for Protected Status Was Determined by the Rent Control Board**

Household Members	Elderly/Disabled		Others	
	1996	1995	1996	1995
1	29,100	28,150	23,760	22,320
2	33,300	32,150	27,120	25,500
3	37,450	36,200	30,480	28,680
4	41,600	40,200	33,900	31,860
5	44,950	43,400	36,600	34,380
6	48,250	46,650	39,300	36,960
7	51,600	49,850	42,060	39,480
8	54,900	53,050	44,760	42,060

**Note:** To obtain protected status, applicants had to:

- prove residency
- document age, if over 62
- document disability, if applicable
- submit most recent federal income tax return, if available
- submit proof of government benefits (SS,SSI,AFDC, etc.), if received
- submit pay stubs with year to date earnings, if employed
- provide documentation of medical expenses, if elderly or disabled
- provide documentation of childcare expenses, if claimed

Materials on homelessness.

S-745

In City Council November 24, 1997