



# WestMetro HOME Consortium

## HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

---

Through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded **\$5,406,962** to the WestMetro HOME Consortium for housing, services, and shelter to individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The WestMetro HOME Consortium includes Bedford, Belmont, Brookline, Concord, Framingham, Lexington, Natick, Needham, Newton, Sudbury, Waltham, Watertown, and Wayland. The City of Newton is the lead entity.

HUD requires all recipients of HOME-ARP funding to develop a HOME-ARP Allocation Plan. The Allocation Plan requires approval by HUD before the Consortium can receive and begin to commit HOME-ARP funds. To ensure that resources from this one-time funding source address the most pressing homelessness and housing instability needs, the Consortium will conduct broad community outreach to engage stakeholders, advocates, and housing and homelessness service organizations working in our communities. This consultation process, coupled with extensive data collection and analysis, will inform the needs assessment, gap analysis, and implementation program required for the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

### How can HOME-ARP funds be used?

- Preservation and Production of Affordable Rental Housing
- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)
- Housing-Related Supportive Services
- Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters (NCS)
- Non-profit operating assistance or capacity building

### What populations are HOME-ARP funds designed to help? Who are “qualifying populations” for this program?

- Homeless, as defined in section 103(a) of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- At risk of homelessness, as defined in section 401 of McKinney Vento
- Fleeing or attempting to escape domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.
- Supported through services or assistance that otherwise prevent homelessness or risk of housing instability.
- A veteran or a family, including a veteran that meets one or more of the previous criteria.

In addition to assessing the housing and homelessness assistance needs of the program’s target populations, the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan is concerned with these related issues:

- **Equity:** to ensure that individuals with fewer opportunities to access housing resources can benefit from safe, consistent programs that may meet their needs.
- **Community Connectivity:** by evaluating current institutions and housing resources, the plan aims to facilitate communication and coordination among various organizations to help people experiencing housing scarcity capitalize on new and existing programs.
- **Respect & Discretion:** to identify, understand, plan for, and address the needs of individuals with homelessness or housing scarcity without compromising their privacy, safety, and autonomy.

## PURPOSES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

---

Community engagement is at the heart of the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan process. When analyzing the needs of qualifying populations, the WestMetro HOME Consortium will consider both existing support institutions and stakeholders. Housing data and institutional resources may show a significant gap in needs; however, the personal and organizational knowledge of people in the Consortium's communities is critical for an effective planning process. Engagement and outreach opportunities will be facilitated through dialogue and participation to:

- **Evaluate** the presence of qualifying populations (listed on page 2 of this document).
- **Identify and involve** the people and organizations with interest in housing solutions.
- **Learn** from those familiar with the housing needs of individuals of those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or facing housing instability due to domestic violence.
- **Consult** with faith-based and cultural organizations that provide social services within Consortium to understand existing, successful programs, opportunities, and constraints to housing security.
- **Present recommendations** to the WestMetro HOME Consortium and document feedback from in-person and online outreach methods.
- **Convey the needs assessment results** and outreach efforts to the community, the organizations involved with housing services, and WestMetro HOME Consortium decision-makers.

## STAKEHOLDERS, ADVOCATES, ADVISORS, DECISION MAKERS

---

As used in this engagement plan, "**stakeholder**" means:

- Qualifying populations who are homeless, at risk of being homeless, or defined in the law as another vulnerable population,
- Individuals currently receiving services through the Continuum of Care (CoC), and
- People who experience or have experienced housing insecurity, homelessness, or vulnerability.

**Advocates** are existing organizations advocating for homeless and vulnerable populations, such as shelter providers, housing organizations, social service agencies, health care agencies and organizations, faith-based community leaders, and others. The initial list of identified advocates and community partners can be found beginning on page 8 of this document.

**Community Partners** are the elected and appointed officials and professional staff in the Consortium's communities.

**Decision Makers** include the WestMetro HOME Consortium and the City of Newton's Department of Planning & Community Development.

## RESOURCES, SCALE OF ENGAGEMENT, PROJECT SCHEDULE

---

Community outreach opportunities will advance equity and encourage community conversation. Considerations made to further these intentions include:

- **Equity.** The intentional inclusion of community members who have experienced housing scarcity aims to elevate the voices of those who have faced uncertainty due to various circumstances and are not always included in traditional modes of outreach.
- **Access to Information.** Documents regarding the federal standards of the HOME American Rescue Plan Act and additional interim updates will be accessible through on the WestMetro HOME Consortium’s webpage at <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/planning/housing-community-development/westmetro-home-consortium>  
OR  
<https://tinyurl.com/WestMetroHOMEConsortium>
- **Community.** The WestMetro HOME Consortium covers thirteen municipalities. Although these communities share similar affordable housing challenges, they also have quite different patterns of residential development, different market conditions, different social and economic obstacles, and different development constraints. The focus of the HOME-ARP planning process ultimately must focus on qualifying populations and the activities the Consortium can support with HOME-ARP resources.
- **Multiple & Iterative.** There will be multiple opportunities to engage agencies, organizations, and individuals throughout the process.

