

"I did not choose to be living in a car... Please understand that I am scared. I am frightened. I am confused. I just want help."

-YOUTH IN THREE COUNTY

Ending Youth Homelessness in Massachusetts

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The MA State Plan to End Youth Homelessness includes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” It also establishes that the first step towards achieving this vision is for both the State & each Region to understand the demographics of youth & young adults (YYAs) experiencing homelessness and the resources designed to serve them. To this end, in 2019, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) required each of the ten regionally funded partners to submit a community needs assessment to the MA Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH).

Findings: On a single night in 2018, **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts; of these, 465 were individual unaccompanied YYA and 615 were pregnant or parenting.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA.² These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn't safe, home isn't supportive, or home doesn't exist.

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



In Massachusetts, **Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness** as compared to the overall population of YYAs, with the greatest disparities in Plymouth County where Black YYAs are more than 7x as likely to experience homelessness.^{4,5} **Latinx YYAs are more than 2.5x as likely to experience homelessness in MA** with the greatest disparities in the Metro West region where Latinx YYAs are 8.5x more likely to experience homelessness.^{4,5}



Statewide **24% of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+.**⁶



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7.³ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide; 218 of these students (42.4%) were identified in Essex County.⁶ Additionally in 2018, 51% of YYA experiencing homelessness in Worcester reported foster care involvement, which was nearly double the state rate of 26.4%.³



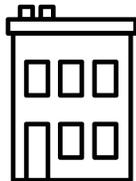
In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting.**^{1,2} 100% of these individuals were in emergency shelter.

[1] 2018 HUD PIT Count; [2] FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; [3] 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; [4] FY18 Statewide HMIS; [5] 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; [6] MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018

Addressing the Findings

November 2019

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



Housing

MA currently has 466 housing units specifically for YYA + 76 emergency shelter beds for YYA.² **To reach the goal of ending YYA-homelessness, an estimated 1,100-1,200 additional YYA-dedicated units must be added over the next five years to end homelessness for YYAs who would not likely stabilize without housing assistance.** These units should consist of a broad array of models in urban, suburban & rural communities. Also, every Region must assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. **EOHHS will create and launch an empowering, trauma-informed youth homelessness awareness campaign** targeted to YYA, providers, and the general public. EOHHS will also continue to support Regions' efforts to partner with and train a broad array of stakeholders. Such partnerships must include DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, schools, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available at least in both English and Spanish. Finally, there is a need for **an improved identification and service protocol for minors** as a means to both prevent experiences of homelessness and serve them as quickly as possible when experiencing homelessness.



Transportation

YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. **EOHHS will support Regions to improve access to transportation by reviewing existing programs and identifying both gaps and opportunities for expansion, coordinating among regional transportation authorities, and investing in innovation and flexibility.**



Employment Opportunities

Most YYA need improved employment connections & support in order to maintain housing. **EOHHS recommends that the ICHH and its partner agencies develop a statewide hiring & retention strategy for YYA experiencing homelessness in partnership with the Executive Office of Labor Workforce Development.**



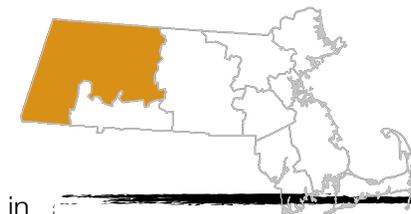
Substance Use & Mental Health Support

Many regions reported both a lack of services available and long waitlists for YYAs who sought out treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. There is a need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain housing and employment. **EOHHS will coordinate efforts with MassHealth, DPH/Bureau of Substance Addiction Services and the Department of Mental Health to improve support of YYA in existing substance use and mental-health programming and create new YYA-dedicated resources where appropriate.**

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

"A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. "Fixed" refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. "Regular" means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). "Adequate" means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth."

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH



Ending Youth Homelessness in Three County

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, Three County engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

“I did not choose to be living in a car... Please understand that I am scared. I am frightened. I am confused. I just want help.”

-YOUTH IN THREE COUNTY

Findings: On a single night in 2018, **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **24** of these YYA were in Three County.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA, and **101** in Three County.² These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn’t safe, home isn’t supportive, or home doesn’t exist.

