



# **Housing Security Community-Based Health Initiative**

## **Summative Report: WATCH CDC Data**

Prepared for Newton-Wellesley Hospital by  
The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute

**December 2025**

UMass**Amherst** | Donahue Institute

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## Housing Security CHI Evaluation Team

Jill Capitani, Research Manager  
Sophia Baxendale, Research Analyst  
Christina Citino, Senior Research Manager

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Established in 1971, the UMass Donahue Institute is a public service, research, and economic development arm of the University of Massachusetts. Our mission is to foster healthy communities and support economies that alleviate poverty and promote opportunity. In collaboration with partner organizations and clients, we carry out our mission through research, education and training, capacity building, and direct services to strengthen our collective impact.

The Applied Research and Program Evaluation team partners with organizations across multiple sectors to develop and implement utilization focused studies that address public health, human services, and educational programs and initiatives. Our philosophy reflects a rigorous but practical orientation, reflecting our belief that research is most meaningful when findings can be applied to public benefit.

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# Housing Security Community Health Initiative

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## Grant Background

In October 2021, Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH) awarded a four-year, \$1.9 million grant to implement upstream and downstream strategies aimed at reducing housing insecurity and addressing inequities affecting low-income tenants—particularly communities of color and immigrant populations—within NWH’s six priority communities: Natick, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Wellesley, and Weston.

This investment was made possible through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s (DPH) approval of a Determination of Need (DoN) Community Health Initiative (CHI) process involving healthcare facilities in the City of Waltham. The DoN process seeks to promote population health and enhance public health value by requiring hospitals and health systems to invest in community-level interventions focused on social determinants of health (SDoH) and aligned with priorities identified by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). SDoH are the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, worship, and age. These conditions include a wide set of forces and systems that shape daily life such as economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, and political systems.<sup>1</sup> DPH recognizes six SDoH, including built environment, social environment, housing, violence, education, and employment.

By prioritizing these determinants and aligning with EOHHS priorities, CHI resources are directed toward strategies that address conditions hindering health opportunities and foster environments that improve health outcomes. This funding provided NWH with a significant opportunity to invest directly in programs that improve the health and well-being of those living in the communities they serve. Under CHI regulations, hospitals must conduct a comprehensive review of community needs with a robust community engagement process to identify health priorities and strategies. In collaboration with an Advisory Committee composed of community representatives and local organizations, NWH identified housing insecurity—and its impact on mental health—as the health priority to address.

Housing insecurity encompasses a range of circumstances, such as spending more than 30% of household income on housing costs (or over 50% in severe cases), living in overcrowded or substandard housing, sharing housing with multiple families to reduce expenses, moving frequently due to financial or safety concerns, or experiencing homelessness. Although housing insecurity is not typically associated with the relatively affluent Metro West communities served by NWH, the high—and continually rising—cost of housing, combined with a shortage of affordable housing options, creates significant burdens for many residents.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the region’s overall higher income levels often mask deep economic inequities disproportionately affecting low-wage service workers and immigrant newcomer families. Moreover, median household income varies considerably across these communities by race, with Black or African American and Latinx households earning substantially less than white or Asian households.<sup>3</sup>

1 Centers for Disease Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/about/priorities/why-is-addressing-sdoh-important.html>

2 UMass Donahue Institute. Socioeconomic Indicators for Massachusetts. March 2023. [https://donahue.umass.edu/documents/Treasury\\_SocioEconomic\\_Report\\_March\\_2023.pdf](https://donahue.umass.edu/documents/Treasury_SocioEconomic_Report_March_2023.pdf)

3 Impact MetroWest. <https://www.impactmw.org>

# Housing Security Community Health Initiative

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## Evolving Context of the Housing Crisis in Massachusetts

In her January 2024 State of the Commonwealth address, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey identified the lack of affordable housing as the “biggest challenge” facing the Commonwealth, noting that the crisis was “decades in the making.” Her emphasis underscored the critical role of safe, stable, and affordable housing as a social determinant of health.

Over the course of this grant, high housing costs and a shortage of affordable units—combined with an influx of newcomer families and the expiration of pandemic-era protections such as eviction moratoriums—drove dramatic increases in housing insecurity and homelessness. In November 2023, WBUR reported unprecedented demand for shelter statewide, with the family shelter population more than doubling in a single year.<sup>4</sup> Point-in-time counts of homelessness in Greater Boston reflected similar trends, showing a 67% increase in homelessness from January 2023 to January 2024, with families comprising nearly two-thirds of the homeless population.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, federal and state housing supports declined and restrictions tightened. In late 2023, the Commonwealth scaled back its Right to Shelter law, capping capacity at 7,500 families and imposing time limits on stays.<sup>6</sup> The closure of the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and reinstatement of the “Notice to Quit” requirement for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) coincided with eviction filings surpassing pre-pandemic averages—rising from 2,600 to over 3,000 per month in early 2025.<sup>7</sup>

During the final year of this grant in 2025, escalating costs for housing, utilities, food, and other necessities deepened the risk of housing insecurity for low- and middle-income families. These financial pressures were compounded by federal funding reductions, shifts in housing policy that limited access to housing programs, and heightened immigration enforcement measures that disrupted household stability. Together, these factors placed an extraordinary strain on community providers, forcing them to stretch limited resources and adapt services to meet growing demand with fewer financial supports.

As a result, NWH Housing Security CHI-funded partners described unprecedented demand and increasingly complex cases amid shrinking resources for households and nonprofits. Both organizations reported making intentional efforts to educate residents about available services, adapt programs to increase accessibility, and support staff and volunteers facing heavy workloads and vicarious trauma.

Multi-year funding through NWH Housing Security CHI proved critical during this challenging period, directly benefiting hundreds of households and strengthening organizational capacity and community resilience.

4. WBUR. Mass family shelter system reaches cap. Waitlist for homeless families to begin Friday. November 9, 2023. <https://www.wbur.org/news/2023/11/09/family-shelter-capacity-waitlist>

5. Boston Indicators. Homelessness in Greater Boston: An Update. January 29, 2025. [bostonindicators.org. https://www.bostonindicators.org/article-pages/2025/january/homelessness-point-in-time-update](https://www.bostonindicators.org/article-pages/2025/january/homelessness-point-in-time-update)

6. Ibid.

7. Massachusetts Housing Partnership. Housing Stability Monitor: Massachusetts Evictions & Foreclosures. August 26, 2025. <https://www.mhp.net/news/2025/housing-stability-monitor>

# Housing Security Community Health Initiative

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## CHI Program Partners

WATCH Community Development Corporation (WATCH CDC) served as the lead agency for the Housing Security CHI, responsible for overall grant management, program coordination, and contracting for services. They provided housing-focused case management services and emergency financial assistance to low-income residents of Waltham and led implementation of innovative approaches to better support clients' mental health needs, economic independence, and community engagement.



WATCH CDC is a private, nonprofit community development corporation working toward a more just community in the Waltham area by promoting affordable housing, providing adult education and leadership development, and empowering underrepresented residents through civic engagement.

As a key partner on the Housing Security CHI, Metro West Collaborative Development (Metro West CD) was responsible for providing housing-focused case management services, including emergency financial assistance and housing search, to residents in the remaining five priority communities: Natick, Needham, Newton, Wellesley, and Weston.



Metro West CD is a private, nonprofit community development corporation, with a mission to collaborate with MetroWest communities to expand housing opportunities by building and preserving affordable housing; helping families find and keep their homes; counseling community leaders to achieve their housing goals; and advocating for supportive policy and investment.

## CHI Evaluation

The UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI) provided evaluation support and progress monitoring throughout the initiative. This report summarizes the housing security services implemented, programs developed, households engaged, and the outcomes documented at the individual, organizational, and community levels at the conclusion of the grant.

