

PRESS RELEASE

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Contact: Galina Abashina, Marketing and Development Coordinator, (413) 455-1936 x106

Date: October 9, 2017

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF WESTERN MASS RECEIVES \$250,000 GRANT TO EXPAND CITIZENSHIP SERVICES

Springfield – Jewish Family Service of Western Mass has been awarded a competitive two-year \$250,000 Citizenship and Assimilation Grant from the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This grant will allow JFS to expand its' current citizenship program to better serve prospective citizen's assimilation into American civic life in Hampden County of Western MA.

JFS is one of 45 organizations in 26 states to receive nearly \$10 million in funding to support citizenship preparation services. Since its inception in 2009, USCIS Citizenship and Assimilation Grant Program has helped more than 190,000 lawful permanent residents prepare for citizenship; an estimated additional 25,000 will receive services through September 30, 2019. A "permanent resident" is a person authorized by the US Gov't to live and work in the country on a permanent basis.

Jewish Family Service is a nonprofit social service agency that has developed both substantive legal and programmatic expertise during its six years of experience in Citizenship and Naturalization services. "The program began as a response to a glaring unmet need in our community. Today, JFS is a well-respected and trusted partner in engaging the immigrant community in Hampden County," said Maxine Stein, JFS CEO. "JFS is excited and pleased to have received this grant opportunity. It will allow us to strengthen our current work in citizenship and positions us to be a leader in helping those on the path to becoming U.S. citizens. As a Jewish organization, we are proud to provide this important service to our local residents. Like all of us, we value freedom, safety and opportunity. Citizenship helps to provide that and we can help make that happen."

JFS was a sub-awardee of a USCIS Office of Citizenship National Capacity Building Grant awarded to HIAS for FY 2010. JFS' citizenship curriculum was highlighted by USCIS on their website for best practices in 2011 for its effective classroom constitution activity that may be adapted to meet the needs of each class of students. In 2013, JFS received a similar two-year citizenship grant.

In addition to processing naturalization applications and providing citizenship instruction, JFS prepares a cadre of volunteers who are trained to provide ESOL tutoring and citizenship prep mentoring which includes the citizenship test and interview. "Our staff are accredited by the Department of Justice and this additional support is a tremendous resource for our clients and our staff as well."

Since 1915, Jewish Family Service has been providing exceptional social services, grounded in Jewish values, to support and empower individuals and families from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.

Jewish Family Service of Western MA is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of Western MA.

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

| info@jfswm.org | www.jfswm.org

Hampden County Main Office: 15 Lenox Street, Springfield, MA 01108, (413) 737-2601

Jewish Campus Office: 1160 Dickinson Street, Springfield, MA 01108, (413) 455-1936

Berkshire County Satellite: 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201, (413) 442-4360 x17

Hampshire/Franklin County Satellite: 253 Prospect, Northampton, MA 01060, (413) 737-2601