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness statewide and 3.5x as likely in Three Co. as compared to the overall population of YYAs.^{4,5} **Latinx YYAs are 5X more likely to experience homelessness** in Three County which is significantly higher than statewide where they are more than 2.5x as likely to experience homelessness.^{4,5}



In Three County, **27% of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+** as compared to 24% statewide.³



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7.³ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide; and 34 of these youth were in Three County. ^{3,6} *“I was half a year from turning 16 when I became homeless. There was nothing I could do to prevent it.”* - YYA



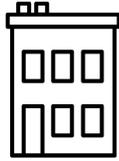
In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting.**^{1,2} 100% of these individuals were in emergency shelter.

[1] 2018 HUD PIT Count; [2] FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; [3] 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; [4] FY18 Statewide HMIS; [5] 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; [6] MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018

Addressing the Findings

November 2019

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



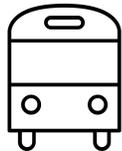
Housing

There are currently 56 housing units specifically for YYA in Three County. This region currently has no emergency shelter options specifically for YYAs. Three County must add additional YYA-dedicated units in order to end homelessness for YYAs who would not stabilize without housing assistance. These units should consist of a broad array of models in urban, suburban & rural communities. Also, Three County must assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. Three County must continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. Such partnerships must include DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, schools, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in both English and Spanish. Finally, there is a need for improved identification of minors as a means to both prevent experiences of homelessness and to serve them as quickly as possible when they are already experiencing homelessness.



Transportation

YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. Three County can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs and identify both gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility.



Employment Opportunities

Most YYA will need improved employment connections and support in order to maintain housing, as the majority of YYA will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.



Substance Use & Mental Health Support

In Three Co, 21% of YYA self-identified their mental health and 13% self-identified their substance use disorders as disabling conditions. This is likely a significant undercount. There is an identified need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain stable housing and employment.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing...and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

-Homeless Service Provider in MA

Ending Youth Homelessness in Hampden County

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, Hampden County engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

Findings: On a single night in 2018, **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **120** of these YYA were in Hampden County.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA, and **509** in Hampden County.² These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn't safe, home isn't supportive, or home doesn't exist.

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness statewide.⁴ While this is lower in Hampden County, Black YYA are still nearly twice as likely to experience homelessness as compared to other YYAs.^{3,5} **Latinx YYAs are approximately 2.5x as likely to experience homelessness both in Hampden County and statewide.**^{3,5}



Statewide **24%** of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as **LGBTQ+** and 13% in the Hampden County region.⁶



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7.⁶ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, and 29 of these were identified in Hampden County.⁷



In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting.**^{1,2} 100% of these individuals were in emergency shelter.

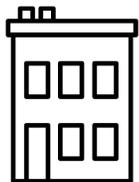


“When I became homeless, I went a long time without eating. I didn't want to put that burden on other people.... people thought I had an eating disorder.”
-Young Adult in Springfield

1) 2018 HUD PIT Count; 2) FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; 3) FY18 Springfield HMIS; 4) FY18 Statewide HMIS; 5) 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; 6) 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; 7) MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018 school year

Addressing the Findings

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



Housing

There are 5 programs & 63 units specifically for YYA in this region, 12 of which are YYA emergency beds. A crisis-residential facility is under development in Springfield, but more units are needed throughout the region. One provider lamented, “We have a [housing] list, but all the lists have waiting lists.” Hampden Co. must also assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates & achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report “flying under the radar” and not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. Hampden County needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers and the schools, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English and Spanish.



Transportation

YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. Hampden County can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs and identify both gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility.



Employment Opportunities

The poverty rate in Hampden County is 23% for YYA; nearly double the national average (12.3%). Most YYA need improved employment connections and support in order to maintain housing, as the majority of young adults will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.



Substance Use & Mental Health Support

Hampden County reported both a lack of services available and long waitlists for YYAs who sought out treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. There is a need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain stable housing and employment.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing... and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

-Homeless Service Provider in MA



Ending Youth Homelessness in Worcester County

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, Worcester County engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

“How can I get a job if I don't even got a place to shower or sleep or eat? There's a hundred of other kids like me sleepin' in these buildings and no one [cares].”

-YOUTH IN WORCESTER

Findings: On a single night in 2018, **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **139** of these YYA were in Worcester County.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA, and **376** in Worcester.² These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn't safe, home isn't supportive, or home doesn't exist.

