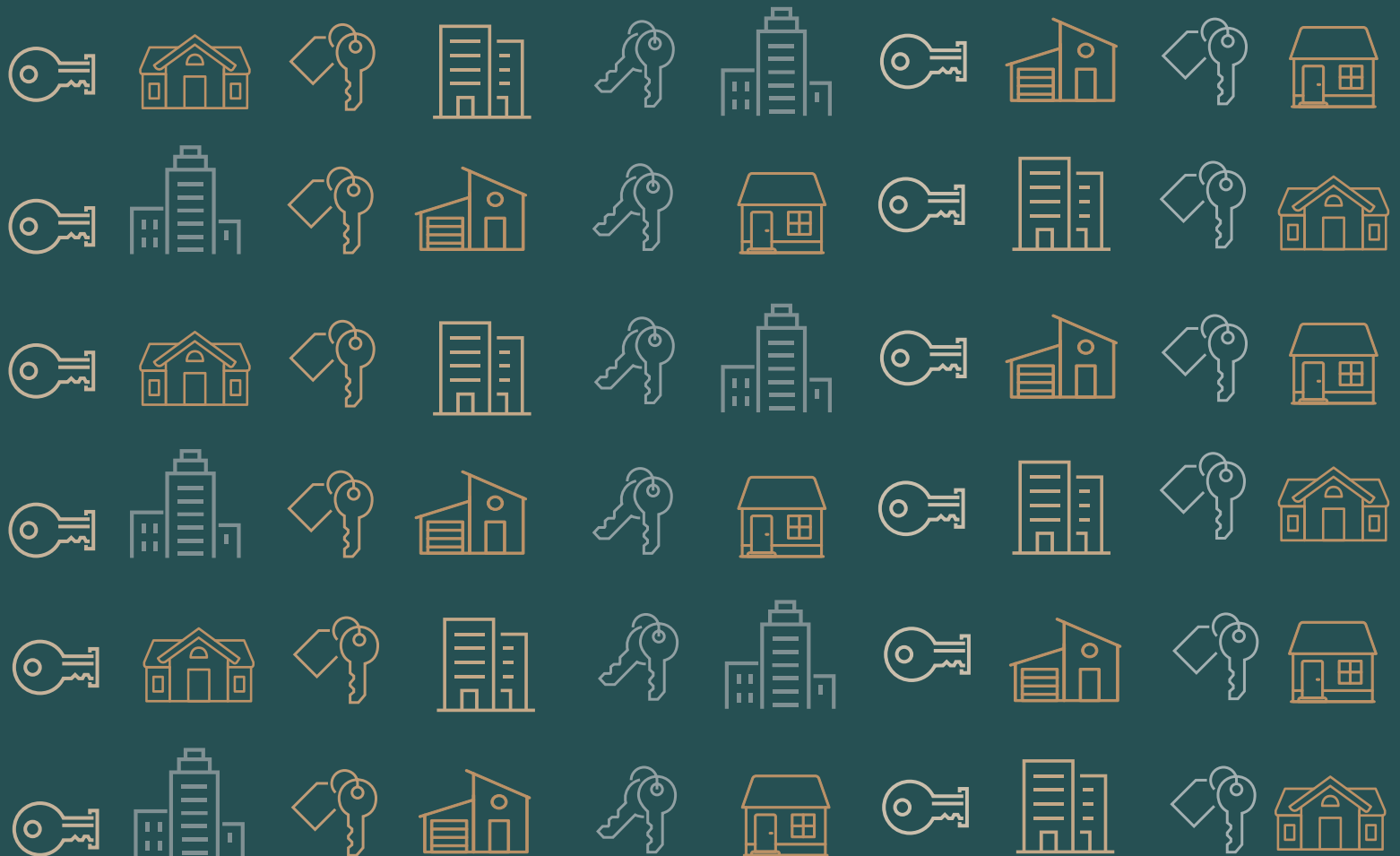




A Guide to Massachusetts Housing Resources for Unaccompanied Young Adults & Families 2020



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Introduction



This guide was created by the MA Department of Youth Services (DYS) as a road map for caseworkers, family engagement specialists, and anyone helping clients find and/or sustain housing. In the process of helping individuals and families search for housing, it is essential to ensure the right matching of services to the needs of the people being served. *A Guide to Massachusetts Housing Resources for Unaccompanied Young Adults & Families* is not an exhaustive list of phone numbers and addresses. Rather, this guide aims to steer people to the most appropriate category of help for identifying and obtaining housing, regardless of their tenancy barriers, such as lack of sufficient income, poor rental history, criminal history, disabilities, or other challenges that make it difficult to obtain and maintain housing. The end goal is to connect individuals and families with housing that is desirable and sustainable — i.e., in neighborhoods where they want to live, in communities that are safe, have access to transportation, and are close to employment.