Each year, WATCH CDC and Metro West CD submitted aggregate data on client demographics, identified needs, services delivered, actions taken, and related outcomes. This data was collected and compiled through their Salesforce client case management system, which was funded by the grant. In addition to data reporting, both organizations participated in partner meetings and submitted narrative progress reports on a biannual basis. For this final report, UMDI aggregated data across the full four-year grant period, calculating cumulative totals of annual counts—including repeat households—to illustrate the overall volume of services provided over time.

# Housing Security Community Health Initiative

## Housing Security CHI Program Model

WATCH CDC and Metro West CD used a multi-faceted approach to address housing insecurity and reduce housing inequities. Key strategies included:

### Housing Stabilization



Addressing immediate housing insecurity with housing-focused case management and emergency financial assistance.

### Mental Health Supports



Reducing the impact of housing insecurity and its root causes on mental health through increasing access to mental health services.

### Economic Independence



Increasing economic independence using an evidence-based job support and financial management self-sufficiency approach.

### Community Engagement



Supporting community advocacy efforts for affordable housing and the protection of low-income tenants facing eviction.

Inherent in and underlying all activities and interactions is the principle of **client empowerment**. Case management work is a partnership between the clients and their case managers, empowering the client to move forward with support and resources. As such, both agencies prioritized communication and education, strengthening their clients' knowledge of tenant rights and the range of resources available, with a goal towards increasing their capacity to self-advocate.

*WATCH CDC's work helps clients to address their critical needs, while empowering them to make the steps needed to address co-occurring needs.*

# Impacts of the Housing Security Initiative

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NWH's four-year investment through the Housing Security CHI has generated far-reaching impacts—not only for the households and families facing housing insecurity, but also for the organizations and staff funded to deliver these services, and for the broader community as a whole.

## Individual-Level Impacts

The Housing Security CHI helped support the provision of case management and financial assistance to hundreds of households and families residing in NWH's six priority communities—Natick, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Wellesley, and Weston.

- **Increased Access to Critical Services:** Over the lifetime of the grant, WATCH CDC and Metro West CD provided a range of housing assistance, basic needs, mental health, and/or job and financial management support services to 1,735 unique households, 946 of whom received services for multiple years.

*“Having this support has helped us reach a greater number of Waltham households and support them with more in depth follow up than we had prior to the grant.” —WATCH CDC*

- **Improved Housing Security and Well-Being:** WATCH CDC and Metro West CD documented many client-level outcomes, including emergency financial and basic needs support, improvements in housing security and living situations, enhanced client empowerment, and reduced anxiety related to managing housing challenges. Additional documented impacts include securing employment, lowering expenses, and eliminating debt.

*“The impact for many of the families we have worked with is generational...Being supported while needing housing or basic needs and being empowered to advocate for oneself, are experiences that will have a lasting impact on the families we have served.” —WATCH CDC*

## Institutional Level Impacts

The four-year grant strengthened the organizational capacity of both WATCH CDC and Metro West CD, enabling them to more effectively address housing insecurity and systemic inequities impacting community residents.

- **Secured and Expanded Staffing:** The CHI allowed both organizations to stabilize existing staffing and add culturally and linguistically appropriate staff to better serve their diverse communities. More specifically, WATCH CDC used grant funds to support three full-time bilingual, bicultural staff positions, including the Job and Financial Management Clinic Coordinator, an additional full-time Housing Clinic Case Manager, and a Community Organizer. The grant also funded critical consultant services, including a bilingual licensed mental health consultant, a data management consultant, and marketing and translation services. Metro West CD used the grant to partially fund two Case Managers, one of whom was bilingual, as well as the Director of Housing Programs.

# Impacts of the Housing Security Initiative

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- **Strengthened Staff Capacity:** In alignment with the CHI's emphasis on mental health, WATCH CDC used grant funding to contract consulting services from a bilingual licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) through Children's Charter. This clinician worked closely with both organizations and conducted an annual staff training titled *Insecurity & Anxiety: How to Best Respond to Clients in Distress*. The training equipped staff to recognize signs of stress, anxiety, and other mental health needs among clients, respond appropriately, and connect clients to mental health resources and services.
- **Expanded Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Resources:** WATCH CDC allocated funds to translate its website and housing assistance materials into multiple languages, including Haitian Creole, to meet the needs of a growing Haitian immigrant population. Additionally, the mental health consultant developed and annually updated a **mental health resource guide** detailing local mental health providers by service type—community-based programs, outpatient therapy, referral services, mobile crisis intervention, and online resources. The guide includes critical information such as MassHealth acceptance, intake processes, availability, languages spoken, and specific services offered. It is accessible on WATCH CDC's website, and supplemental handouts were created for direct distribution to clients during in-person interactions.
- **Implemented a New Housing Clinic Client Case Management Platform:** To streamline data collection and reporting, WATCH CDC contracted with a Salesforce consultant to design and implement a tailored case management system. This platform captures client demographics, identified needs, and services or referrals provided and client outcomes, enabling case managers to track household assistance and service types efficiently. The system went live in February 2022 and continues to evolve with ongoing usability improvements. Both organizations use this tool daily to coordinate services and monitor outcomes, strengthening accountability and program effectiveness.

*"These improvements have helped us build a strong foundation of impact and data that we can then use to sustain the housing clinic work going forward."* —WATCH CDC

- **Expanded Services and Improved Service Delivery:** The grant enabled WATCH CDC and Metro West CD to broaden their support offerings, integrating mental health, job search, and financial planning needs into their intake process to provide more holistic assistance.

**Expanded Case Management Support Services:** Metro West CD, expanded their housing assistance services, providing more extensive case management support to their clients.

**Job Search and Financial Management and Planning:** In March 2022, WATCH CDC launched the Job and Financial Management Clinic. Led by a bilingual Job and Financial Planning Coordinator, the clinic offered one-on-one counseling and group workshops to help clients with job searches and financial planning, fostering greater financial self-sufficiency. In addition, WATCH CDC introduced a Computer Literacy course to address technology gaps among community members.

**Mental Health Support:** Beginning in December 2022, both organizations added an intake option for clients seeking help with "stress, anxiety, or depression related to housing or financial difficulties." Case managers followed up with clients seeking this help with two screening questions to assess mental health needs. Based on responses, staff provided tailored resources such as mental health provider information, coping strategy handouts, and referrals to community workshops or clinicians.

# Impacts of the Housing Security Initiative

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- **Increased Connections and Strengthened Partnerships:** WATCH CDC reported forming multiple new partnerships to expand service offerings and improve delivery. Examples include collaborating with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to expedite food stamp inquiries, partnering with Waltham Fields Community Farms and St. Peter's Church to address food insecurity, and working with Tech Goes Home, Cambridge Savings Bank and Brandeis University to support computer literacy, job search, and financial planning activities and workshops. Both organizations also emphasized the continued importance of long-standing community partnerships in sustaining comprehensive support for clients.

## Community-Level Impacts

Finally, the four-year grant supported community awareness and advocacy efforts for affordable housing and the protection of low-income tenants facing eviction.

- **Raised Community Awareness of Direct Services:** Both WATCH CDC and Metro West CD actively and widely promoted their programs, increasing public awareness of their organizations and services available to residents. Moreover, WATCH CDC noted intentional outreach to Haitian and Spanish speaking communities to increase public awareness about services and housing resources through tabling at community and partner organization events, canvassing, and partnering with local churches.
- **Advocated for Policy Change:** Both organizations built upon their existing community organizing and advocacy efforts to expand affordable housing and strengthen tenant protections. Metro West CD's advocacy efforts focused primarily on creating additional affordable housing units. Over the course of the grant, Metro West CD proposed purchasing and/or developing 117 affordable units within the Newton-Wellesley Hospital service area. To date, 75 of these units have successfully advanced. WATCH CDC prioritized client empowerment, encouraging current and former clients to join their Tenant Action Group (TAG), where they can learn about their rights as tenants, understand how housing policy is made, amplify tenant voices, and advocate for municipal housing policies that impact their lives.