### Resources

The City of Newton has engaged Barrett Planning Group to assist the WestMetro HOME Consortium with developing this plan.

### Scale of Engagement

This engagement plan aims to connect existing advocacy and support networks within the Consortium to assess the current needs of people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Public consultation meetings open to residents of the Consortium will be offered twice during the planning process – once for general consultation and again for the final public hearing. Consultation with members of qualifying populations will require assistance from service providers, and we aim to conduct at least one in-person engagement opportunity geared toward those experiencing housing instability. The engagement process will also include a survey for the general public as well as service providers. Needs for language interpretation and translation will be assessed and addressed as appropriate. The project schedule below outlines our engagement plans in project phases.

## Project Schedule and Participation

### PHASE I: AUGUST 2022

- Mobilization
- Gather data
- Kick off meeting with City of Newton staff

### PHASE II: SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022

- Begin public information process through online platforms and social media.
- Reach out to advocates, community partners, and stakeholders
- Confirm dates for major information and consultation meetings
- Finalize engagement plan
- Initial consultation with WestMetro HOME Consortium: project background
- Interview organizations and agencies responding to the outreach process.
- Specific consultation meetings with advocates and service organizations

### PHASE III: OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2022

- Conduct a survey of service providers, public officials, and staff in the Consortium communities, as well as a survey for the general public
- Facilitate three virtual community meetings for the general public and at least one in-person consultation meeting
- Develop Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis
- Follow-up consultation with the WestMetro HOME Consortium, options for programming HOME-ARP funds

### PHASE IV: DECEMBER 2022-JANUARY 2023

- Develop programmatic goals
- Draft HOME-ARP Plan preparation
  - Draft recommendations and implementation program
  - Draft plan
  - Public hearing
  - Draft submission for HUD review
  - Response to HUD comments
- Revisions and final plan
- Submission of HOME-ARP Plan

## Communications

Information about the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan will be made available primarily through the City of Newton's Office of Housing & Community Development.

The consulting team will create consistent design elements for all PDF and print materials, advertisements, and engagement events. The consulting team will deliver all materials produced to WestMetro HOME Consortium for dissemination throughout Consortium communities.

## Messaging

This planning process is defined by the current needs of residents in communities represented in the WestMetro HOME Consortium. An accurate depiction of the regulations for this special one-time program and how HOME ARP may benefit Consortium residents is vital to this project. Outreach opportunities facilitated by the consulting team aim to orient the plan toward an equitable allocation of funds to meet the needs of qualifying populations.

The needs of the homeless, those at risk of homelessness, and vulnerable populations are unique. The consulting team aims to prepare materials to depict personal realities and the need for additional resources. An informational campaign depicting individuals included in the qualifying populations and beneficial programs may alter misconceptions of this planning process and begin community discourse.

## ORGANIZATIONS, ADVOCATES, COMMUNITY PARTNERS

---

The Consortium will aim to consult with the following organizations, advocates, and community partners during the development of this plan. This list is subject to change.

### **Housing /Homelessness Services and Advocacy**

Balance of State Continuum of Care  
Bristol Lodge Men’s & Women’s Shelters  
CAN-DO  
Community Day Center of Waltham  
Engine 6  
Family Promise Metrowest  
Friends of 2Life Communities  
Metro Housing Boston  
Metro West Collaborative Development  
Newton Community Development Foundation  
Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO)  
Self Help, Inc.  
South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)  
Watch CDC

### **Housing Authorities**

Bedford Housing Authority  
Belmont Housing Authority  
Brookline Housing Authority  
Concord Housing Authority  
Framingham Housing Authority  
Lexington Housing Authority  
Natick Housing Authority  
Needham Housing Authority  
Newton Housing Authority  
Sudbury Housing Authority  
Waltham Housing Authority  
Watertown Housing Authority  
Wayland Housing Authority

### **Healthcare**

Brookline Community Mental Health Center  
CHNA 7 (Community Health Coalition of Metrowest)  
CHNA 15 (NorthWest Suburban Health Alliance)  
CHNA 17 (Greater Cambridge/Somerville Community Health Network)  
CHNA 18 (West Suburban Health Network)  
Eliot Community Health Services  
Springwell

### **Disability Services & Advocacy**

Advocates  
MetroWest Center for Independent Living  
Opportunities for Inclusion  
Perkins School for the Blind  
The Price Center  
Work, Community, Independence, Inc.