This document is formatted for online use; all URLs are clickable.

Regional Contacts for Emergency Support



Services for Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness¹ or Housing Instability

WHERE TO GO:

EOHHS Homeless Youth Service Regions. (See contact chart on following pages 7–8)



 <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/ma-unaccompanied-homeless-youth-commission>

GOOD TO KNOW:

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) implements a statewide homeless youth program in 10 regions in Massachusetts. These regions provide housing and services to **unaccompanied homeless youth or youth at risk of homelessness up to age 24**. In each program region, EOHHS supports a provider or a network of providers who demonstrate that they can deliver: (1) ongoing services to unaccompanied homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness, and (2) appropriate and timely interventions in response to their needs. The lead agency, listed in the table below, coordinates among partners in the region and can connect unaccompanied homeless youth to the appropriate resources.

Shelter for Families

WHERE TO GO:

Apply for Emergency Services in person at one of ten locations in Massachusetts. There is no application form for emergency services online. You must call for assistance and visit one of the ten locations in Massachusetts. To apply for shelter services, please call  (866) 584-0653 and speak with a Homeless Coordinator. For more information on Emergency Assistance and to contact for help see:  <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-emergency-family-shelter>

GOOD TO KNOW:

Massachusetts is unique in that it operates the family shelter system at the state level rather than the county or city level. **Families facing a housing crisis may be deemed eligible for Emergency Shelter if they meet the following criteria:**

- Be a resident of Massachusetts
- Meet the gross income standards for Emergency Assistance
- Have needy children under the age of 21, or be pregnant

and the reason for homelessness is one of the following:

- No-fault fire, flood, natural disaster, condemnation, or foreclosure
- Fleeing domestic violence (current or within past 12 months)
- *No-fault* eviction
- Child(ren) are exposed to substantial health and safety risk

Four types of shelters are or have been available across the state:

- **Congregate shelter:** provides families with their own room and shared bathroom, kitchen and living area. These shelters are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Scattered-site shelters:** apartments in the community rented by the state. Families in scattered-site shelters receive services either through an offsite case manager visiting a family's home or by a family going to a central office.
- **Co-shelter:** apartments in the community shared by two to three families, with each family having its own bedroom and sharing the remainder of the apartment. Some apartments are staffed; others are not.
- **Hotels/motels:** Historically have been used as an overflow system when shelter capacity is filled. The use of hotels and motels is currently in the process of being discontinued.

¹ An "Unaccompanied" youth is an individual, under age 24, that is not in the custody or care of a parent or guardian

Additionally, there are some family shelters with rooms available for families who are not eligible for state-funded shelter. There is a high demand for these rooms and thus they are often full. It is recommended to call them directly to determine availability. <http://www.mahomeless.org/get-help/families/81-resource-links/125-community-rooms>

Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention

WHERE TO GO:

Housing Consumer Education Centers, <http://www.masshousinginfo.org/regional-agencies>

GOOD TO KNOW

Each of the nine member agencies of the Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts acts as the Housing Consumer Education Center for its region. These agencies offer housing assistance, an array of services including eviction-prevention, and information to low- and moderate-income residents of MA. Two of the agencies (Community Teamwork Inc in Lowell and SMOC in Framingham) are also the lead agencies in their region for EOHHS Homeless Youth Services and many of these also can help with housing search.

Housing Search Agencies

WHERE TO GO:

The following is a list of programs in each region dedicated to housing search. This list is appropriate for both young adults and families who need assistance with housing search.

Western MA: Franklin Co Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Turner Falls, MA

<https://www.fcrhra.org/education/housing-search-workshops>

Central MA: The Central MA Housing Alliance Housing Assistance Program, Worcester MA

http://www.cmhaonline.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=60&Itemid=109

Metro Boston: HomeStart, Boston, MA

<https://www.homestart.org/housing-search>

Northeastern MA: Community Teamwork, Housing Consumer Education Center, Lowell, MA

<http://www.commteam.org/how-we-help/housing-utilities/hcec/>

South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc. (SMOC), Framingham, MA

























<http://www.smoc.org/housing-consumer-education-center.php>

Southeastern MA: Housing Assistance Corporation, Hyannis, MA <https://capehousing.org/>

GOOD TO KNOW:

Housing search agencies help individuals and families assess their housing difficulties including CORI check and repair, developing an appropriate housing plan, locating available housing, filling out extensive application paperwork, and help with budgeting. These agencies typically have worked extensively with local realtors, landlords, housing authorities, and housing development agencies to increase the number of available units. For young adults, EOHHS youth providers can also help with housing search, and some of the above listed agencies are also the lead EOHHS youth service providers.