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness statewide.⁴ While this is lower in Worcester County, Black YYA are still nearly twice as likely to experience homelessness as compared to other YYAs.^{3,5} **Latinx YYAs are approximately 2.5x as likely to experience homelessness both in Worcester County and statewide.**^{3,5}



Statewide **24%** of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as **LGBTQ+** and 21% in Worcester.⁶



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7 and 16.3 in Worcester County.⁶ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, and 68 of these were in Worcester County; the 2nd highest in MA.⁷ Additionally in 2018, 51% of unaccompanied YYA in Worcester reported foster care involvement, which was nearly double the state rate of 26.4%.⁶

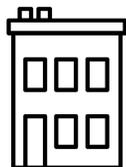


In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting** compared to **40%** in Worcester County.^{3,4} 100% of these YYA were in emergency shelter.

Addressing the Findings

November 2019

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



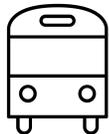
Housing

There are currently 5 YYA Rapid rehousing units, 74 transitional housing units and 4 host homes for YYA in Worcester County. This region currently has no emergency shelter options specifically for young adults, and more permanent housing options are needed throughout the region. Worcester County also must assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. Worcester Co. needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers and the schools, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English and Spanish.



Transportation

YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. Worcester County can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs, identify gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility.



Employment Opportunities

Most YYA need employment connections and support in order to obtain and maintain housing, as the majority of YYA will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.



Substance Use & Mental Health Support

Worcester Co has the second largest number of YYA who identified as homeless upon enrollment into the substance use treatment system. Additionally, “family substance abuse” was repeatedly stressed as problematic and a precursor to homelessness. Furthermore, Worcester YYA & providers reported both a lack of services available and long waitlists for YYAs who sought out treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. There is a need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain stable housing and employment.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing...and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

-Homeless Service Provider in MA



Ending Youth Homelessness in Bristol County

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, Bristol County engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

Findings: On a single night in 2018, **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **59** of these YYA were in Bristol County.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA, and **104** in Bristol County.² These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn’t safe, home isn’t supportive, or home doesn’t exist.

“I did not choose to be living in a car... Please understand that I am scared. I am frightened. I am confused. I just want help.”

-YOUNG ADULT

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness statewide⁴ and **5x more likely in Bristol County** as compared to as compared to the overall population of YYAs.^{3,5} **Latinx YYAs are more than 2.5x as likely to experience homelessness statewide and 3x as likely in Bristol County** as compared to the overall population of YYAs.^{3,5}



Statewide **24%** of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as **LGBTQ+** as compared to 9% in Bristol County.⁶ There is a need for providers to improve their data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity in order for the region to better understand the scope of this population and resources needed to serve them.



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7.⁶ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, and 61 of these were in Bristol County. This region has the 3rd highest number of unaccompanied minors identified in schools.⁷



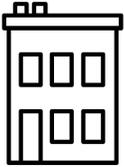
In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting**.^{3,4} 100% of these individuals were in emergency shelter.

1) 2018 HUD PIT Count; 2) FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; 3) FY18 Bristol Region HMIS; 4) FY18 Statewide HMIS; 5) 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; 6) 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; 7) MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018 school year

Addressing the Findings

November 2019

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



Housing

There are only 8 YYA-specific transitional housing units and 11 permanent supported housing units for YYA in Bristol County. While this region also has 6 emergency shelter beds at Killian's House specifically for YYAs, there was an identified need for more emergency beds as well as more permanent housing options throughout the region. Currently only 1% of all beds in Bristol County are designated for YYA. Bristol County also must assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. Bristol County needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness & housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers and the schools, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English and Spanish.



Transportation

YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. Bristol County can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs, identify gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility.



Employment Opportunities

Most YYA need employment connections and support in order to obtain and maintain housing, as the majority of YYA will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.



Substance Use & Mental Health Support

Bristol County has the 3rd largest number of YYA who identified as homeless upon enrollment into the substance use treatment system. Additionally, in the 2018 Youth Count, nearly all YYA surveyed in this region self-identified as having unmet mental health needs. Providers report both a lack of services available and long waitlists for YYAs who sought out treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. There is a need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain housing and employment.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing...and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

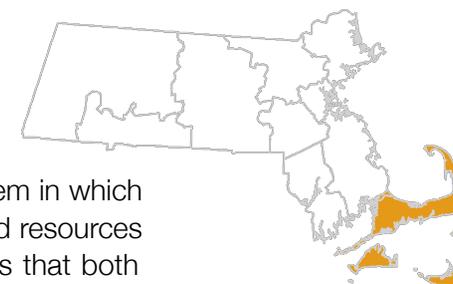
-Homeless Service Provider in MA

Ending Youth Homelessness on the Cape & Islands

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, the Cape & Islands engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

Findings: On a single night in 2018 **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **27** were from the Cape & Islands.¹ In that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA², and **88 were on the Cape & Islands.**³ These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn’t safe, home isn’t supportive, or home doesn’t exist.



