

**MA Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth – Protocols to Create Welcoming Spaces
– June 2018**

The Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission recommends the following action to support the creation of safe and welcoming spaces for youth and all who are dedicated to ending youth homelessness in the Commonwealth.

For immediate action, the Chair of the Commission supported by commission members will:

- Send out agenda 2-3 days ahead of meeting
- Identify group working agreements at every meeting (suggested language below)
- Provide name tags
- Set up room to ensure good sightlines to allow for everyone to be called on, seen, and heard
- Facilitate meetings in a manner that intentionally solicits perspectives from multiple people, including YYAs at the meeting
- Compensate YYA to attend meetings

Future considerations will include:

- Whenever feasible choose meeting spaces that are low-barrier to enter (such as a public library)
 - Select a location that doesn't require ID's
 - Choose child-friendly location
- Identifying supports for children/childcare
 - Possibly have an on-site volunteer; based around a community support model
 - Identify resources that may be set aside for childcare services
 - Book an adjacent room for attendees with children to be close by

In preparing for Commission meetings and to provide guidance to other conveners of forums and meetings across the state in their work to end youth homelessness, the Commission recommends the following action steps:

Proposed Group Agreements (this text will be included in the youth commission agenda and it is recommended that other conveners of meetings and forums adopt these protocols)

Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Working agreements:

We agree to:

- Assume good intentions and remember that we are here to achieve the same goal: to prevent and end homelessness for youth and young adults in the Commonwealth
- Use respectful language (including using “youth and young adults” or “young people” instead of “kids”; “youth experiencing homelessness” instead of “homeless youth”
- Ask for and use people’s preferred pronouns (*she/her/hers; he/him/his; or they/them/theirs*)
- Engage in differences of opinion with courtesy and respect and follow up directly with someone if a misunderstanding takes place
- Welcome all participants into the room and conversation, especially young adults with lived experience
- Understand that a commitment to inclusion may mean that the norms of “professional meetings” may need to be altered, including norms around the presence of children, explaining acronyms, and sensitivity to the personal relevance of topics of discussion