

MEMBERSHIP MONDAY: Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services

Highlighting MLK Family Services' Impact on the Community

At the Providers' Council, we are proud to highlight the incredible work of our members who are making a difference in the human services sector. This week, for Membership Monday, we are featuring Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services, a vital organization dedicated to promoting well-being and strengthening families, youth, and communities across Western Massachusetts.

Who is MLK Family Services and What Do They Do?

Inspired by the values and legacy of Dr. King, MLKFS operates with the mission “to foster an environment where we nurture and empower the aspirations of individuals, families, and youth to achieve new realities of peace, social and economic justice, self-determination, self-actualization, and self-sufficiency.”

Located in the Mason Square neighborhood of Springfield, MLKFS provides comprehensive services to under-resourced communities in Hampden County. Their programming spans:

- **Youth and Education:**

Literacy-based after-school programs, the College Readiness Academy, the King's Kids After-School Program, and a tour of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) all support academic growth and access to higher education.

- **Public Health and Wellness:**

MLKFS leads health equity work through the Mason Square Health Task Force, prevention services, and teen leadership initiatives. Their on-site emergency food pantry supports individuals and families experiencing food insecurity and screens for SNAP eligibility.

Additionally, they host a mobile food bank every 2nd and 4th Thursday from their 3 Rutland Street community center.

- **Family Support Services:**

The organization offers parenting support, financial coaching, income maximization assistance, and advocacy to help families thrive and stay together safely in their communities.

- **Violence Prevention, Cultural Programming & Community Engagement:**

Through culturally grounded programs, including sports and arts teams, MLKFS creates safe and empowering spaces for youth and community members to connect and grow.



When Did MLK Family Services Join The Providers' Council and Why?

A long-time member of the Providers' Council, Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services has consistently demonstrated its commitment to supporting vulnerable communities and advancing systemic change. In 2024, President and CEO Shannon M. Rudder was honored with the Council's Peer Provider Award, recognizing her leadership and the organization's tireless efforts to uplift and empower those they serve. As part of this recognition, MLK Jr. Family Services engaged in meaningful discussions with peer organizations, participated in dynamic workshops, and connected with funders and fellow providers dedicated to strengthening the nonprofit sector. Their involvement continues to grow, with Shannon Rudder recently joining the Council's Board of Directors, further expanding the organization's voice in shaping the future of human services in Massachusetts. Together, they are working to foster collaboration, share innovative ideas, and amplify collective impact across the sector.



A Voice from the MLK Family Services' Team



Being a member of the Providers' Council has been an incredibly valuable and inspiring experience for Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services. We are truly grateful for their unwavering commitment to strengthening human services providers across Massachusetts. As an organization rooted in the Western region, it's especially powerful to feel so connected to a statewide network of mission-driven peers. The Council's top-notch training, advocacy, and networking opportunities have deepened our impact, kept us informed on key policy issues, and reinforced our sense of shared purpose. We're proud to be part of this dynamic community and look forward to growing together.

— Shannon M. Rudder, MBA,
President & CEO



Looking Ahead: MLK Family Services' Continued Commitment to Support and Innovation

Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services continues to be a powerful force for equity, opportunity, and healing across Western Massachusetts. Their holistic, community-based approach—grounded in justice, education, and family strength—remains a model for the human services sector.

In alignment with the Providers' Council's mission to strengthen the human services network, MLKFS is preparing to launch a new strategic plan on June 30 that will guide their next chapter of impact and growth. This milestone reflects their commitment to shaping a future that is responsive, inclusive, and rooted in community needs.

They are also celebrating the return of their signature event, the 2025 Social Justice Awards, on Saturday, October 18, 2025 at 12 p.m. at Twin Hills Country Club in Springfield. The event will honor nine outstanding individuals who champion justice and transformation in their communities. This year's theme—"We are determined...to work and fight until justice runs down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream"—reflects their unwavering dedication to equity and systemic change.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for those interested in supporting this powerful event. Your support will empower leadership with conscience, inspire understanding, and help transform futures. To learn more or join as a sponsor, visit mlkjrfamilyservices.org/events or contact Claudia Pazmany at cpazmany@mlkjrfs.org.

Want to learn more about MLK Family Services and the Providers' Council? Visit our websites to explore our work, services, and the impactful initiatives driving change in our communities.

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[MLK Family Services' Event page](#)