

Family Independence, Inc.

FOUNDED: 2017

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$3,112,564

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Family Independence, Inc. (FI) is a residential program for families experiencing homelessness that provides life and parenting skills development, access to education, job training, child care and child-centered services, housing search assistance, and specialized clinical services. FI's two programs, Young Parent Living Program and Family Emergency Shelter Program serve young families and adults respectively.

According to the Massachusetts Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission's Youth Count survey, between 2019 and 2022 the percent of unsheltered youth increased 38% and there was nearly a 36% increase in unhoused youth (UHY) who were not in school and did not have a diploma. Based on the study, respondents who left home as minors were less likely to be sheltered, have a high school degree, or to receive the help they needed, and more likely to have no income sources at all.

FI serves young families in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, and the South End. Many of the residents are low-income families struggling with the emotional, psychological, physical, and economic effects of poverty, abuse, discrimination, violence, and parental neglect. FI provides a broad range of behavioral health services using a holistic, supervised, structured housing model for young families.

Two-Year Goals

- Develop in-house mental health services by hiring three clinical staff
- Develop affordable housing with supportive social services for 10 additional families post-discharge
- Develop new partnerships to provide housing search and rental assistance to program participants
- Hire two additional staff to expand parenting and life skills learning groups

Investment Opportunity

Family Independence, Inc. seeks an investment of \$420,000 over the next two years to build fully in-house mental health services. This investment will allow the organization to hire three mental health counselors and to lease and/or purchase office equipment and technology, including three laptops, to support the work of a growing staff.

Ways to Invest

- Provide real estate services to expand office and living space for families
- Join a committee on the Board
- Lead financial literacy workshops
- Develop website content
- Donate technology, including computers and office equipment
- Provide advocacy campaign support to access and purchase city- and state-owned properties

Family Independence Model



Young Parent Living Program (YPLP)

FI offers a safe, comprehensive, supervised, structured residential young parent living experience for fifteen (15) homeless, pregnant/parenting teens, ages 12-21, and their children. Young families can stay in the program until the parents are 21 and 11 months. Each family has a small efficiency apartment with communal space. These young families are first referred by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) after they have been assessed as homeless by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). They are placed in a network of Young Parent Living programs. FI, as part of the network, assesses each young parent's needs by performing a clinical assessment. Through placement with FI, young families receive access to housing, clinical services from community partners, and child care assistance. FI collaborates with Boston public schools to ensure that teens have access to high schools, alternative high schools, and HiSET programs. Young families receive life skills training through learning groups on parenting skills, financial literacy and budgeting, maintaining a household, and healthy living.

FI provides 24-hour staff supervision and support to all residents. During the day, FI staff ensure that youth attend schools and other programs, facilitate effective communication between teachers and youth, and check if youth receive the support they need. After school, FI staff travel through the apartment units to ensure young parents have support for homework, chores, and meal preparation, and ensure that the families have enough food. During bedtime, staff support young parents with establishing bedtime routines for children. FI staff ensure young families feel safe and are safe 24/7.



Emergency Family Shelter Program

After unhoused adults are assessed by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), they are referred to Family Independence which operates 20 adult units to help homeless families with minimal resources attain housing stability. Through the Emergency Family Shelter Program, FI develops and monitors Rehousing Plans that identify and address each parent’s strengths, needs, and goals, including education, training, employment, and independent housing. FI supports each family’s pursuit of its Rehousing Plan so they can achieve their housing permanency goals. FI partners with families through all the steps of housing search to ensure that families access housing as soon as possible. FI offers on-site and community-based services such as case management, advocacy, and mentoring. Additionally, FI provides referrals to access health and stabilization services for rehoused families—to equip families and promote independence and success. FI provides stabilization support for a minimum of 2 years after families are rehoused.

“They provided a community of support and encouragement that allowed me to complete high school and pursue college. I built friendships that have endured well beyond my experience.”

— Anonymous, Former Program Participant

Leadership & Governance

France A. Neff, PhD, LMHC, President & CEO, has dedicated her career to empowering young parents and helping them build stable environments for their children to thrive. With over 20 years working with families, France's passion and commitment shine through in every endeavor. The FI team includes 11 staff members working within the program facilities. The dedicated FI Board consists of five community leaders, including mental health professionals, educators, and experts in operations, law, and development.