The remainder of this report provides data and findings specific to WATCH CDC's efforts as a part of the NWH Housing Security CHI.

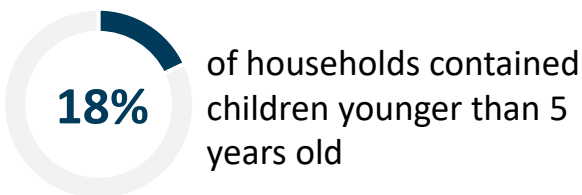
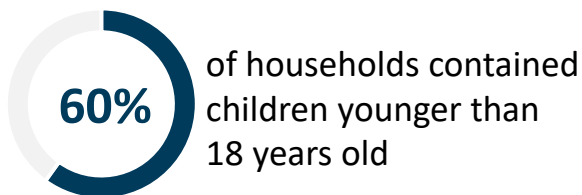
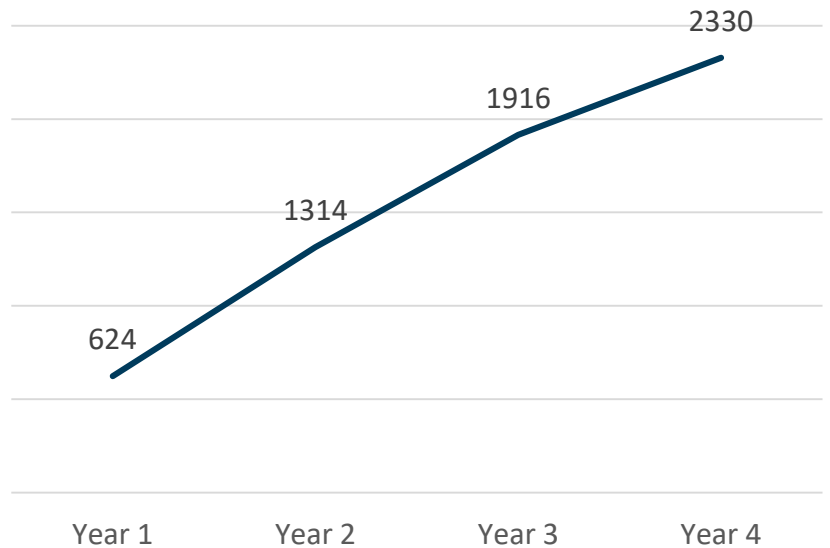
# Program Volume, Reach, and Population Served

Through the Housing Security CHI, WATCH CDC strengthened and expanded existing housing-focused case management services, successfully reaching the CHI’s intended target communities and populations, with the majority representing households of color and immigrant communities. **Over the lifetime of the grant, WATCH CDC provided support services to nearly 2,400 low-income households** (duplicated counts). All households served over the lifetime of the grant were Waltham residents.

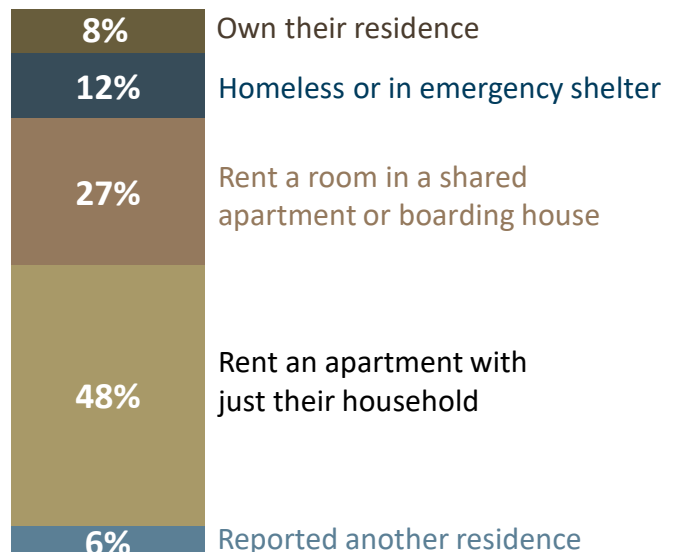


**2,330** households, representing 1,490 unique households, were served. Household sizes ranged from **1 to 12** people.

## Cumulative Households Reached

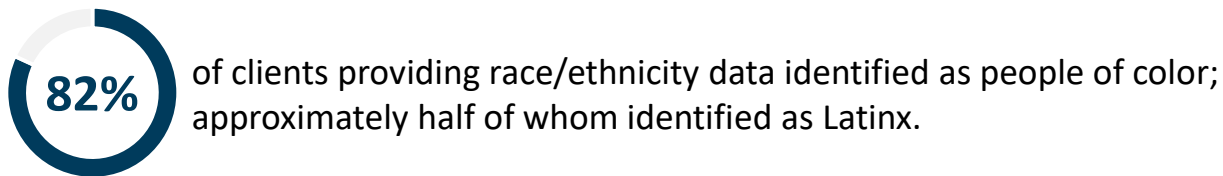


Of the households reporting their living situation:

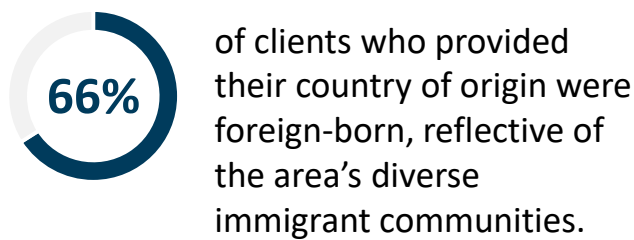


# Program Volume, Reach, and Population Served

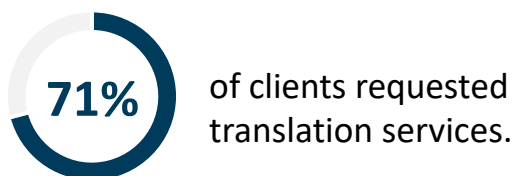
WATCH CDC reached diverse populations, increasing access to **culturally and linguistically appropriate supports and resources**.



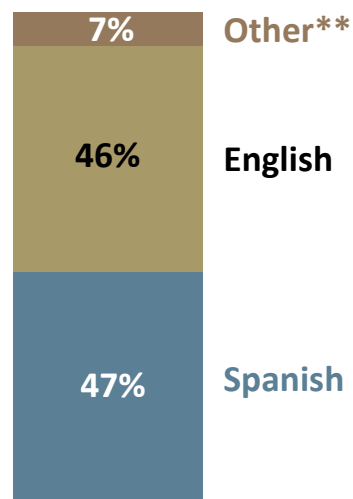
\*Asian, Two or more races, Other race



Clients identified 67 countries of origin.