REGIONAL CONTACT CHART

DYS REGION	EA OFFICES Family Emergency Shelter	HOUSING CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTERS Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention	EOHHS HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICE REGIONS: LEAD AGENCY Services for Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability
WESTERN	Springfield  310 State Street	Berkshire Housing Development Corp  1 Fenn Street, 3rd floor, Pittsfield, MA 01202-1180  (413) 499-1630 x 108 Fax: (413) 445-7633  lwright@berkshirehousing.com  www.berkshirehousing.com	Berkshire County Jacob Hogue, Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority  1 Fenn Street Pittsfield, MA 01201  413-443-7138 or 1-800-248-9002 x226  jacobh@bcrha.com Franklin and Hampshire Counties Kelsey Wessels or Sam Pepe, DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services  16 Miles Street Greenfield MA 01301 15 E. Main Street Orange, MA 01364  413-774-7054 x 4  kwessels@dialself.org or spepe@dialself.org
		Franklin County Housing & Redevelopment Authority  241 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, MA 01376  (413) 223-5204  awatson@fchrha.org  www.fchrha.org	HAMPDEN COUNTY City of Springfield  The Impact Center 41 Taylor St, Springfield, MA 01103 (open Mon/Wed 10-5, Tues/Thurs 10-6)  Contact: Emily English or Mark Watkins at Gandara center (413)654-1554  eenglish@gandaracenter.org
CENTRAL	Worcester  13 Sudbury Street	RCAP Solutions, Inc.  12 East Worcester Street, Worcester, MA 01604  (978) 630-6600, (800) 488-1969 Fax: (978) 630-2751  hcec@rcapsolutions.org  www.rcapsolutions.org	WORCESTER COUNTY  call: 1-800-579-0000  99 Day St. Fitchburg, MA and 40 Southbridge St. 4th Fl. Worcester, MA

^^^

Chart continued on next page >>

DYS REGION	EA OFFICES Family Emergency Shelter	HOUSING CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTERS Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention	EOHHS HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICE REGIONS: LEAD AGENCY Services for Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability
NORTHEASTERN	<p>Lawrence 🏠 280 Merrimack Street</p> <p>Lowell 🏠 131 Davidson Street</p> <p>Salem 🏠 45 Congress Street, Suite 1176</p>	<p>South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc. 🏠 7 Bishop Street, Framingham, MA 01702 ☎ (508) 872-0765 ☎ Fax: (508) 620-2697 ✉ hcec@smoc.org 💻 www.smoc.org</p>	<p>METRO WEST (SO.MIDDLESEX & WEST NORFOLK COUNTIES), SOUTH MIDDLESEX OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL (SMOC) Erika Tegtmeier, Homeless Youth Program Director 🏠 7 Bishop Street, Framingham 01702 South Middlesex Opportunity Council ☎ 508-620-2469 Yolanda Ortiz, Program Director, Tempo ✉ Yolanda_ortiz@waysideyouth.org ☎ 508-879-1424</p>
	<p>Community Teamwork Inc 🏠 155 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA 01852 ☎ (978) 459-0551, (800) 698-0551 ☎ Fax: (978) 453-9128 ✉ kross@commteam.org 💻 www.commteam.org</p>	<p>NORTH MIDDLESEX COUNTY Community Teamwork Inc. (CTI) Amanda Mallardo, Director of Homeless Youth Svcs ☎ (978)-654-5801 ✉ Amallardo@commteam.org</p> <p>ESSEX COUNTY Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development Merlinda Marseille, NSHAG Youth Case Manager 🏠 39 Curwin Terrace, Lynn, MA 01905 ✉ mmarseille@lhand.org ☎ 339-883-2332</p>	
METRO	<p>Boston 🏠 1010 Mass Avenue - New Market Square</p> <p>Chelsea 🏠 80 Everett Avenue, 3rd Floor</p>	<p>Metro Housing Boston 🏠 1411 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02120-3401 ☎ (617) 425-6700, HCEC Resource Line (617) 859-0400 ☎ Fax: (617) 532-7559 ✉ resourceline@metrohousingboston.org 💻 www.metrohousingboston.org</p>	<p>METRO BOSTON (Cambridge & Somerville, Malden, Melrose, Chelsea, Everett, Waltham, plus Metro DYS region) Bridge Over Troubled Waters Peter Ducharme, Director of Program Services 🏠 47 West St Boston, MA ☎ 617-423-9575 ext. 210 ✉ pducharme@bridgeotw.org</p>
SOUTHEASTERN	<p>Hyannis 🏠 181 North Street</p> <p>Brockton 🏠 60 Main Street</p>	<p>Housing Assistance Corporation 🏠 460 West Main Street, Hyannis, MA 02601 ☎ (508) 771-5400 ☎ Fax: (508) 775-7434 ✉ cdanzl@haconcapecod.org 💻 www.haconcapecod.org</p>	<p>CAPE COD & ISLANDS County of Barnstable Dan Gray, CoC Program Manager ☎ (774) 224-0051 ✉ daniel.gray@barnstablecounty.org</p>
	<p>New Bedford 🏠 160 West Rodney French Boulevard</p>	<p>HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS 🏠 169 Summer Street, Kingston, MA 02364 ☎ (781) 422-4200, (800) 242-0957 ☎ Fax: (781) 585-7483 ✉ kfaccchini@housingsolutionssema.org 💻 www.housingsolutionssema.org</p>	<p>PLYMOUTH & EAST NORFOLK CO Father Bill's and MainSpring Patricia Jackson, Young Adult Program Manager 🏠 430 Belmont Street, Brockton, MA 02301 ✉ pjackson@helpfbms.org ☎ Alternate contact: Iraimi Diatta, (508)858-9849 ✉ Email: idiatta@oldcolonyymca.org</p> <p>BRISTOL COUNTY Catholic Social Services of Fall River ☎ 1-800-homeless or 508-674-4681 🏠 306 Ashley Boulevard, New Bedford, MA</p>

