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**WESTERN MASS. WINS FUNDS
TO SUPPORT JOBS FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES**

Holyoke, MA - With a \$300,000 grant from the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation, Western Massachusetts has launched a statewide pilot project to create a successful employment model for homeless families, Pamela Schwartz, director of the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness (the Network), announced today at a press conference at Holyoke Community College with dozens of regional leaders in attendance.

“We are thrilled to participate in this exciting opportunity to demonstrate how homeless families can become housing stable with stable employment” Schwartz said. “We have a model that is already on its way to proving successful.”

Corporation for Public Management (CPM), the lead employment and training agency for the project, called Secure Jobs Connect (SJC), joins with job developers CareerPoint and ServiceNet, and regional housing authorities, regional employment boards, community colleges, businesses and child care providers across Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties. SJC will work with 76 families over one year who will obtain employment through an approach that integrates training, community service, work experience, child care and transportation needs.

“Our collaborative model is key to our success,” said Heriberto Flores, CPM President. “Every sector of our community is committed to this project, and we are especially grateful to our local businesses for meeting their employment needs while partnering in the mission to end homelessness.”

Business partners in attendance at the announcement included Baystate Medical Center, Holyoke Credit Union and Savers, Inc. Elected officials also came out in support of the project, including the office of Congressman Richard Neil, State Senator Michael Knapik, Representative Cheryl Coakley-Rivera, Representative Peter Kocot, Representative Aaron Vega, Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse, Chicopee Mayor Michael Bissonnette and Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz. Additionally, State Senate Majority Leader Stan Rosenberg and Senator Ben Downing are members of the project’s 35 person Advisory Committee.

MA Department of Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Aaron Gornstein spoke at the event, acknowledging the critical role of public-private partnership in addressing the challenge of family homelessness. “The Patrick-Murray Administration is pleased to join forces with the Fireman Foundation’s extraordinary commitment, and together to make it possible for more families to raise their children in a place they can call home,” Gornstein said.