## Preferred Language Indicated

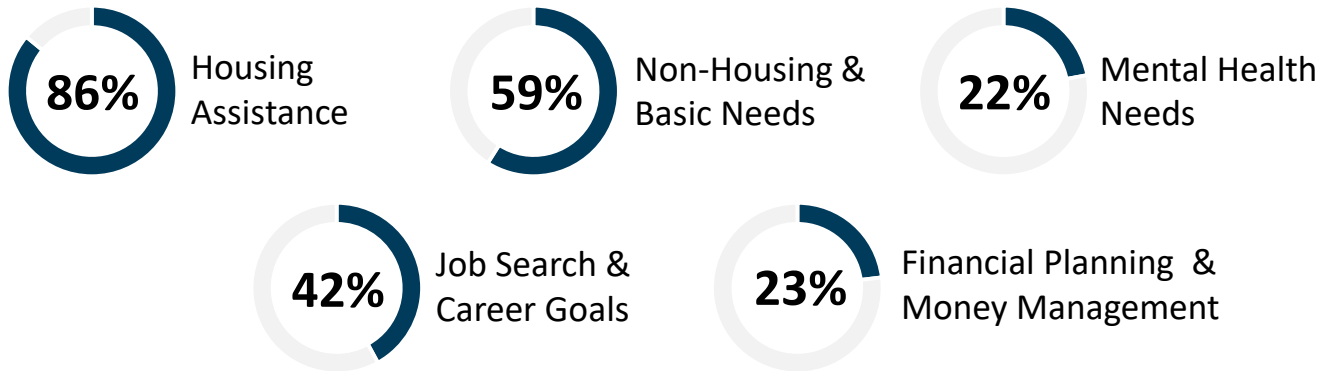


\*\*ASL, Arabic, French, Haitian Creole, Luganda, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish, Vietnamese

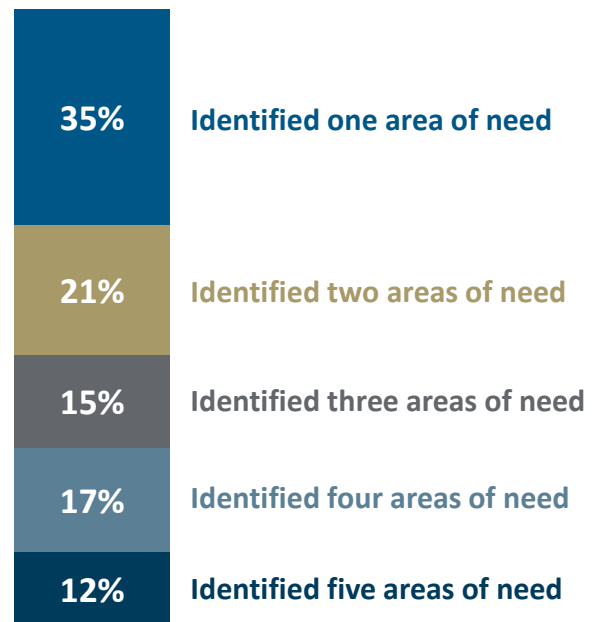
# Assistance Areas Requested

Clients seeking support from WATCH CDC began by completing a Client Intake Form, identifying one or more areas of need: housing assistance, non-housing and basic needs support, mental health support, job search or career development, and/or financial planning and money management.

## Percentage of Clients Requesting Help With:



Two-thirds of clients requested support to address multiple challenges, highlighting the **multitude, complexity, and intersectionality of issues facing WATCH CDC clients.**

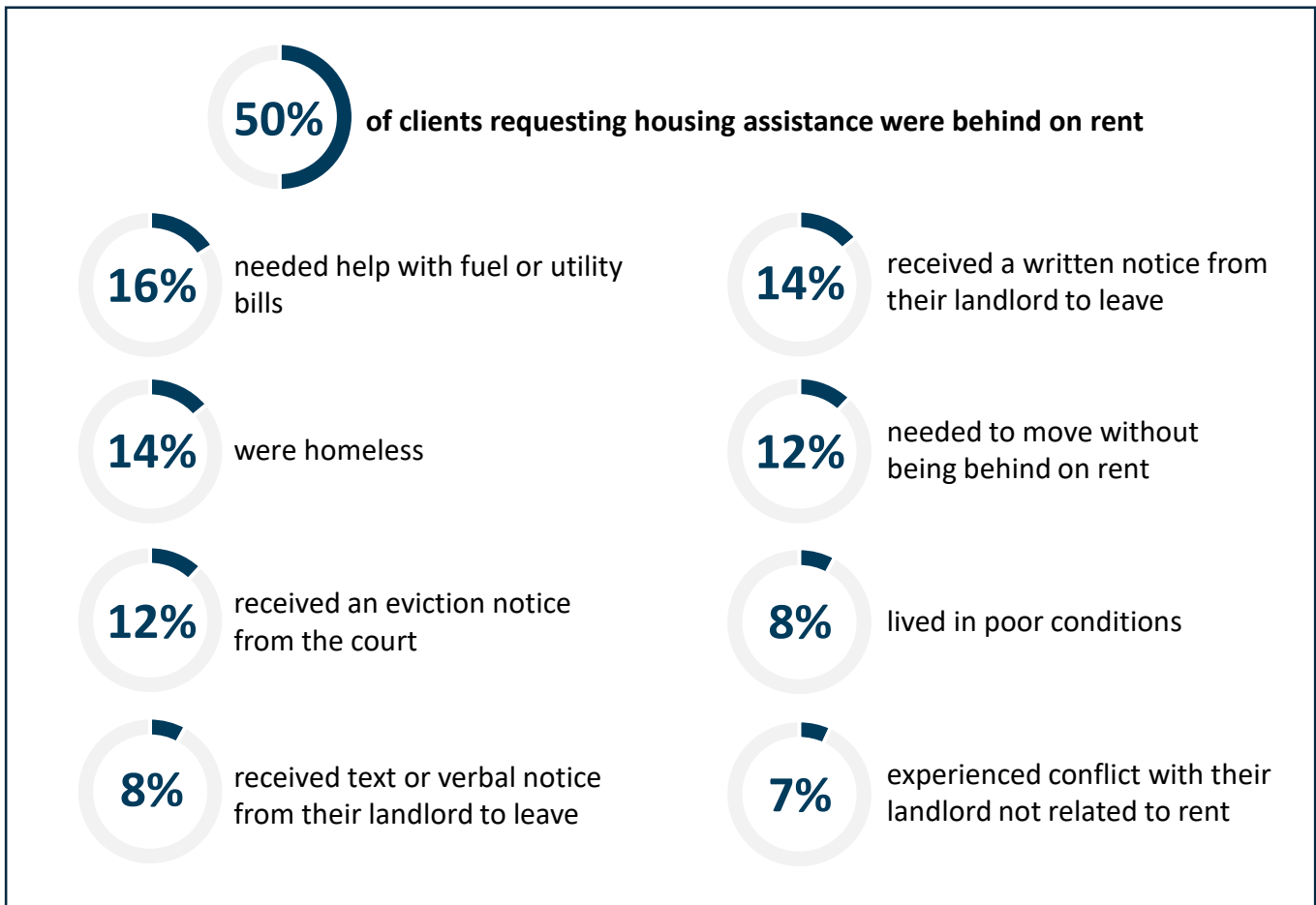


The following pages highlight WATCH CDC's progress addressing each of the five areas noted above as well as their community advocacy efforts over the lifetime of the grant.

# Housing Assistance Requests

Clients requesting housing assistance from WATCH CDC were asked to describe the specific challenges they faced. Clients reported a wide range of housing-related issues, with the most common being falling behind on rent payments. Many clients experienced multiple, overlapping housing challenges, underscoring the complexity of their situations and the need for comprehensive support.

**1,925 households requested housing assistance.** Housing-related challenges reported include:



# Housing Assistance Services Provided

WATCH CDC case managers delivered a wide range of tailored housing assistance services based on each client’s unique needs, with many clients receiving multiple forms of support. For reporting purposes, these services have been organized into three overarching categories. Each category includes a detailed breakdown of specific services provided and the number of households (HH) served.

**1,901** households received housing assistance.

## Provision of Information

	# of HH
Rent and utility arrears	1,271
Tenants’ rights	820
First and last month rent, security deposit	391
Public housing	392
Fuel assistance or utility payments	361
Housing court	359

*Our client, her husband, and two daughters were living in a garage without a bedroom and a kitchen. We assisted our client to get rehoused after her place got condemned and declared inhabitable by the City...we assisted them to get all available programs for low-income families like fuel assistance and Internet essentials.*  
– WATCH CDC



## Completing and Submitting Applications

	# of HH
Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)	399
Housing search	291
Other financial help	183
Non-RAFT apps for housing	57

## Referrals and Advocacy

	# of HH
Eviction legal help or communication with landlord	446
Emergency shelter	211
Community Day Center for homeless individuals	121
Health department for unsafe living conditions	61
Police / Police social work department	28
Waltham Public School MKV (homeless services)	25

*I have a client who was being harassed by her landlord. WATCH CDC was able to connect her to a lawyer to stop the harassment, while also advocating on her behalf to her Section 8 servicer...Through this advocacy, the client was able to secure funds to move, obtain household goods, and prevent an eviction...that would have caused the tenant to lose her Section 8 voucher.*  
– WATCH CDC

# Housing Assistance Outcomes

Case managers conducted follow-up with clients one to three months after their last service interaction. Housing assistance outcomes are organized into two categories: financial outcomes and housing status. Due to a low survey response rate, the number of households impacted is likely higher than reported.