Types of Housing to Consider



Subsidized Housing

Households with limited income, including receiving SSI, SSDI, may be eligible for subsidized housing. Eligibility for subsidized housing typically depends on income, age, and/or disability. Additionally, towns and cities vary in the amount and type of housing units available. A Fact Sheet on Subsidized Housing may be found at:

 <https://www.massaccesshousingregistry.org/resources/subsidized-housing>

Housing Authorities

WHERE TO GO:

For a list of local Housing Authorities please see:

 <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/local-housing-authority-contact-listing>

An informational guide on eligibility to how and when to access housing authorities:

 <https://www.mass.gov/guides/a-guide-to-obtaining-housing-assistance>

GOOD TO KNOW:

A Housing Authority is the public agency that provides access to subsidized public housing. The above publication called "How to Obtain Housing Assistance" is from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the state housing authority.

Market Rate Housing

WHERE TO GO:

Young adults who need assistance with renting market-rate housing should contact a regional EOHHS youth service provider or the housing search agency listed in the chart above. Families should contact a housing search agency.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Market rate housing is any rental housing that is not subsidized.

Additional Housing Resources




Evictions

WHERE TO GO:

For help mitigating landlord disputes and evictions, contact one of the ten regional Housing Consumer Education Centers. These centers can also help connect households to local eviction prevention and legal resources

 <http://www.masshousinginfo.org/regional-agencies>

GOOD TO KNOW:

In Massachusetts, it is illegal for a landlord, on his or her own, to remove tenants and occupants and their belongings from a rented apartment, room, or home without first getting a court order. The court order that allows a landlord to evict a tenant is called an execution. Even after a landlord gets an execution, only a sheriff or constable can move a tenant and his or her belongings out of the property.  <https://www.mass.gov/eviction-for-tenants>

The Massachusetts' Housing Court Guide to Landlord-Tenant issues offers information about responding to an eviction, and what may happen before and after an eviction court case.

 <https://www.mass.gov/guides/housing-courts-guide-to-landlord-tenant-issues>

Financial Assistance for Homelessness Prevention: RAFT

WHERE TO GO:

For more information about RAFT and who to contact for help see:

 <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-residential-assistance-for-families-in-transition-raft>

GOOD TO KNOW:

The RAFT Program is a homelessness prevention program funded by DHCD. RAFT provides short-term financial assistance to low-income families, elders, persons with a disability, and unaccompanied youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Costs can cover: moving cost assistance, rent and utility arrears, rental stipends, utility bills, security deposits, utility startup costs, first/last month's rent, and furniture.

Housing Resources for Specific Subpopulations

College Students

WHERE TO GO:

Prospective or enrolled students at community or State colleges should contact the 'Single Point of Contact' on their campus  https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/uaccess/ma_network/spoc/directory

GOOD TO KNOW:

In order to offer students the necessary support at the college-level, many institutions have designated a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) as the on-campus point person for addressing students' needs. The SPOC assists youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability during matriculation and throughout their college career, helping students access a broad range of services both on and off campus. The goal is to provide a continuum of support after homeless students transitioning from high school to college education.

LGBTQ+ identified persons

WHERE TO GO:

The AGLY network is a network of youth workers from community-based LGBTQ youth groups throughout Massachusetts. Each LGBTQ youth group in the AGLY Network offers a variety of social support programming and development opportunities that build on the strengths and abilities of LGBTQ young people across the state.

