



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The City of Boulder and Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA)  
Create *Keep Families Housed* to Prevent Family Homelessness**

*Program links rental assistance to measures focused on improving the well-being of children and supporting families' efforts to improve their situation.*

**March 6, 2017, BOULDER, CO** -- In response to the increase in local family homelessness, the City of Boulder and Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA) have partnered on *Keep Families Housed*, a pilot program aimed at preventing homelessness for families with children. The program, which links rent assistance to measures focused on the well-being of children, strives to support a family's efforts to improve their situation, achieve and maintain good health, access educational opportunities, and maintain financial stability.

"It's not only more cost-effective, but also significantly better for children to prevent a family from becoming homeless in the first place," says Julie Van Domelen, EFAA's Executive Director. "Our goal is to keep families in a situation from which they can build themselves back up to self-sufficiency and financial stability."

There are about 500 homeless children in BVSD schools, 300 of whom live in the City of Boulder, plus many more children who are not yet school aged. While EFAA currently provides one-time rent assistance annually to 200 families with children at risk of eviction and housing insecurity in the City of Boulder, a contribution of \$263,000 from the City of Boulder means that families who meet health- and education-focused requirements can receive up to three months of rent assistance, and an additional 100 families will be eligible to receive rent assistance.

"This pilot gets to the root cause issues we're focusing on as part of our Human Services Strategy," said Karen Rahn, City of Boulder Human Services Director. "*Keep Families Housed* is an investment in early intervention to stabilize families and children and address problems before they become more traumatic for the family and more costly for the community."

*(more)*

Families who meet certain criteria can receive one-time rent assistance. To receive a second or third month of assistance that year, families need to meet markers for well-being and education, such as ensuring that children are enrolled in school, nutritional programs and health insurance, and parents complete financial stability classes, connect with BVSD's Infinite Campus, and seek annual medical and dental care for their children.

### **Local Need**

Many hardworking low-income families pay 70% or more of their income on rent each month, leaving them unable to save for emergencies and extremely vulnerable to unexpected bills or reduction in income. When a bump in the road happens, like job loss or unexpected expenses, and the family is unable to pay rent, emergency rental assistance is effective at avoiding eviction, dislocation and trauma to children. By keeping the stability of a home, families are better able to rebound and more likely to once again become self-sufficient. It is also proven that the cost of bringing a family back from homelessness is much greater, in dollars and human capital, than preventing homelessness in the first place.

### **Program Evaluation**

EFAA has engaged Colorado-based OMNI Institute to do a one-year evaluation of *Keep Families Housed*. Their qualitative and quantitative research will provide insight into other factors impacting the households engaged in the program, and evaluate what changes for the families as a result of accessing the program. This external evaluation will ensure EFAA is effectively utilizing this funding to positively impact at-risk families, and supports long-term success for our community's most vulnerable children.

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### **ABOUT EMERGENCY FAMILY ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION**

EFAA has been dedicated to helping residents of Boulder and Broomfield Counties meet their basic needs since 1918 and acts as a safety-net for families, individuals, people with disabilities and seniors. EFAA operates 53 emergency and transitional housing units, provides food, rent assistance, utilities assistance, and supports clients' efforts toward financial stability and self-sufficiency through case management, education and advocacy. For more information please visit [www.efaa.org](http://www.efaa.org) or connect with EFAABoulder on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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