## 756 housing-related financial assistance outcomes were documented.

### Households impacted

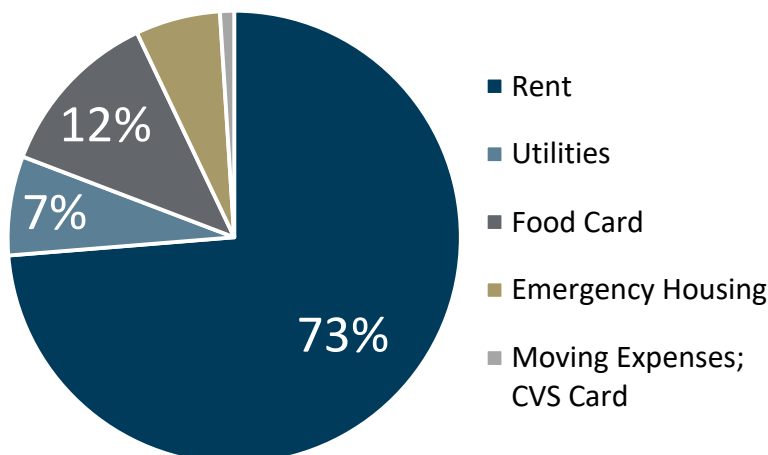
- 442 received TAF (Tenant Assistance Funds)
- 145 received RAFT (state rent / utility assistance)
- 62 received first and last month rental assistance and security deposit
- 57 received fuel assistance
- 50 received utility bill assistance

The NWH Housing CHI grant allocated funds for direct **emergency financial assistance** to eligible clients. Grant dollars were distributed by both organizations through the previously established Tenant Assistance Fund (TAF). Through TAF, clients received grants of up to \$3,000 for **utility and rent arrears, emergency housing, and first and last months' rent and security deposits.**



**442 households** received Tenant Assistance Funds (TAF) grants totaling over \$379,000 and averaging \$859 per household.

TAF grants were used for ...



*Our client fell behind with rent after reducing his work hours to care for his parents. He took on extra jobs but the increased income made him ineligible for RAFT. His case manager applied for TAF and the Good Samaritan Fund, was approved, and with this rental assistance, was able to avoid eviction.*  
– WATCH CDC

*A young adult...who didn't qualify for RAFT or city funds needed an apartment after being abandoned by their family. WATCH was able to use TAF funds towards the young adult's move-in fees and get them into housing within two weeks of being made homeless. Without these funds, this client would have remained homeless indefinitely.* – WATCH CDC

# Housing Assistance Outcomes

The Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) state program provides short-term emergency financial assistance to help families avoid eviction, foreclosure, loss of utilities, and other housing related emergencies. Funds may be used for rent, utilities, moving costs, and mortgage payments.



**At least 145 households** received RAFT grants totaling more than **\$850,000** and averaging **\$5,883** per household.

In addition to documenting financial outcomes, WATCH CDC staff conducted follow-up with clients one to three months after receiving services to assess their housing status.

**1,057** improved housing or living situation outcomes were documented.

## Households impacted

- 514 delayed eviction
- 238 avoided eviction
- 222 negotiated with landlord
- 56 found emergency shelter
- 19 received repairs or fixed code violations
- 8 received help from the police



*WATCH came through for me at a time when both of my parents were ill and passed away and I had to miss work due to spending time with them and then making funeral arrangements. My reduced work hours and income caused me to fall behind on my rent. Even after getting help from the city, I was facing eviction due to not being able to keep up with my rent. WATCH helped me with my application for rent help and connected me to getting legal help in fighting the eviction proceedings. People fall on hard times for external reasons beyond their control. WATCH takes into account the person and what they're going through. Meeting folks where they are in their challenges is what I appreciate most about WATCH CDC. – WATCH CDC Client*

*I have a client who had a mice infestation at home. The landlord did not listen to the complaints of the tenant, who was terrified. We helped the client contact the Waltham Health Department. As a result, the landlord got cited by the City with several code violations and was ordered to fix the problems. Later, the landlord retaliated against the tenant, terminated his tenancy, and filed suit in Court to evict him. Our client was referred to free legal help and was able to delay his eviction, until the tenant found a better, more suitable, and safe place for his family. – WATCH CDC*

# Housing Assistance Skills Outcomes

Operating within a client empowerment framework, WATCH CDC introduced a skills outcome measure in Year 2 of the grant to assess how services extended beyond immediate assistance to build clients' capacity for self-advocacy. Staff conducted follow-up with clients one to three months after receiving services to evaluate these skill-based outcomes. Due to a low response rate on follow-up surveys, the actual number of households impacted is likely higher.

**627** skills outcomes were documented.

## Households impacted

- 218 connected with a new resource or agency
- 147 filled out an application for their household
- 80 gained confidence in navigating resources
- 43 learned how to advocate for themselves
- 38 communicated with their landlord or housing authority
- 38 connected with disability resources
- 37 applied for or updated their benefits with DTA
- 26 communicated with a shelter representative



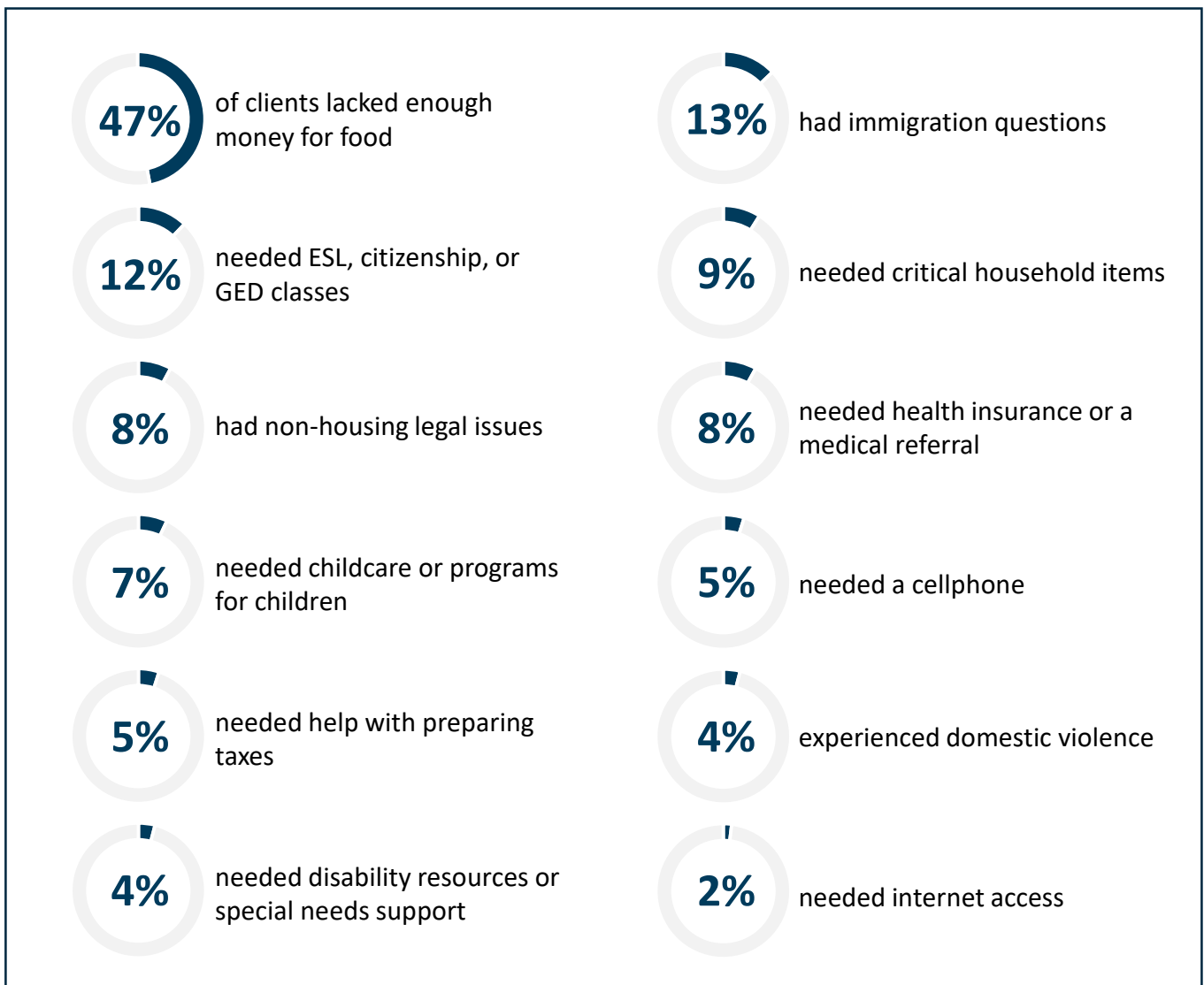
*WATCH clients are encouraged to learn new skills and to become self advocates for themselves and their families moving forward. – WATCH CDC Community News*