“Homelessness leaves you in the dust, and then you struggle to catch back up.”

-YOUTH ON THE CAPE

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness both statewide⁴ and on the Cape & Islands³ as compared to the overall population of YYAs.⁵ **Latinx YYAs are 5.5x more likely to experience homelessness** on the Cape & Islands³ and more than 2.5x as likely statewide.⁵



Statewide **24%** of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as **LGBTQ+** as compared to 11% on the Cape & Islands.⁶ There is a need for providers to improve their data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity in order for the region to better understand the scope of this population and resources needed to serve them.



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7.⁶ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, 10 of these youth were identified on the Cape & Islands.⁷



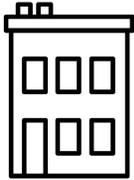
In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting** and **67%** on the Cape & Islands.^{3,4} 100% of these individuals were in emergency shelter.

1) 2018 HUD PIT Count; 2) FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; 3) FY18 Barnstable HMIS; 4) FY18 Statewide HMIS; 5) 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; 6) 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; 7) MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018 school year

Addressing the Findings

November 2019

Housing



There are currently no housing units or emergency shelter options specifically for YYA on the Cape and Islands, and more permanent affordable housing options are needed throughout the region. Housing YYA currently experiencing homelessness is an attainable goal if the region targets resources for those with the highest need, while simultaneously working to address the more systemic challenges, including the shortage of affordable housing. The Cape & Islands also must assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.

Awareness and Early identification



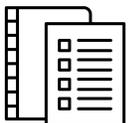
YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. The Cape & Islands needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers, schools, the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Transportation



YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. This is especially true for YYA living on the Islands. The Cape & Islands can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs, identify gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility.

Employment Opportunities



Most YYA need improved employment connections and support in order to obtain and maintain housing, as the majority of YYA will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.

Authentic Youth Voice in Decision Making



Direct youth involvement is essential in the development and implementation of all resources and actions noted above. YYA who have experienced homelessness on the Cape & Islands expressed a desire to have a voice in regional planning efforts.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing...and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

-Homeless Service Provider in MA



Ending Youth Homelessness in Plymouth County

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2018-2019, Plymouth County engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

Findings: On a single night in 2018 **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **69** in Plymouth County.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA² and **154 in Plymouth County**³. These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn’t safe, home isn’t supportive, or home doesn’t exist.

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 7x as likely to experience homelessness in Plymouth County³ as compared to the overall population of YYAs.⁵ This is higher than the statewide rate where Black YYA are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness.⁴
Latinx YYAs are more than 2.5x likely to experience homelessness both in Plymouth County³ and in MA⁵.



In Plymouth County **27% of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+**, as compared to 24% statewide.⁶



The average age at which YYAs report leaving the house of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7 statewide⁶. Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, and only 17 of these youth were in Plymouth County schools, which are among the lowest numbers identified in the state.⁷



In 2018, **70%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in Plymouth County and 60% in MA were **pregnant or parenting**.^{1,4} 100% of these individuals were in shelter.

“I don’t really know what to do next. I am in the shelter and I hear about housing opportunities but I am nervous. What do I say to a landlord? I don’t make enough money to pay rent even if I get some help to move in.”

-YOUTH IN PLYMOUTH CO

1) 2018 HUD PIT Count for MA and South Shore CoC; 2) FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; 3) FY18 South Shore HMIS; 4) FY18 Statewide HMIS;

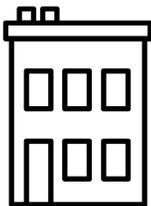
5) Based on 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; 6) 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; 7) MA Dept of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018 school year

Addressing the Findings

November 2019

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.

Housing



There are currently 8 YYA-designated shelter beds and 41 housing units for YYA in Plymouth County. Housing YYA currently experiencing homelessness is an attainable goal if the region starts with resources targeted for those with the highest need, while simultaneously working to address the more systemic challenges, including the shortage of affordable housing. Plymouth County must also assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.

Awareness and Early identification



YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. Plymouth County needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers and the schools, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English and Spanish.

