



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
**MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE**

**WILLIAM FISHER**  
Director

**LAUREN MAHONEY**  
Deputy Director

**Date:** 8/21/2025  
**To:** City Council  
**From:** William Fisher, Director  
**Re:** 77/85 Wheatland St Fire and Local Recovery Resource Center (LRRC)

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Dear City Council Members,

As a result of the fires at 77 and 85 Wheatland Street on Sunday, July 6, 2025, 17 residents were displaced and in need of housing and basic services. On the day of the incident, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinated with the Somerville Fire Department, Inspectional Services Division, and the American Red Cross to provide situational awareness and immediate housing support.

In the days that followed, OEM continued to collaborate with multiple city departments and external partners to assess and meet the essential needs of the fire survivors. Ultimately, all 17 individuals were identified as having outstanding and significant needs. Recognizing that many residents were already overwhelmed by the trauma of displacement and the challenge of navigating multiple agencies, OEM organized a **Local Recovery Resource Center (LRRC)** on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. at the East Somerville Community School Cafeteria. Thirteen of the 17 survivors attended the LRRC.

An LRRC is designed to allow survivors access to disaster-related relief services and information to aid in the recovery process following a natural disaster or hazard. An LRRC brings together representatives from local and state agencies as well as essential support organizations, serving as a “one-stop shop” to provide direct services and on-site assistance to disaster survivors.

The center was organized with labeled resource tables positioned around the room and a central seating area. Upon arrival, survivors were welcomed at a registration table staffed by the American Red Cross, who reviewed initial intake notes from caseworkers and identified any outstanding needs. Each resident was then paired with an American Red Cross volunteer ambassador, who guided them through the LRRC to each table, ensuring they connected with all available resources, including language interpretation needs.

The following departments and agencies participated, either by staffing a table or providing resource information:

- **Mayor’s Office/Intergovernmental Affairs**
- **Somerville Police Department**



- **Office of Emergency Management** – Facilitate assistance with ID/document replacement, housing court liaison, mail forwarding, and temporary parking permits
- **Animal Control** – Pet supplies
- **Somerville Fire Department** – Fire reports for assistance applications; comfort and support from Millie, SFD's the first responder therapy dog.
- **Tzu Chi USA (Non-Profit)** – Spiritual and financial assistance
- **Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency** – State resource information
- **Health and Human Services** – Clinical health workers
- **Somerville Public Schools** – School resource support
- **Communications and Community Engagement** – Media and public information, including publicizing the Emergency Fund
- **Office of Housing Stability** – Temporary hotel/motel assistance; permanent housing support
- **The Salvation Army** – Meals, vouchers for clothing/furniture/household goods, children's supplies and toys
- **Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs** – Translation and interpretation services, immigration document assistance, legal guidance
- **American Red Cross** – Registration, volunteer ambassadors, hygiene kits, children's stuffed animals

In addition, the Somerville Homeless Coalition agreed to be the fiduciary for the emergency fund, which helped raise necessary funds to assist those impacted in obtaining materials and covering initial rehousing costs. As a result of the LRRC, the Emergency Fund, and the efforts of all involved, within a few weeks, all impacted were able to leave the hotel and establish long-term housing

We are proud of what was accomplished through this collaborative effort. While words cannot fully convey the impact, the gratitude expressed by residents made it clear that the coordinated support mattered. One resident summed it up best: **"It's just nice to know someone cares."**

Sincerely,

William Fisher  
Director