

**Offered by Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George**

Arroyo, Bok, Breadon, Campbell, Edwards, Flaherty, Flynn, Mejia, O'Malley  
Wu and Janey



**CITY OF BOSTON**

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY

**AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE THE SPECIAL  
COMMISSION ON ENDING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS**

- WHEREAS: There is a crisis of family homelessness in the City of Boston; and
- WHEREAS: There is a great need to understand the scope, magnitude, costs, and impact of family homelessness, particularly the educational and health impacts on homeless children; and
- WHEREAS: There are many root causes of family homelessness, including poverty, domestic violence, community violence, substance use disorders and mental health issues; and
- WHEREAS: Although the Commonwealth of Massachusetts currently oversees the Emergency Assistance shelter program and provides many of the resources available to homeless families while in shelter, these resources are neither designed nor enough to end this statewide crisis; and
- WHEREAS: In addition, it is paramount that the City of Boston ascertain the costs incurred by insufficient and uncoordinated resources available for homeless families; and
- WHEREAS: Family homelessness is solvable and preventable with a concrete, actionable plan that coordinates all necessary city resources to end family homelessness in Boston.

NOW THEREFORE,

**Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston, as follows:**

**Section 1.**

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter XII shall be amended by adding at the end thereof, the following new section and subsections:

**12-16 Special Commission to End Family Homelessness.**

**12-16.1 Purpose.**

The purpose of this ordinance is to establish a Special Commission to End Family Homelessness. The purpose of this ordinance and the Special Commission is to develop an actionable and

measurable plan to end family homelessness in the City of Boston. The intent of this ordinance is to ensure no family is homeless in Boston.

#### **12-16.2 Establishing the Special Commission.**

The Special Commission will include the following people, or their designee:

- A member of the Boston City Council shall be designated by the Council President and shall serve on the Commission. (1)
- Mayor of Boston (1)
- Chief of Health and Human Services (1)
- Chief of Housing (1)
- BPS Superintendent (1)
- Governor of Massachusetts (1)
- Secretary of Health and Human Services (1)
- Secretary of the Department of Housing and Community Development (1)
- Representative from the Boston Legislative Delegation in the Senate (1)
- Representative from the Boston Legislative Delegation in the House (1)
- Representative of Child Care Providers who specifically work with homeless children (1)
- Representative of an Emergency Food Distribution Center or an Emergency Food Provider (1)
- Three members of the Family Shelter Providers Roundtable (3), plus one (1) alternate member of the Family Shelter Providers Roundtable
- Three representatives who have family homelessness or housing insecurity lived expertise (3)

The Special Commission meetings will be open to all members of the Family Shelter Providers Roundtable. Additionally, representatives from the following Massachusetts State agencies will be considered important partners to be called upon as needed: the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Early Education and Care, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Public Health.

The Special Commission will exist for as long as it takes to develop a comprehensive, actionable plan to end family homelessness, up to 5 years from the founding of the Commission. The Special Commission will ensure this plan focuses on homeless families in the City of Boston.

Special Commission members shall serve without compensation. Members will elect a Chair for the Commission every year with a simple majority vote. If there is a tie, the alternate member of the Family Shelter Provider Roundtable will cast a vote

The Special Commission will first convene within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this ordinance. Should there be a vacancy or resignation in any of the above positions, the Chair of the Special Commission will appoint a new representative from another equally relevant office or organization within ninety (90) days. Members of the Special Commission will remain members as long as the Commission exists or unless voted to be removed by a majority vote of the Commission.

### **12-16.3 Responsibilities and Authorities of the Special Commission.**

The primary responsibility of the Special Commission is to create a coordinated plan to end family homelessness in the City of Boston. As the Special Commission sees fit, the Commission will a) identify the current gaps in resources for homeless families and the necessary steps to fill those gaps; b) discern the impact of the lack of stable housing for homeless/housing insecure children; c) conduct a cost analysis of the family homelessness currently and a cost analysis of providing the necessary resources to end family homelessness; and d) generate a thorough plan that would unite city resources into a coordinated effort that will lead to the end of family homelessness.

This Special Commission will meet Quarterly. Additional meetings may be held to work on specific issues as they relate to the overall work of this Commission. Subcommittees of the Special Commission may be formed and meet at least monthly or more often if needed. The Special Commission will file a bi-annual progress report with the Clerk to update the City on the plan's development during the entirety of the Commission.

At any point, the Special Commission may be called upon to testify to and update the City Council on the City's progress to end family homelessness.

If the Special Commission determines necessary, the Special Commission is authorized to continue meeting to ensure the plan is implemented, provided the Special Commission continues to provide bi-annual reports to the Clerk.

**Filed in Council: January 10, 2020**