Transportation



YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. Plymouth County can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs, identify gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility. *“If I am going to look for a training program or a job then I will need help with transportation. I don’t have any money and I am staying at the shelter. I need a monthly pass to get around, I don’t want to work near where I live in shelter.” -YYA in Plymouth Co*

Employment Opportunities



Most YYA need improved employment connections and support in order to obtain and maintain housing, as the majority of YYA will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing...and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

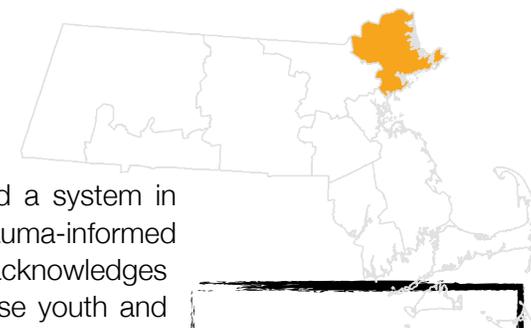
-Homeless Service Provider in MA

Ending Youth Homelessness in Essex County

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, Essex County engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

Findings: On a single night in 2018, **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **59** of these YYA were in Essex County.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA, and **136** in Essex County.² These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn’t safe, home isn’t supportive, or home doesn’t exist.



“I’ve[been] homeless. I’ve been sleepin’ in my car... people are laughing“

-YOUNG ADULT IN LAWRENCE

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness statewide⁴ and **5x more likely in Essex County** as compared to as compared to the overall population of YYAs.^{3,5} **Latinx YYAs are more than 2.5x as likely to experience homelessness statewide and slightly more likely (1.2x) in Essex County** as compared to the overall population of YYAs.^{3,5}



Statewide **24%** of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as **LGBTQ+** and 21% in Essex County.⁶



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7.⁶ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, and **218 of these were in Essex County comprising 42.4% of all identified unaccompanied minors in schools statewide.**³



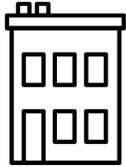
In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting.**^{3,4} 100% of these individuals were in emergency shelter.

1) 2018 HUD PIT Count; 2) FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; 3) FY18 Essex Region HMIS; 4) FY18 Statewide HMIS; 5) 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; 6) 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; 7) MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018 school year

Addressing the Findings

November 2019

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



Housing

There are currently no housing units or emergency shelter options specifically for YYA in Essex County, and more permanent housing options are needed throughout the region. There is also a reported need for more housing search specialists. Essex County also must assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. Essex County needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers and the schools, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English and Spanish.



Transportation

YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. Essex County can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs, identify gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility.



Employment Opportunities

Most YYA need improved employment connections and support in order to obtain and maintain housing. *"It's hard when you have jobs but all your money is going towards food and gas to keep warm because you're in your car sleeping during blizzards, during rainstorms..."* - YYA



Substance Use & Mental Health Support

Essex County is tied for having the third largest number of YYA who identified as homeless upon enrollment into the substance use treatment system. In focus groups with providers, "family substance abuse" was repeatedly stressed as a precursor to homelessness. Additionally, both providers and YYA reported that the mental health supports and resources in the region were inadequate. There is a need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain stable housing and employment.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

"A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. "Fixed" refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. "Regular" means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). "Adequate" means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth."

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

"If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing...and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be."

-Homeless Service Provider in MA

Ending Youth Homelessness in the North Middlesex Region

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, the North Middlesex Region engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

Findings: On a single night in 2018, **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **35** of these YYA were in the North Middlesex Region.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA, and **101** in the North Middlesex Region.² These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn’t safe, home isn’t supportive, or home doesn’t exist.

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness statewide and 3.5x as likely in the North Middlesex Region.^{3,4,5} **Latinx YYAs are approximately 2.5x as likely to experience homelessness** both in the North Middlesex Region and statewide.^{3,4,5}



Statewide **24%** of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as **LGBTQ+** and 18% in the North Middlesex Region.⁶



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7.⁶ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, and 22 of these were in the North Middlesex Region, which are among **the lowest regional numbers of unaccompanied student minors identified in the state.**⁷



In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting.**^{1,2} 100% of these individuals were in emergency shelter.