### **Domestic Violence & Trafficking**

Domestic Violence Services Network  
Family Promise Metrowest  
REACH Beyond Domestic Violence  
RIA, Inc.  
The Second Step  
Voice Against Violence / SMOC



**Human Services/Multi-Services**

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)

Community Action Program Intercity, Inc. (CAPIC)

Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI)

Middlesex Human Services Agency

Natick Service Council, Inc.

Riverside Community Care

Salvation Army

Self Help, Inc. (SHI)

Wayside Youth & Family Support Network

West Suburban YMCA

**Faith Based Organizations**

Newton Interfaith Clergy Association

**Food Assistance**

Framingham/Waltham WIC Program

Lexington Food Pantry

**Education & Employment**

MassHire Framingham Career Center

Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical

South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical

(See also: *Community Partners*)

**Immigration, Cultural Organizations**

ELPAC- English Learning Parents Advisory Council at Newton North High School and Newton South High School

**Legal & Mediation Services**

Greater Boston Legal Services

Housing Families

Metropolitan Mediation Services

MetroWest Legal Services

MetroWest Mediation Services

Middlesex Community College Law Center

Volunteer Lawyers Project

**Veterans' Services**

Amvets Post #79 (Natick)

VFW Post #1274 (Natick)

West Suburban Veterans District  
(See also: *Community Partners*)

**Community Partners**

**TOWN OF BEDFORD**

ADA Coordinator

Bedford Public Schools

Code Enforcement

Council on Aging

Health Department

Health & Human Services

Planning Department

Police Department

Veterans' Services

Youth & Family Services

**TOWN OF BELMONT**

ADA Coordinator

Belmont Public Schools

Office of Community Development

Council on Aging

Health Department

Police Department

Veterans' Services

Youth & Family Services

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN | WESTMETRO HOME CONSORTIUM  
HOME-ARP ALLOCATION PLAN

**TOWN OF BROOKLINE**

ADA Coordinator  
Brookline Public Schools  
Building Department  
Council on Aging  
Planning & Community Development  
Police Department  
Veterans Services

**TOWN OF CONCORD**

ADA Coordinator  
Building & Inspections  
Concord Public Schools  
Health Department  
Human Services  
Planning Division  
Police Department  
Veterans' Services

**CITY OF FRAMINGHAM**

ADA Coordinator  
Council on Aging  
Disability Committee  
Fair Housing Committee  
Framingham Public Schools  
Public Health  
Inspectional Services  
Planning & Community Development  
Police Department  
Veterans' Services

**TOWN OF LEXINGTON**

ADA Coordinator  
Building Office  
Human Services Department  
Lexington Public Schools  
Planning Department  
Police Department  
Public Health  
Senior Services  
Veterans' Services

**TOWN OF NATICK**

ADA Coordinator  
Building Department  
Council on Aging  
Health & Human Services  
Natick Public Schools  
Community & Economic Development  
Police Department  
Veterans Services

**TOWN OF NEEDHAM**

ADA Coordinator  
Building Department  
Council on Aging  
Health & Human Services  
Needham Public Schools  
Planning & Community Development  
Police Department  
Veterans Services

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN | WESTMETRO HOME CONSORTIUM  
HOME-ARP ALLOCATION PLAN

**CITY OF NEWTON**

ADA Coordinator  
Council on Aging  
Health & Human Services  
Inspectional Services  
Newton Public Schools  
Horace Cousens Industrial Fund  
Planning & Community Development  
Police Department  
Veterans Services

**TOWN OF SUDBURY**

ADA Coordinator  
Building Department  
Council on Aging  
Health Department  
Sudbury Public Schools  
Planning & Community Development  
Police Department  
Veterans Services

**CITY OF WALTHAM**

ADA Coordinator  
Council on Aging  
Health Department  
Inspectional Services  
Planning & Community Development  
Police Department  
Veterans Services  
Waltham Public Schools

**CITY OF WATERTOWN**

ADA Coordinator  
Building & Inspectional Services  
Council on Aging  
Disability Commission  
Health Department  
Inspectional Services  
Planning & Zoning Department  
Police Department  
Veterans' Services  
Watertown Public Schools

**TOWN OF WAYLAND**

ADA Coordinator  
Building Department  
Council on Aging  
Health Department  
Planning Department  
Police Department  
Town Manager  
Veterans' Services  
Wayland Public Schools  
Youth Services

**State Agencies**

Department of Children & Families  
Department of Development Services  
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education  
Department of Housing & Community Development  
Department of Mental Health  
Department of Public Health – F.O.R. Families  
Department of Transitional Assistance  
Department of Veterans Affairs