



**Homeless Services Bureau
Client Update
November 25, 2014**

To Homeless Services Clients:

As we enter the 7th week of the temporary shelter system established due to the Long Island Bridge closure, I am pleased to report that we are making progress towards a more permanent solution for our shelter and program beds. We have also begun the process of returning items left on Long Island to you, our clients, as quickly as possible.

We thank you for your understanding and patience during this challenging transition. Your safety and wellbeing are our top priority, especially as we enter the cold winter months. We will continue to address issues and concerns as they arise as quickly as possible and pledge to keep you updated as new information on both our emergency shelter and transitional programs becomes available.

Please refer to the information below for the most recent updates, including details on the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday and how you can obtain belongings left on Long Island.

Emergency Shelter

We are working to establish a long term temporary solution that will provide stability to those who were disrupted by bridge closure. We have proposed the construction of a new, modular steel structure on city-owned property on Frontage Road, near the former methadone clinic. We hope to build a shelter large enough to house 450 beds.

Depending upon the weather during construction, the site could be operational in about 15 weeks. In the meantime, we will rely on the current shelter system in place. The temporary shelter at the South End Fitness Center (SEFC) will stay open and our partners at St. Francis House, Healthcare For the Homeless, Pine Street Inn, New England Center for Homeless Veterans, Boston Rescue Mission, Valentine Street Housing Program and Pilgrim Shelter will likely continue to take overflow guests on a nightly basis for the next 3-4 months.

Client Belongings

We know that many of you have belongings on the Island that you would like to retrieve. Homeless Services staff have collected all guest items from Long Island and they are being stored on the Mattapan campus. Any emergency shelter guest who would like to retrieve their personal effects should call 617-823-7676 between the hours of 9am and 5pm. We ask that you provide your name, locker number and contact information so we can follow-up with you. Once you contact us, those possessions will be brought to the Woods Mullen Shelter at a pre-determined time when guests can pick them up.

If you are unable to pick up your items during the scheduled time and/or are making new storage arrangements, please keep our staff members informed.

Thanksgiving Dinner

As Long Island is not currently in operation, our traditional Thanksgiving dinner will be served at the Woods Mullen Shelter. We recognize the importance of this holiday and are grateful for the continued sense of community during this unprecedented time of transition. Tickets to the dinner will be distributed by the staff at the SEFC and Woods Mullen on Thanksgiving morning to guests who stayed at these shelters on Wednesday night. Please note that due to limited space, seats will only be available for 250 guests. We are working with other provider shelter partners who are also serving Thanksgiving dinner, to accommodate additional guests, if needed.

Documentation Needs

For guests requesting verification of homelessness, please see Operations staff at the South End Fitness Center or Case Management staff at Woods Mullen Shelter.

Lockers

We recognize that the locker system on Long Island was a valued resource to many of our emergency shelter guests and program clients. Our Homeless Services staff, in partnership with Property Management, will look into the feasibility of reinstating this system once a new facility is established. Additional information on this service will be shared as it develops.

We encourage clients in the community to remain in contact with staff to receive services and regular updates. The main number to the SEFC is 617-534-6100.

The City of Boston and the staff of the Boston Public Health Commission are committed to ensuring you have access to the services and resources you need. Please know we are working as quickly as we can to resolve this problem, and are making headway. We hope to update you with more concrete details of our progress in the coming weeks. Thank you for your continued cooperation as we work through this difficult time.