



July 27, 2021

The Hon. Daniel J. Hunt, Chair
House Committee on Federal Stimulus and Census Oversight

The Hon. Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means

The Hon. Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Testimony regarding use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds

Dear Chairman Hunt, Chairman Michlewitz, Chairman Rodrigues, and distinguished members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of One Family, Inc. regarding use of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds.

One Family, Inc. – organizational overview

[One Family](#) is a Massachusetts nonprofit that prevents family homelessness by helping low-income parents achieve higher education and career success. Our approach to homelessness prevention combines direct-service programs, training and technical assistance, and public policy advocacy.

Through our longest-running direct-service initiative, the [One Family Scholars](#) program, each year we help up to 100 low-income single parents pursue college degrees, so they can build family-sustaining careers, and put a roof over their families' heads. We do this through individualized coaching, scholarships, and incentive-based stipends.

And over the past four years, through the [Credential to Career Coaching](#) program, we've also helped over 130 more low-income parents identify family-sustaining careers that match their skills and interests and will support housing stability, and then create individualized plans to enter those careers, including a roadmap to earning any necessary degrees, certificates or other credentials.

One Family's ARPA request

One Family respectfully requests that \$582,407 from the Federal COVID-19 Response Fund be designated for a two-year pilot program in collaboration with Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital, with the goal of mitigating the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pilot program participants in the Brockton region.

Requested legislative language: **"Not less than \$582,407 shall be provided to One Family, Inc. for a pilot project to assist residents in the Brockton area in recovering from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the development of individualized educational and vocational plans and the utilization of career coaching."**

Under the pilot, we would bring our Credential to Career Coaching program to unemployed individuals and low-wage workers in the Brockton region, serving 120 pilot participants. The economic impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected low-income families and majority-communities-of-color such as Brockton, and the pilot program will help parents who have experienced these profound hardships to achieve or regain financial stability.

For additional information regarding this pilot project, please see the attachment.

Additional ARPA priorities – homelessness prevention and affordable homes

One Family respectfully requests that the Committees consider the following additional priorities in allocating funding from the Federal COVID-19 Response Fund:

- \$500M to dramatically expand homeownership opportunities for families who have historically been – and continue to be – excluded from the housing market in Massachusetts, including People of Color.
 - \$200M for the Commonwealth Builder program
 - \$300M for expanded first-time homebuyer opportunities
- \$450M to dramatically expand the availability and capacity of public housing, and to preserve and upgrade existing public housing.
- \$300M for affordable housing production and preservation.
 - \$200M for affordable rental housing production
 - \$100M for affordable housing rehabilitation projects
- \$78M to establish and implement a right to counsel for families and individuals going through the eviction process, and \$5M for tenant outreach and housing assistance.
- Close gaps in access to homelessness prevention resources, currently funded under the state’s Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program and the federally funded Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program.
- Invest in longer-term housing supports for children and families timing out of the HomeBASE program.
- \$300M to acquire and convert motels and other facilities into permanent supportive housing, to shift emphasis from providing shelter to ending homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this request and additional recommendations for allocation of ARPA funds, and for your leadership on supporting recovery for the families who have been most harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic impact.

Sincerely,



Valerie Paric
Executive Director



Attachment: Overview of One Family-Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital pilot project

One Family, Inc.

Founded in 2000, One Family works to prevent homelessness and break the cycle of family poverty in Massachusetts. Our philosophy is that long-term housing stability is built on a foundation of education and career success. To that end, we offer two direct-service programs – One Family Scholars and Credential to Career Coaching – both of which help parents with low incomes identify and pursue education and career goals, and increase their income to achieve economic independence and housing stability.

Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital

Founded as Brockton Hospital in 1896, Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital is a community-based non-profit teaching hospital, providing a full range of clinical services. The Hospital is the oldest and largest inpatient facility in its service area, which is designated as the city of Brockton and twenty-one surrounding municipalities.

Credential to Career Coaching (C2C)

C2C is an intensive three-month program designed to help parents experiencing or at risk of homelessness access education and career opportunities, leading to long-term financial independence and housing stability. Through a combination of group workshops and one-on-one coaching sessions, the C2C program helps parents match their skills and interests to career paths that will fully support their families. For some parents, this involves credential attainment. For others, it involves strategic career planning, job search assistance, resume reviews, and more. But no matter what a parent's individual goals and needs are, C2C provides the individualized, client-centered support needed for success. Each parent leaves C2C with a step-by-step plan to achieve their education and career goals, and receives a year of follow-up coaching to help them stay on track.

C2C is designed to empower some of the most underserved and vulnerable members of our communities, whose barriers to economic advancement are myriad and systemic. While there are many programs aimed at helping families achieve stability (through housing stabilization services, job training workshops, college access programs, etc.), these supports too often exist in silos – education, career, or housing, but not all three. C2C bridges these silos, providing highly individualized support to help parents earn educational credentials, enter stable career paths, and afford housing.

Population to be served

A disproportionate number of employees at Signature who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) work in low-wage entry-level roles classified as “service workers.” Hospital service workers have felt the direct effects of the pandemic as it spread in the community. As essential workers, they continue to be exposed to the virus every day.¹ This underscores the need to create intentional pathways for advancement for these employees. In Signature's most recent Equal Employment Opportunity Employer Information Report, of Signature's 2,648 employees, 74% were white and 26% were people of color (15.5% African American, 4% Latino, and 6.5% other races/ethnicities). While people of color make up

¹ Mental Health America: <https://mhanational.org/mental-health-healthcare-workers-covid-19>

26% of Signature’s workforce overall, 52% of employees in “service worker” roles identify as BIPOC. From a racial equity standpoint, this disproportionality highlights the urgent need to create opportunities for low-wage earners in these positions to find pathways for educational and economic advancement.

The city of Brockton is a “majority-minority” community, with roughly 60% of the population identifying as BIPOC. Brockton’s median household income trails the state average by \$21,774, and roughly 17% of residents live below the poverty line. Given that some of the most devastating economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been – and continue to be – felt in low-income communities, communities of color, and among families who were already living paycheck to paycheck, investing in communities like Brockton now will make a real difference, helping workers and families in our Commonwealth get back on their feet. By empowering residents of this region to access education and training to enter stable career paths in healthcare, One Family and Signature will help advance economic recovery and opportunity for the entire community.

Pilot project summary

One Family and Signature are both committed to building stronger, healthier communities. We view the pilot project as both a racial and economic justice initiative.

There are two primary components of One Family’s pilot program with Signature, which will serve 120 pilot participants:

1. **One Family will deliver C2C onsite at the hospital to support current entry-level and low-wage employees of Signature**, helping them explore family-sustaining career paths within the hospital network, and better understand the education and training prerequisites for advancement. Employees in these roles include transporters, food service workers, and environmental health workers.
2. **One Family will also offer C2C at community-based sites to aid unemployed and under-employed parents in the Brockton region** with family incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level who are not employed by Signature, by helping connect them to career opportunities at Signature and with other regional employers.

Through participation in the C2C program, each of the 120 pilot participants will create a personalized plan to achieve their education and career goals, and move towards economic self-sufficiency and long-term housing stability. The pilot project will also help ensure that job candidates who are often excluded or overlooked in recruitment – including candidates of color and parents with low incomes – have more equitable access to well-paid positions in the hospital network and at employers throughout the Brockton region.