*Our work at WATCH CDC empowers families by giving them the tools and access to resources that would otherwise be unknown or unavailable to them without our intervention. A large part of my role includes educating the community of the resources available and how to use those resources to become well-informed and prevent evictions and homelessness, and to offer support for mental health, childcare, or other needs. – WATCH CDC*

# Non-Housing Assistance and Basic Needs Requests

WATCH CDC clients requested assistance with a wide range of non-housing basic needs. The most frequently reported challenge was lacking enough money to purchase food. Many clients faced multiple non-housing and basic needs challenges.

**1,360** households requested assistance for non-housing basic needs. Non-housing and basic needs challenges included:



# Non-Housing and Basic Needs Services Provided

WATCH CDC provided non-housing assistance to more than 1,400 households; many of which received multiple services. For reporting purposes, these services have been categorized into two broad areas, information & resources and referrals & advocacy. Each category includes specific service types and the number of households (HH) served.

**1,430** households received non-housing and basic needs assistance.

## Provision of Information and Resources

	# of HH
SNAP, WIC, or free food	624
Internet Essentials Program or Safelink	120
Household items	58
Enrolled in ESL, GED, or Citizenship classes	46
Non-housing financial help	45

*Our client was having issues with getting SNAP reinstated and the WATCH case manager was able to contact someone within DTA. DTA then connected with the client within one week and helped to reinstate their SNAP benefits and gain client access to food. WATCH was also able to connect the client to a local food pantry to get food immediately. – WATCH CDC*

## Referrals and Advocacy

	# of HH
ESL, GED, or Citizenship classes	242
Immigration help	180
Disability or special needs resources	121
Non-housing legal help	120
Job Clinic	115
Medical or health insurance resources	92
Domestic violence survivor support	82
Childcare, youth service, or parent info center	72
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)	61
Other	40

*A client reached out who had recently moved and did not have furniture or clothing. We were able to refer them to a partner that provides furniture, house wares, and clothing. We provided funding for a moving truck and coordinated the time for the client to pick out the furniture they needed and have them delivered to her home. Without this intervention, a single-parent household would not have had access to furniture, household goods, and clothing. – WATCH CDC*

Case managers provided referrals and information for other resources, including education assistance, credit counseling, job and community resources, and available charities.

# Non-Housing and Basic Needs Outcomes

Case managers conducted follow-up with clients one to three months after receiving services to better understand their clients' current situation and the impact of their work. Due to low response rate on follow-up surveys, the actual number of households impacted is likely higher.

## **631** non-housing and basic needs outcomes were documented.

### Households impacted

- 267 received food or food stamps or went to a food bank or pantry
- 113 received legal assistance
- 63 received critical household items or furniture
- 55 received financial assistance from other agencies or community partners
- 49 received immigration help
- 39 received domestic violence help
- 28 received help with taxes
- 17 received internet access or Lifeline phone

**Housing case managers helped facilitate over \$50,000 in financial assistance from local agencies and community organizations to support their clients non-housing needs.**

WATCH CDC reported working closely with community organizations for financial assistance and resources for their clients. Sources of assistance included Brookline Center, Jewish Family & Children's Service, and Lend-a-Hand.

*WATCH provided me with a bus pass that helped me get to job interviews and to appointments. I feel like WATCH is always by my side. When I was down on my luck, they were there for me. I want to take the time now to say thank you again for everything. – WATCH CDC client*

*Our client is elderly, homeless and currently living in his car and has need for basic items. He has maxed out on all rental and tenant assistance grant programs. Client coordinated support with Temple Beth Shalom for help with donations like a sleeping bag, vitamins and supplements he uses as medicine. We are continuing to pursue housing options. – WATCH CDC*

*I have a client who is a single mother...who was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Due to her Chemotherapy, she is unable to work and pay for her rent or food for her child. WATCH was able to use TAF funds to pay her rent arrears. WATCH also sent her food and a pharmacy card to buy necessary items. We also referred her to one of our partners for help with household items. Through this advocacy, the client was able...to stay in her current home, feed her child, and have the necessary peace to continue moving forward during this difficult time. – WATCH CDC*

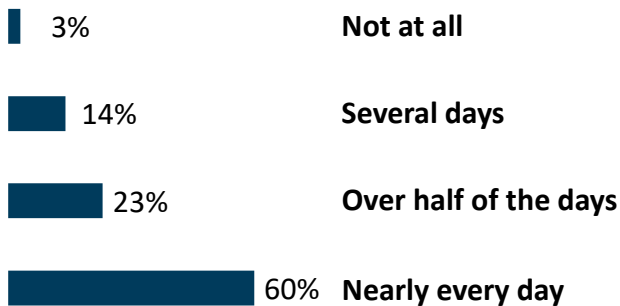
# Mental Health Support Requests

As part of the NWH Housing Security CHI, WATCH CDC integrated mental health screening into their client intake process. Case managers asked clients whether they were experiencing stress, anxiety, or depression related to housing or financial difficulties to identify clients with potential mental health needs.

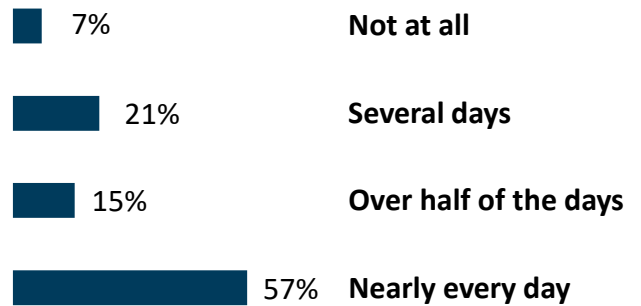
**504** clients indicated having stress, anxiety, or depression related to housing or financial difficulties.

WATCH CDC implemented a screening tool to assess the severity of clients' mental health needs. Screening questions were only asked of clients who indicated stress or anxiety related to housing or financial difficulties on their intake form or during follow-up discussions with a case manager. Clients responded using a scaled format. As shown below, approximately half of respondents reported feeling "nervous, anxious, or on edge" or "unable to stop or control worrying" for at least half of the days in the past two weeks.