 <https://www.bagly.org/the-agly-network>

GOOD TO KNOW:

LGBTQ-identified young adults are more likely than their straight or cis-gendered peers to experience homelessness and if they do become homeless, they are more likely to experience violence or exploitation. Safe, accepting, and affirming services, and physical spaces for support are essential to serving this population.

Persons with Mental Health Needs

WHERE TO GO:

CBHI provides individual at-home therapeutic housing-supports through MassHealth:

 <https://www.mass.gov/masshealth-childrens-behavioral-health-initiative>

For families in Boston or Worcester seeking to support family members with mental health disorders:

 <http://ppal.net/>


GOOD TO KNOW:

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) assists their clients with housing and housing supports.

Non-DMH clients who may need mental health support in order to obtain and maintain their housing should contact one of the following resources:

Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI)-CBHI ensures that children with MassHealth coverage, who have significant behavioral, emotional and mental health needs and their families get the services they need for success in home, school, community, and throughout life. This includes in home therapy to help a family remain housed.

 <https://www.mass.gov/masshealth-childrens-behavioral-health-initiative>

Parent Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)- PPAL is located in Boston and Worcester. PPAL offers support to families of persons with mental illness, to help them stay housed with their families in the community.  <http://ppal.net/>

Persons with CORIs

WHERE TO GO:

Contact a housing search agency (See “Housing Search Agencies” above) to support people and households find housing when they have certain charges on their CORIs. Additionally, search websites such as Craigslist and Facebook who will have apartment listings that are less likely to require formal background checks.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Any federally subsidized housing property cannot accept tenants with certain felony charges including: arson, lifetime registered sex offenders, drug trafficking, certain violent crimes, or conviction for producing methamphetamine in federally subsidized housing.

Public housing authorities and property management companies operating public or subsidized housing can request “Required 1” CORI access. Required 1 CORI access means that a requester will get:

- All criminal cases still going on in court, including cases where a person younger than 17 years old is being tried as an adult,
- Adult misdemeanor and felony convictions no matter how old, including cases where a person younger than 17 years old has been convicted as an adult (unless sealed), and
- Murder, manslaughter or sex offense convictions, no matter how old (unless sealed).

The requester must not get:

- Any sealed cases,
- Juvenile cases when a person younger than 17 was not convicted as an adult,
- Cases where there was no conviction,
- Cases that were continued without a finding and then dismissed,
- Civil cases, or
- Non-incarcerable cases.

Property management companies, real estate agents, and private landlords renting market rate housing may request “Standard” CORI access and a requester will get:

- Criminal cases still going on in court,
- Misdemeanor convictions within the past 5 years, including cases where a person younger than 17 years old is convicted as an adult,
- Felony convictions within the past 10 years, including cases where a person younger than 17 years old is convicted as an adult, and
- Murder, manslaughter or sex offense convictions, no matter how old (unless sealed).

The requester must not get:

- Any sealed cases,
- Cases where there was no conviction,
- Misdemeanor convictions more than 5 years old,
- Felony convictions more than 10 years old,
- Juvenile cases,
- Civil cases, or
- Non-incarcerable cases.

Though multi-unit complexes and large property management companies typically run background checks and may deny someone with a criminal background, they also have an appeal process if someone feels they were unfairly denied due to their CORI.

Private landlords generally are not held to any particular federal law which requires them to provide housing to somebody if they choose not to.

Additionally, individuals applying for housing should review their credit score. There are often situations where someone with a CORI is denied due to a low credit score and lack of employment history rather than their CORI.

Persons with Disabilities

WHERE TO GO:

Mass Access is a free online program that matches people with disabilities with vacant, accessible housing.

www.massaccesshousingregistry.org

The Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) provides information about searching for rental housing in Massachusetts for people who have one or more disability https://www.chapa.org/sites/default/files/sdfasdfsaf_2.pdf

GOOD TO KNOW:

Any person who has a disability, a family member, or an advocate can obtain housing information, regardless of age, income or type of disability. The CHAPA guide is also helpful to people who are low-income. This guide is similar to the [DHCD](#) guide for obtaining housing but offers additional guidance for requesting reasonable accommodations.

Persons Involved in Commercial Sex Exploitation/Trafficking

WHERE TO GO:

Under 18: My Life My choice (Metro, Southeast, Central and Northeast regions + Worcester)

<http://mylifemychoice.org/>

Over 18: Lift (central and western regions) <https://liftworcester.org/lift-services/>

Eva Center (Metro region) <https://www.evacenter.org/>

GOOD TO KNOW:

Under 18- Massachusetts law requires mandated reporters to immediately file a 51A report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is suffering from abuse and/or neglect, which includes anyone under the age of 18 who is at-risk of or is being sexually exploited or trafficked.

