

## **Former Bay State Correctional Center in Norfolk to be utilized for temporary Safety Net site**

### *Background & Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **Background**

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is planning to open another state-contracted Safety Net site for families on the Emergency Assistance waitlist. The temporary site is scheduled to open no earlier than mid-June at the former Bay State Correctional Center (BSCC), which is a decommissioned pre-release correctional facility that ceased housing operations in 2015 and where facilities remain in good condition. The site will be able to house families in two settings: non-congregate private rooms in dormitory buildings and a congregate-style arrangement in the gymnasium as needed. Capacity could serve up to 450 individual members of families (approximately 140 families) on the EA waitlist, including those who end up staying at Logan Airport.

#### **FAQs**

##### **Why are you using this facility?**

The Massachusetts prison population has decreased by nearly half in less than a decade and, thanks to criminal justice reforms, the state maintains the lowest incarceration rates in 35 years. The Healey-Driscoll Administration recently announced the pending closure of MCI Concord, and as former correctional facilities are decommissioned, those facilities and the land they occupy will be repurposed for alternative uses. Bay State Correctional Center, a former minimum-security dorm-like facility, was decommissioned in 2015 and has not been occupied for nearly a decade. However, the site is upkept and is in good condition.

The site will be repurposed and adapted to provide temporary, emergency safety net site to families experiencing homelessness. As an existing state-owned property, the site can be quickly repositioned to provide dignified shelter at fiscally responsible cost to meet the urgent needs of unhoused families.

##### **What will the site accommodations be?**

The campus has two dormitory-style buildings and a third building that can host various daytime activities. The main dorm building has 144 rooms with amenities that include: shared bathrooms and showers, a cafeteria, a gymnasium, a large common room, and office space, which will be utilized for case management and shelter administrative activities.

The second dorm building has 44 rooms, shared bathrooms and showers, and a large common room. The campus also has greenspace which can be utilized for recreational activities. A retrofitting of the site will include play areas with developmentally appropriate activities for children and classroom spaces where adults will participate in ESOL classes, job training courses and housing search workshops.

Families will also be provided with bunk beds and pack 'n plays in dormitory rooms, and as needed, cots and sleep kits that can be arranged in a congregate setting.

##### **What services will families be provided on the site?**

- Three culturally-appropriate meals a day as well as baby food as needed

- Intensive case management and on-site supports focused on housing stability, work authorization preparation and transition from the Emergency Assistance system.
- Assistance with school enrollment for children, as needed.
- On-site clinical supports by nurses from the Department of Public Health
- Diapers, wipes other personal hygiene items

**How many families will be staying at the site?**

Approximately 140 families, who are deemed eligible for Emergency assistance and on the waitlist, will be placed at the overflow site

**Will families be able to leave the site and freely move throughout the site?**

Yes, families will be able to leave and return to the campus as needed prior to nightly curfew, aligned with policies in place at shelters across the state. Razor wire will be removed from fencing prior to launch; the fence will remain to ensure safety on the site, but families will have freedom to leave and return to the site. The site will also have 24/7 security to further ensure safety of residents.

**What steps will be taken to convert the facility into a Safety Net site suitable for families?**

The facilities on site are in good condition. Minor repairs to plumbing and other facility improvements will be made to ensure safety and wellbeing for families residing at the site. The site will provide child-appropriate equipment, including cribs, highchairs, play spaces, and other developmentally appropriate activities for children.

**Who will run the site?**

The Executive Office of Health and Human services will have a competitive bidding process for qualified shelter providers. The shelter provider will operate the site 24/7 and will contract with local vendors for certain services, like catering, cleaning, laundry, and security.

**How long will this site operate as a Safety Net site?**

Safety Net operations at the site are expected to continue for 6-12 months.

**Below are images of what the rooms at the facility will look like\* and current exterior/interior:**



*\*Images of similar accommodations set up at Eastern Nazarene College*



*\*Images of former Bay State Correctional Center exterior; cafeteria*