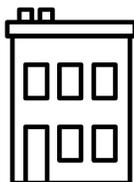


“Promises should mean something. When people - whether friends, family, or service providers- say they’ll do something, they shouldn’t let you down. [But] people let you down all the time.”
-Young Adult in Lowell

1) 2018 HUD PIT Count; 2) FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; 3) FY18 Lowell and BoS HMIS; 4) FY18 Statewide HMIS; 5) 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; 6) 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; 7) MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018 school year

Addressing the Findings

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



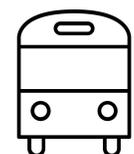
Housing

There are 13 housing units specifically for YYA in the North Middlesex Region. This region currently has no YYA-dedicated emergency shelter options. Housing YYA currently experiencing homelessness is an attainable goal if the region starts with resources targeted for those with the highest need, while simultaneously working to address the more systemic challenges, including the shortage of affordable housing. The North Middlesex Region must also assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. The North Middlesex Region needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers and the schools, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English and Spanish.



Transportation

YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. The North Middlesex Region can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs, identify gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility.



Employment Opportunities

Most YYA need employment connections and support in order to obtain and maintain housing, as the majority of YYA will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.



Substance Use & Mental Health Support

The North Middlesex Region reported both a lack of services available and long waitlists for YYAs who sought out treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. There is a need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain stable housing and employment.

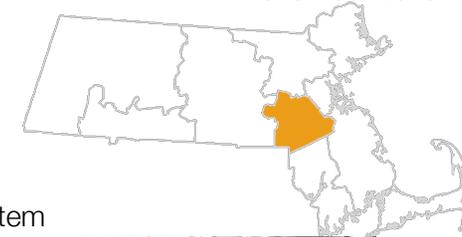
Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing... and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

-Homeless Service Provider in MA



Ending Youth Homelessness in Metro West

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, Metro West engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

Findings: On a single night in 2018 **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts¹. Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA² and approximately **100 in Metro West**³. These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn’t safe, home isn’t supportive, or home doesn’t exist.

“Every place I’ve been there’s always an expiration date... I called shelters left and right all of them they are all full always FULL FULL FULL! ... and my family kept pawning me off between each other it was just not fun.”

-YOUTH IN FRAMINGHAM

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness statewide and over 3x as likely in Metro West as compared to the overall population of YYAs.^{3,4,5} **Latinx YYAs are 8.5x more likely to experience homelessness in Metro West**, as compared to 2.5x as likely statewide- **the highest racial disparity among youth experiencing homelessness identified in the state.**^{3,4,5}



24% of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as **LGBTQ+** both statewide and in Metro West.⁶



The average age at which YYAs report leaving the house of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7 statewide⁶. Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, and 26 of these youth were in Metro West.⁷



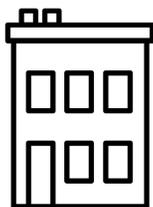
In 2018, **70%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in Metro West and 60% in MA were **pregnant or parenting**.^{1,4} 100% of these individuals were in shelter.

1) 2018 HUD PIT Count for MA and South Shore CoC; 2) FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; 3) FY18 BoS HMIS; 4) FY18 Statewide HMIS; 5) Based on 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; 6) 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; 7) MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018 school

Addressing the Findings

November 2019

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



Housing

There are 6 YYA-specific transitional housing units and 20 permanent supported housing units specifically for YYA in the Metro West Region. While this region also has 4 emergency shelter beds designated for YYAs, there is an identified need for more emergency beds as well as more permanent housing options throughout the region. Metro West must also assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. Metro West needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers and the schools, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English and Spanish.



Transportation

YYAs & providers report that a lack of accessible and reliable transportation options affects access to many resources, while also limiting education and employment opportunities. MetroWest can improve access to transportation by coordinating with the regional transportation authorities to review existing programs, identify gaps and opportunities for expansion, and partnering to invest in innovation and flexibility.



Employment Opportunities

Most YYA need improved employment connections and support in order to maintain housing, as the majority of young adults will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.



Substance Use & Mental Health Support

Providers in Metro West reported both a lack of services available and long waitlists for YYAs who sought out treatment for substance use and/or mental health disorders. There is a need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain housing and employment.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

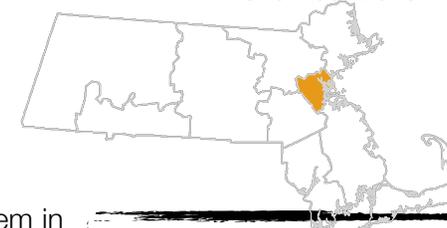
“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing...and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

-Homeless Service Provider in MA

November 2019



Ending Youth Homelessness in Metro Boston

A snapshot of community need & recommendations

Overview: The Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness describes a vision to “build a system in which every community in the Commonwealth has coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed resources that are effective, regionally accessible, and reliably funded.” To actualize this, the State Plan acknowledges that both the State and each region must first understand the demographics and experiences of those youth and young adults (YYAs) and the resources that are designed to serve them. In 2019, the Metro Boston Region engaged in a community needs assessment to provide credible data and a deeper understanding of the YYAs experiencing homelessness and the resources available to serve them.