**Over the last two weeks, how often have you felt nervous, anxious, or on edge?**



**Over the last two weeks, how often have you felt unable to stop or control worrying?**



Adding these intake and screening questions enabled tiered mental health support for households that may not have verbally identified or recognized their needs. Including these questions created opportunities for deeper conversations about stress related to housing and financial challenges, with the goal of normalizing and reducing stigma around seeking mental health support.

*I find myself also listening to people and that the only thing they need is for someone to listen to them...giving them the tools for and information for mental health. – WATCH CDC*

*I have a client who is a survivor of domestic violence and was homeless due to the domestic violence circumstances. Through WATCH case management, this client received mental health services which has helped her to manage their mental health needs caused through the traumas she endured. The mental health treatment has allowed her to successfully attend work and school. Through the efforts of WATCH, our mental health providers, and other partnering agencies, the client is now housed and stable because of these community efforts. – WATCH CDC*

# Mental Health Services Provided and Outcomes

WATCH CDC provided mental health assistance to more than 500 households over the course of this grant. Clients who indicated feeling stress and anxiety about their housing or financial situation on their intake form were provided mental health resources, including information on local mental health providers, handouts on self-soothing and coping strategies, and information on upcoming mental health workshops in the community. Moreover, approximately 30% of these clients were referred to an appropriate local mental health provider based on their responses to the mental health screening question and further discussions with their case manager.

## 504 households received mental health related resources and services.

Services Provided	# of HH
Mental health resources	500
Mental health referral	155

*There was a client who was a survivor of domestic violence...WATCH was able to support the client with getting services by making the call with the client on the phone to the appropriate agencies. Without these services, the client did not know where to turn. – WATCH CDC*

In addition, WATCH's mental health consultant provided at least one **client mental health workshop**, *Managing Mental Health*, offered in both Spanish and English, annually. The workshop provided community residents with strategies to manage and reduce stress and anxiety and information about local mental health resources and providers available. Workshop feedback surveys were overwhelmingly positive. As one client reflected, the workshop taught them how to “modos de respirar para calmar la ansiedad. También usar mis 5 sentidos más para poderme calmar.”

Case managers also followed up with clients, asking them the same questions about their current level of anxiety in order to document changes in mental health needs after receiving of resources. Documented outcomes suggested initial improvements in mental health for those responding.

## 222 mental health related outcomes were documented.

### Households reporting

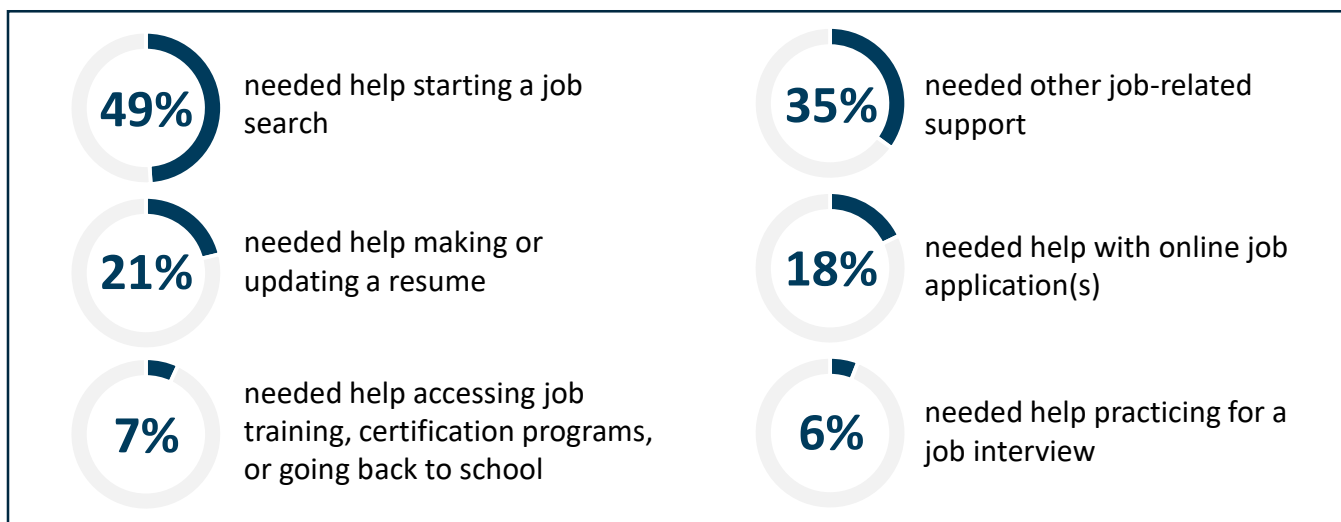
- 189 reduced anxiety managing housing challenges
- 33 received mental health services

*A client had a lot of anxiety...We provided a mental health referral and confirmed two weeks later that the...client is regularly meeting with a counselor. The client reports that she is feeling less overwhelmed and able to manage her anxiety. – WATCH CDC*

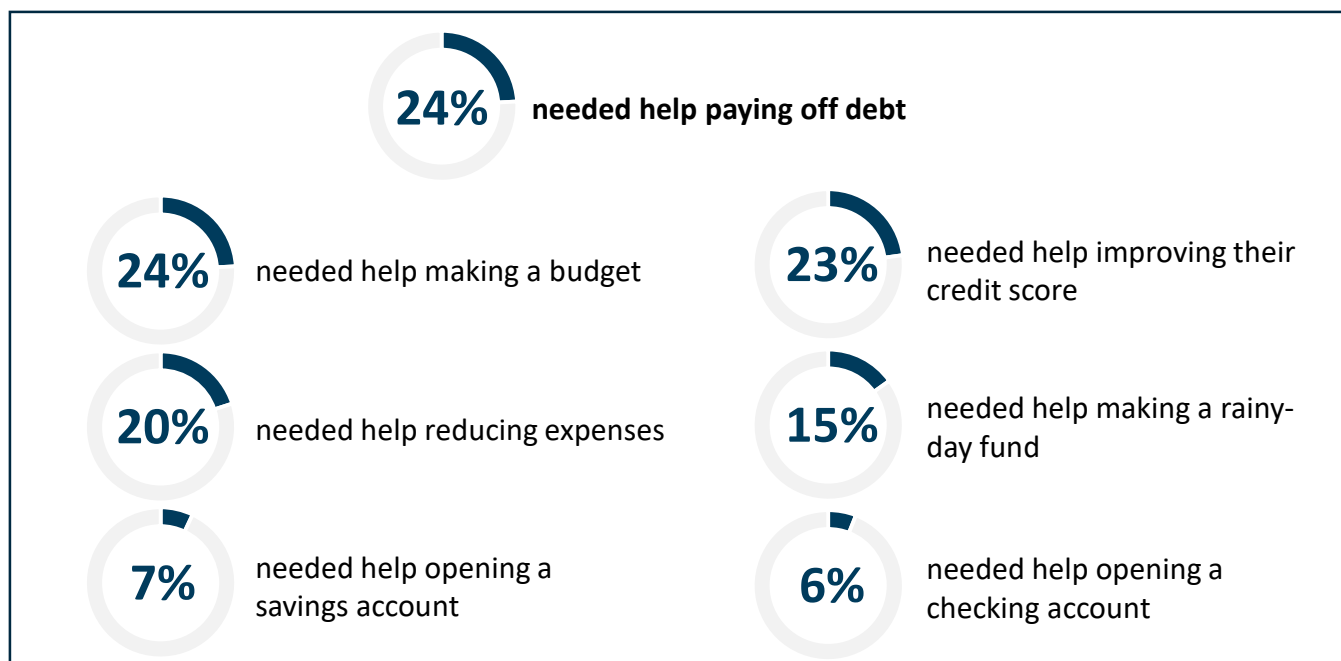
# Job Support and Financial Management Requests

Clients contacting WATCH CDC for services were asked whether they needed help with either job search and career goals and/or financial planning and money management.