Youth under 18 can also be referred to My Life My choice <http://mylifemychoice.org/>

(Metro, Southeast, Central and Northeast regions + Worcester) for survivor-led support services. My Life My Choice takes referrals for youth of all gender identities and expressions under the age of 18 and serves them beyond the age of 18.

Over 18- Young adults who have been sexually exploited may need intensive life skills and wraparound support in order to obtain and maintain housing. Connection to both an EOHHS youth service provider as well as additional survivor-support agencies is encouraged.

Young adults 18 and over, can refer themselves for survivor support services to:

Lift (central and western regions) or <https://liftworcester.org/lift-services/>

Eva Center (Metro region) <https://www.evacenter.org/>

The MA Coalition to End Human Trafficking has a statewide resource directory that can be filtered by “direct services” and/or “aftercare” <http://mceht.org/#/allies>

Pregnant and Parenting Young Adults

WHERE TO GO:

Under age 22 - DCF/DTA Teen Parents Program: call Kellie Hurley at ☎ 508-929-2183 or Kelly Paquet at ☎ 617-748-2228. Over age 22-The Young Parent Support Program (YPS): call Kellie Hurley at ☎ 508-929-2183 or Paula Callahan at ☎ 617-748-2305.

GOOD TO KNOW:

The TPP provides structured residential living to pregnant and parenting teens between the ages of 13-20 while allowing the teen parent families to remain intact. A collaboration between the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Transitional Assistance, the TPP provides young families a safe and caring environment in which to develop the skills necessary to make healthy choices for themselves and their children, and to lead independent and productive lives.

The Young Parent Support Program (YPS) is a community based service that meets the various needs of pregnant and parenting young adults and their children. The YPS Program is an open-referral program and serves young parent families up to age 23. It is the intent of the DCF that YPS Services assist young parents in obtaining the necessary skills and knowledge to be competent parents, live independently, lead productive lives, and ensure the healthy growth and development of their children.

Services are available to mothers and fathers and may include, but are not limited to outreach, case management, transportation, independent living skills training, parenting skills training, domestic violence education and counseling, substance abuse counseling, and child development education.

Young women over age 22, can also referred to Emergency Assistance.

https://eohhs.ehs.state.ma.us/DTA/PolicyOnline/!SSL/!WebHelp/TAFDC/ESP/ESP_-_Competitive_Integrated_Employment_Services/Young_Parents_program.htm

Substance Use/Recovery Housing and Housing Supports

WHERE TO GO:

To find resources, such as supportive case management for young adult and/or their family or to refer a young adult to treatment please contact the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline at: ☎️ 1-800- 327-5050

🖥️ <https://helplinema.org>

GOOD TO KNOW:

The Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) offers Supportive Case Management to young adults and/or families in recovery achieve self-sufficiency in the context of housing. Case management services are provided within an alcohol and drug-free living environment that reinforces recovery through establishing community-based supports to maintain ongoing goals in the recovery process. Services include: Relapse management through a risk reduction plan, life skills experiential education, recovery support and recovery-oriented activities, peer groups, housing stabilization support (if in transitional housing- support with finding permanent housing), referral and service coordination with community resources, family support and reunification, facilitate access to necessary health/social services/ mainstream benefits and discharge planning.

Undocumented Individuals

WHERE TO GO:

For help determining what programs undocumented individuals may or may not be eligible for please see:

🖥️ <https://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing/immigrants-and-housing> and/or contact a regional Housing Consumer Education Center 🖥️ <http://www.masshousinginfo.org/regional-agencies>

GOOD TO KNOW:

Some subsidized housing programs in Massachusetts can limit who can apply, including families where some members are without documentation or legal status.





General Resources



211

211 is a free, multilingual, phone and web-based service with an extensive database of resources. In Massachusetts, 211 partners with HelpSteps and together staff are continually dedicated to improving search features, data, and usability for users. To search 211's database for housing and other resources please visit:

 <https://www.helpsteps.com/hs/home/#/> Additionally, anyone can simply pick up the phone and  **dial 211** for assistance searching in over 100 languages.


Continuum of Care (CoC)

There are 15 Continua of Care (CoC) in Massachusetts that partner with the EOHHS youth service regions. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines CoCs as programs "... designed to assist individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families experiencing homelessness and to provide the services needed to help such individuals move into transitional and permanent housing, with the goal of long-term stability." CoCs coordinate family services such as Emergency Assistance. "

 <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramIntroductoryGuide.pdf>

While the waits may be lengthy, people interested in applying for a CoC funded housing program should discuss his or her needs with a local homeless service provider and/or with a worker representing a state agency funded provider that provides services.