Financial Sustainability

Family Independence, Inc. has a sustainable financial model based on longstanding contracts with the Department of Families and Children and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. FI has an endowment created from revenue received in 2022 from funds remaining in the Family Services of Greater Boston (FSGB) budget upon closing. FI maintains former FSGB service contracts and receives individual contributions. FI hopes to diversify funding by increasing support from foundations and individual donors.

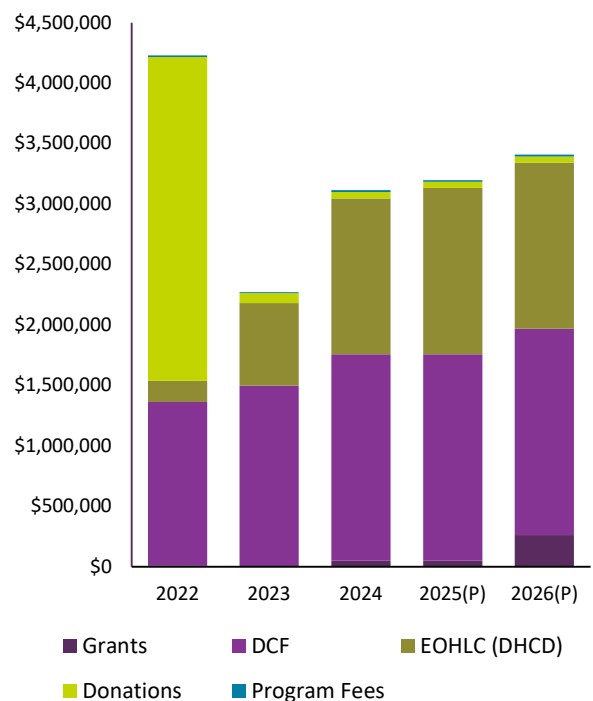
KEY INVESTORS

- Department of Children and Families
- Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

KEY PARTNERS

- Boston Emergency Services Team (BEST)
- Dimock Community Health Center
- Whittier Street Health Center

Revenue by Source



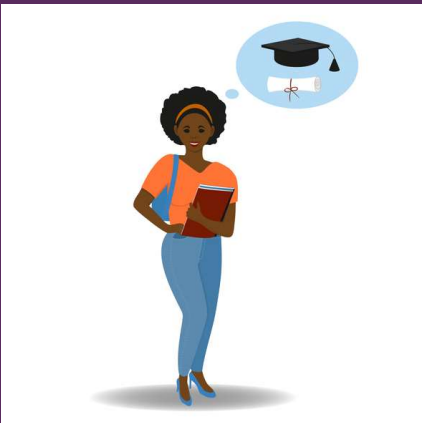
* The budget in 2022 reflects a one-time transfer of funds from Family Services of Greater Boston, which was the parent organization of FI. This amount is held in an endowment and not considered as part of FI’s budget for subsequent years.



Success Story

Anonymous

“I entered the YPLP at seventeen, with two children under the age of three. My window for opportunity looked grim, and my chances of academic success were slim. Through the support of the YPLP, I was able to complete high school and obtain a college degree. I developed long-lasting friendships, learned life skills that have contributed to my success today, but most importantly, I learned to love Me. I became a nurturer, giver, believer, and learner! Having that safe space with trusted adults allowed me to flourish beyond expectations and step proudly into my version of Black Excellence!”



Program Performance and Organizational Health

FI serves 15 teens through the YPLP program and 20 adults through the Emergency Family Shelter Program. FI provides residents with specialized services through their dedicated staff and community partners.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
Families served (both programs)	59	65	70
High school enrollment (YPLP)	70%	75%	80%
Babies and children screened (YPLP)	100%	100%	100%
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Full-time staff	11	14	14
Learning groups	4	7	10
Community collaborators	6	8	10
Total Revenue	\$3,112,564	\$3,197,002	\$3,407,002

Social Impact

While utilizing a supervised, structured apartment model, FI ensures its clients receive holistic individualized support in developing the skills and knowledge needed to be competent parents and lead independent, productive lives once they leave FI. FI helps to build stronger communities starting with youth and families.

Below is a summary of the social impact that FI aspires to have on young families in the next two years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
Young parents demonstrate an ability to set and stay within weekly/monthly budgets	65%	70%
Mothers demonstrate an ability to properly care for home, purchase food, prepare nutritious meals for themselves and their children	75%	80%
Mothers show patience/sensitivity in addressing children’s behavioral issues	75%	80%
Families remain housed after placement	65%	75%