**974** clients requested job support, with nearly half requesting job search support.



**497** clients requested support with financial planning & money management.



# CHI Strategy: Supporting Economic Independence

Through the NWH Housing Security CHI grant, WATCH CDC hired a full-time Job and Financial Planning Director. This role focused on mentoring low-income residents in job search and financial planning, strengthening economic independence and, in turn, stabilizing housing security. The bilingual director launched the Job and Financial Management Clinic in March 2022 and continued to expand and enhance services throughout the grant period. Metro West CD referred clients seeking job and financial planning support to WATCH CDC.

**764** clients participated in Job and Financial Planning Clinic services.



**780** housing clients participated in one-on-one counseling sessions.

These sessions helped the Job and Financial Management Clinic Director understand the unique background and individual needs of each client. Together they established plans and necessary steps to achieve employment and/or financial planning success.

**760** clients received job clinic support, and **402** clients received financial planning and money management support.



**The Job and Financial Planning Clinic hosted 170 educational workshops—71 focused on job support and 99 on financial planning.**

Workshops focused on job support, financial planning, money management, and computer literacy. Sixty-two of these workshops were presented in Spanish, and several were available with Haitian Creole interpretation. In total, the Job and Financial Planning Clinic workshops had 434 unique attendees, with many participating in multiple workshops.



Due to the computer literacy needs of their clients, WATCH CDC partnered with Tech Goes Home during the second year of the grant to offer a 15-hour computer course in English and Spanish. The course provided training for basic technology and online navigation skills. Students who completed the course were provided a free laptop and one year of internet access.

Starting in the third year of the grant, WATCH CDC assumed responsibility, relying heavily on volunteers to deliver this service. They adapted the existing curriculum, intentionally incorporating job and financial management class material into the computer classes, resulting in added demand for one-on-one counseling.

# Job and Financial Management Clinic Outcomes

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The Job and Financial Clinic Director followed up with each of the clients he worked with to assess the progress they were making toward their goals.

## 716 improved job outcomes were documented.

### Households impacted

- 227 applied for a job
- 181 got a job
- 178 updated their resume
- 78 completed computer literacy course
- 27 attended job training
- 25 attended job fair

*A client had been working in the same job for many years. He was laid off and didn't have computer literacy skills. Through case management at WATCH, he was able to become computer literate, apply for jobs, understand the interview process, and successfully obtain a job. – WATCH CDC*

## 116 improved financial outcomes were documented.

### Households impacted

- 51 made a budget
- 50 reduced expenses
- 15 paid off debt or improved credit score

Back To Work (BTW) grants of up to \$500 were available to help clients return to work. **97 households received 134 BTW grants, for a total of over \$36,000.** BTW grants reduced barriers to work by giving clients the resources to pay for work-related necessities, such as car repairs, bus passes, tools, uniforms and work shoes, equipment, training programs, computers, and childcare.

WATCH CDC also distributed a total of **\$6,150 in financial incentives to 112 housing clients** for active engagement in the Job and Financial Clinic.

*A client worked with the Job and Financial Clinic to create smart goals to achieve job search goals. He also participated in our financial and job search workshops and succeeded in finding a job with the MBTA. The client was so grateful for all the help that he received, that he became a computer literacy instructor volunteer for our community members. – WATCH CDC*

# CHI Strategy: Promoting Community Advocacy

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WATCH CDC has a long-standing history of community organizing and actively participate in a wide range of community-building efforts, including hosting engagement events, organizing tenants, advocating for housing justice, and maintaining strong partnerships through local and regional meetings with human services organizations and agencies. Throughout this grant, WATCH CDC continued these established efforts to strengthen tenant protections and expand the supply of affordable housing.

## WATCH CDC's Tenant Action Group (TAG)

WATCH CDC encouraged clients to volunteer and join TAG, where they learned about their rights as tenants and how housing policy is made, amplified tenant voices, and advocated for municipal housing policies that impact their lives. With support from WATCH CDC staff, TAG members identified strategies to influence local decision-making through activities such as door-to-door canvassing, letter writing, petition drives, voter registration, and participation in community events and city meetings. Key accomplishments include:

- **Held quarterly TAG meetings**, keeping members informed and connected to available services and programs.
- **Organized eleven canvassing and tabling events**, providing ongoing outreach and support to community residents.
- **Educated the community and built support for the Tenant Rights Notification Act**, a proposed ordinance requiring landlords to inform tenants of legal and financial resources when facing eviction. During the first two years of the grant, TAG secured 720 petition signatures and 262 letters of support. Although the ordinance was voted down by the city council in December 2023, WATCH CDC and TAG members remain committed to educating the community.

*A former housing client has been an active volunteer at WATCH...with the Tenant Action Group in community organizing. He has gone canvassing and tabled at community events sharing information...He says, 'volunteering encourages me to give back and have a positive impact on the community.'* – WATCH CDC

## WATCH Affordable Housing Committee

In the third year of the grant, WATCH CDC's Community Organizer reactivated the WATCH Affordable Housing Committee—a group dedicated to developing affordable housing solutions and identifying programs to support community members facing homelessness. Key accomplishments included recruiting 12 community members to serve as committee leaders and providing ongoing support and resources to community members facing homelessness.

# Conclusion and Moving Forward

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October 1, 2025 marked the conclusion of the four-year NWH's Housing Security CHI grant. As highlighted throughout this report, the grant supported a broad range of individual, institutional, and community-level impacts during an extraordinarily challenging period. Both WATCH CDC and Metro West CD remain committed to sustaining programs and improvements initiated or strengthened through this grant, and they are actively seeking partnerships and funding opportunities to continue this work. To that end, WATCH CDC leveraged its successful work under this grant to secure funding as the backbone organization for a four-year, systems-level collective impact grant. The goal of this initiative is to reduce the impact of housing insecurity on Waltham school-aged children and youth by building a coordinated, youth-focused referral and support network across multiple Waltham community service organizations and the Waltham Public Schools.

Moving forward, WATCH CDC and Metro West CD will advance their efforts to address housing insecurity and reduce housing inequities by maintaining the following CHI strategies:

- **Housing Stabilization and Basic Needs Support:** WATCH CDC and Metro West CD will continue providing case management services that prioritize client empowerment to promote housing security. Both organizations plan to maintain use of the Salesforce client management database—piloted and integrated during the grant—to strengthen service delivery, track services provided, and document client outcomes.
- **Mental Health Supports:** Staff at both organizations reported improvements in their ability to support clients' mental health needs as a result of this grant. WATCH CDC will continue its partnership with Children's Charter to provide mental health refresher trainings for staff. Given the challenges associated with staff turnover, WATCH CDC emphasized the importance of continued capacity building to ensure that staff remain well-equipped to discuss mental health needs with clients and effectively utilize the mental health resources and processes implemented through this grant. Similarly, Metro West CD noted continued use of supportive, approachable methods for discussing mental health with clients. Their efforts include providing a one-page document with basic mental health resources to clients experiencing stress and anxiety due to their housing situation.
- **Economic Independence:** WATCH CDC remains committed to supporting their clients' economic independence but has adjusted its service model following key staffing changes. As an initial step, WATCH CDC trained two volunteers to support clients with basic job search needs and to refer clients to local community organizations for additional employment support. Moving forward, WATCH CDC has partnered with Cambridge Savings Bank to incorporate financial literacy education into existing ESOL classes, which have significant overlap with their Housing Clinic clients. Cambridge Savings Bank has already facilitated two career workshops, titled *Developing Skills for Success – Job Interview Workshop*. WATCH CDC is also expanding its partnership with Bentley University, engaging their students to teach a six-week financial literacy course in English and Spanish and support computer classes through WATCH CDC's adult education department.
- **Community Engagement:** WATCH CDC and Metro West CD will continue to engage and mobilize community members to raise awareness of local housing resources and advocate for affordable housing and the rights of low-income tenants facing housing insecurity and eviction.