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)


DTA is the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, also known as the welfare department. DTA provides direct economic assistance (cash benefits), food assistance (SNAP benefits), as well as workforce training opportunities. There are 22 DTA offices in MA; click here to locate:  https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-transitional-assistance/locations?_page=1

The MA Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission

The purpose of the UHY Commission is to study and make recommendations regarding services for unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and to provide comprehensive and effective responses to the unique needs of this population. On the Commission's website you will be able to find statewide contacts for youth providers, drop in centers, and more:

 <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/ma-unaccompanied-homeless-youth-commission>

Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless

The MA Coalition for the Homeless is an advocacy agency as well as provider and coordinator of services. Their website contains both advocacy information as well as listings of resources for youth, individuals, and families experiencing homelessness or housing instability.  <https://www.mahomeless.org/get-help>



National Best Practices from Literature Review



Child-welfare placements:

A young person's willingness and desire to be involved with child welfare may vary depending on individual circumstances. However, for youth under 18 for whom a return to their family of origin is not possible, connection with the child welfare system may be necessitated. Youth who wish to receive services through the child welfare agencies should be able to do so when their parents are unable or unwilling to provide a safe home. In Massachusetts, young adults who are in the custody of child welfare prior to their involvement with juvenile justice, can also choose to receive continued services after their 18th birthday through extended foster care or child welfare involvement.² These services include a range of housing options and supports depending on the youth's desires and circumstances.³

Community-based housing programs for youth and young adults:

When staying with family or continuing with child welfare is not an option, juvenile justice stakeholders must work with other state and community stakeholders to identify short and long-term housing options, as young people should never spend more time in the juvenile justice system simply because there are no other housing options. The best-practice handbook *Addressing the Intersections of Juvenile Justice Involvement and Youth Homelessness: Principles for Change* suggests identifying independent living programs during transition planning; they say:

*Transition plans should specifically address long-term housing stability, meaning that agencies don't simply ask if each youth has a place to sleep the night or week they are released, but are also ensuring that youth are positioned to safely return to their homes until adulthood and/or find and keep new places to live or independent housing.*⁴

Ideally, caseworkers and probation officers work to identify and prioritize out-of-home placements that are the least restrictive or most family-like.⁵

Additionally, there are organizations in many communities that focus on the needs of young adults experiencing homelessness and housing instability, and juvenile justice case workers should be familiar with these programs and have the ability to refer appropriately and quickly.⁶ Perhaps most noteworthy of these are the Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs funded through US Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Service Bureau. The RHY program is the national leader for providing shelter and housing services to unaccompanied homeless youth and has four primary programs: Street Outreach Program, the Basic Center Program, the Transitional Living Program, and the Maternity Group Home. (More information on each of these programs can be found in Appendix B.)

Housing Youth with sex offenses:

The literature indicates that youth who have been adjudicated for sex offenses require special policies, practices, and considerations. If a young person is required to register as a sex offender, they may face even greater challenges accessing housing and be even more vulnerable to homelessness. As a result, more intensive transition planning, as early as possible, is essential--particularly for youth who cannot return to their parents'/guardians' homes.

² More information on accessing services after age 18 from the MA Department of Children and Families (DCF) may be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/the-answer-book-leaving-dcf-care>

³ There are two specific national child welfare policies and programs relevant for transition age youth in the juvenile justice system who need to connect/reconnect with the child welfare at discharge. The first is the federally funded John H. Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program, which promotes successful transition to independent living for youth up to age 21 with services that typically include housing, educational/vocational training, and mental health treatment. The second housing program within the child welfare system is the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) model. MTFC is an evidence-based treatment model that works to decrease problem behavior and to increase developmentally appropriate normative and prosocial behavior in children and adolescents who are in need of out of-home placement. Youth are referred into MTFC through a variety of places including juvenile justice and foster care. Depending on the youth's age and severity needs, one of these two programs provide a supportive housing option via child welfare for youth transitioning out of juvenile justice.

⁴ "Addressing the Intersections of Juvenile Justice Involvement and Youth Homelessness: Principles for Change." Coalition for Juvenile Justice and National Network for Youth. Accessed September 22, 2018. https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Principles_FINAL.pdf

⁵ "How to Leverage Continuum of Care Reform for Placement Instead of Custody: An Advocacy Guide for Juvenile Defenders." Bay Area Legal Aid. Accessed September 24, 2018 at <https://baylegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Advocacy-Guide-Leveraging-CCR-for-Placement-Instead-of-Custody.pdf>

⁶ "Addressing the Intersections of Juvenile Justice Involvement and Youth Homelessness: Principles for Change." Coalition for Juvenile Justice and National Network for Youth. Accessed September 22, 2018. https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Principles_FINAL.pdf

Minors and Young Adults- key differences for housing:

Juvenile justice systems across the country now work with an increasingly larger number of young people over age 18, and young adults (18-24) often require different approaches and services than minors. At age 18, an individual is a legal adult, and such status provides both more options and burden. A young adult can contract for their own housing and services, as well as receive public benefits such as food stamps and health insurance. Young adults no longer need their parents to legally make decisions for them, but conversely, their parents are no longer required to house them. The report “Implementing Change: Addressing the Intersections of Juvenile Justice and Youth Homelessness for Young Adults” further unpacks these concerns regarding a return home for transition age youth,

Although many families will welcome their children home, and healthy and supportive relationships are extremely beneficial to young people even if they live elsewhere, returning to the family home may no longer be the default transition plan. Youth may be barred from living with their families due to their justice involvement, there may be safety issues in the home, or the family’s financial situation may not allow them to take care of one more person. Services can and should be offered to families, but as youth near and pass age 18, they need to have housing plans and options beyond living with their parents.⁷

Minors, young people under the age of 18, are often unable to contract for benefits to meet their basic needs, or to make key decisions about their own lives, although there are some state laws that make exceptions. In Massachusetts, minors have the legal ability to enter into contracts such as apartment leases.⁸ However, even though minors can technically apply for a lease or for public housing, and legally have the right to sign a lease, they are not guaranteed this housing. Having a severely limited or non-existent credit and employment history may lower their chances of obtaining housing. Minors who have a court-ordered emancipation have a better chance of securing a lease than unemancipated minors under federal and state housing regulations.⁹ Even so, when family support is not an option, it may be easier and more beneficial for child welfare to provide housing than for a minor to try and obtain on their own.

⁷ “Implementing Change: Addressing the Intersections of Juvenile Justice and Youth Homelessness for Young Adults” Accessed September 2, 2018; <https://www.juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/Implementing%20Change%20-%20Juvenile%20Justice%20and%20Youth%20Homelessness.pdf>

⁸ “Emancipation and the Legal Rights of Minors in Massachusetts.” Social Security Benefits for Homeless People with Disabilities - MassLegalHelp. Accessed September 27, 2018. <https://www.masslegalhelp.org/children-and-families/emancipation>

⁹ *ibid*



Appendix A: Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs

The Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs are funded through the US Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Service Bureau. The RHY program is the national leader for providing shelter and housing services to unaccompanied homeless youth and has four primary programs: Street Outreach Program, Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program, and the Maternity Group Home. The following summaries are adapted from the US Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Service Bureau's Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Fact Sheets.¹⁰

The Street Outreach Program (SOP) supports work with homeless, runaway and street youth to help them find stable housing and services. SOPs focus on developing relationships between outreach workers and young people that allow them to rebuild connections with caring adults. The ultimate goal is to prevent the sexual exploitation and abuse of youth on the streets.

Street outreach services include:

- Street based education and outreach
- Access to emergency shelter
- Survival aid
- Treatment and counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Follow-up support

The Basic Center Program (BCP) helps create and strengthen community-based programs that meet the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth under 18 years old. In addition, BCP tries to reunite young people with their families or locate appropriate alternative placements.

BCP provides the following services:

- Up to 21 days of shelter
- Food, clothing and medical care
- Individual, group and family counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Recreation programs
- Aftercare services for youth after they leave the shelter

The Transitional Living Program (TLP) for older homeless youth supports projects that provide long-term residential services to homeless youth. Young people must be between the ages of 16 and 22 to enter the program.

Living accommodations may include:

- Host-family homes
- Group homes or maternity group homes
- Supervised apartments owned by the program or rented in the community

TLPs offer or refer for the following services:

- Safe, stable living accommodations

¹⁰"About the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program." Children's Bureau | ACF. Accessed September 27, 2018. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

- Basic life skills building, including consumer education, budgeting, housekeeping, food preparation and parenting skills
- Educational opportunities, such as GED preparation, post-secondary training and vocational education
- Job attainment services, such as career counseling and job placement
- Mental health care, including individual and group counseling
- Physical health care, such as physicals and emergency treatment

The Maternity Group Homes for Pregnant and Parenting Youth (MGH) program supports homeless pregnant and/or parenting young people, as well as their dependent children. Youth must be between the ages of 16 and 22 to enter the program.

In addition to standard TLP services, MGH programs offer an array of comprehensive services to teach:

- Parenting skills
- Child development
- Family budgeting
- Health and nutrition

MGH projects incorporate the principles of positive youth development and administer services such as:

- Child-safe transitional and independent living accommodations
- Education in parenting, child discipline and safety
- Mental, physical, and reproductive health care
- Resources to help youth identify reliable, affordable child care
- Money management and use of credit
- Educational opportunities, such as GED preparation, post-secondary training and vocational education