“I wish my service providers could feel the way I feel physically [from] a lack of food and sleep and the loneliness”
-Young Adult in Boston

Findings: On a single night in 2018, **1,080** unaccompanied YYAs were identified as experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, and **409** of these YYA were in the Metro Boston Region.¹ Over the course of that same year **3,789** unaccompanied YYA experiencing homelessness were identified by programs in MA, and **1,631** in the Metro Boston Region.² These YYA find themselves without a stable place to live either because home isn’t safe, home isn’t supportive, or home doesn’t exist.

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Black YYAs are more than 4x as likely to experience homelessness statewide & over 3x as likely in Metro Boston as compared to the overall population of YYAs.^{3,4,5} **Latinx YYAs are nearly twice as likely to experience homelessness in Metro Boston and more than 2.5 as likely statewide.**^{3,4,5}



24% of all YYAs experiencing homelessness identify as **LGBTQ+** both statewide and in the Metro Boston Region region.⁶



The statewide average age at which YYAs report leaving the home of their parent or guardian for the first time was 16.7.⁶ Though there remains a significant gap in identifying homelessness among minors, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in 2018 there were 514 unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness statewide, and only 29 of these were in Metro Boston Region.⁷

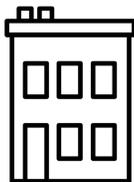


In 2018, **60%** of all identified YYAs experiencing homelessness in MA were **pregnant or parenting.**^{1,2} 100% of these individuals were in emergency shelter.

1) 2018 HUD PIT Count; 2) FY18 Statewide HMIS + FY18 provider data; 3) FY18 Boston, Cambridge, Somerville HMIS; 4) FY18 Statewide HMIS; 5) 2018 US Census data for 15-25 year olds; 6) 2018 MA Statewide Youth Count; 7) MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed 2017-2018 school year

Addressing the Findings

Note: Direct YYA involvement is essential in the development & implementation of all resources and actions noted below.



Housing

There are 217 housing units specifically dedicated for YYA in Metro Boston, and a \$5million funding award from HUD will an additional 150+ units over the next 5 years. However, very few of these units are within existing housing stock. To end youth homelessness, there is a critical need for development of affordable housing units to pair with other housing support. The Metro Boston Region must also assess if programs provide access to housing resources at equitable rates and achieve equitable outcomes for YYA across races and ethnicities.



Awareness and Early identification

YYA report not knowing what kinds of services exist and where to turn for help. The Metro Boston Region needs to continue partnering with a broad array of stakeholders and educate them about YYA homelessness and resources. There is an additional need for regional stakeholders to increase communication and resource-sharing across CoCs whenever possible. There is also a need for improved identification and support of minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Such support must include stronger partnerships among service providers and the schools, DCF, DYS, DTA, LGBTQ organizations, and healthcare providers. Materials and staff support must be available in English and Spanish.



Employment Opportunities

Most YYA need improved employment connections and support in order to maintain housing, as the majority will not receive subsidized housing due to long waitlists, lack of housing stock, and low vulnerability scores.



Substance Use & Mental Health Support

Metro Boston has the largest number of YYA who identified as homeless upon enrollment into the substance use treatment system. Providers in this Region reported both a lack of services available and long waitlists for YYAs who sought out treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. There is a need to improve access to behavioral health supports so that YYAs may better maintain housing and employment.

Who Are Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness?

“A person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. “Fixed” refers to a residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. “Regular” means a dwelling at which a person resides on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). “Adequate” means that the dwelling provides safe shelter, meeting both physical and psychological needs of the youth. All three components of this definition- age, connection to a parent or guardian, and housing status- must be met in order for a person to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth.”

-DEFINITION ESTABLISHED IN 2013 BY THE MA SPECIAL COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

“If a person becomes homeless, we have failed. From a wellbeing... and from a fiscal standpoint, the earlier we can become involved, the more effective it will be.”

-Homeless Service Provider in MA