



## Chris's Story

For as long as he can remember, alcohol has been part of Chris's life. He started drinking as a young teenager, and over the years it has caused him to lose jobs, then his home. Finally, it caused him to lose his family.

Chris has committed himself to sobriety and is ready to move ahead, but an old warrant from a 1995 misdemeanor has prevented him from securing housing or a job. The thought of going through the traditional court system to resolve this issue has been daunting.

Chris's Pine Street Inn case manager referred him to the Homeless Court Program based on the progress he has made. Working with a lawyer from the Committee for Public Counsel Services, Chris's warrant was cleared by the court. Now he is eligible to move into housing and to apply for a job.

Homeless Court has given Chris and many others a way forward. Best of all, Chris has recently renewed his relationship with his daughter and three grandchildren.



## For more information

or to refer a client, please contact:

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**Pine Street Inn**  
**617.892.7897**  
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**Name**  
**Committee for Public Counsel Services**  
**Phone**  
**email**



**Pine Street Inn**  
 Ending Homelessness

Pine Street Inn  
 444 Harrison Avenue  
 Boston, MA 02118  
[www.pinestreetinn.org](http://www.pinestreetinn.org)



**Pine Street Inn**  
 Ending Homelessness

## Homeless Court Program



***A Way Forward***



## What is Homeless Court?

The Homeless Court Program (HCP) was established in 2011 in partnership with:

- Boston Municipal Court, West Roxbury
- Suffolk County District Attorney's Office
- Committee for Public Council Services
- Pine Street Inn

HCP seeks to expand access to the criminal justice system and reduce legal barriers faced by homeless individuals. This alternative court session is designed to resolve misdemeanor offenses, non-violent felonies and outstanding warrants. The goal is to encourage fast social reintegration and a self-supporting life for homeless individuals.

*"The goal of Homeless Court is to restore and affirm the dignity, self-worth and identity of homeless individuals whose lives have been fractured by substance abuse, mental health challenges and economic hardships."*

– Judge Kathleen Coffey  
Chief Justice,  
West Roxbury District Court



## Why is Homeless Court Important?

Employers, landlords and others are reluctant to engage applicants with a criminal history, especially those with open charges. At the same time, fear of the court process and the need to cope with the immediate challenges that homelessness presents, make it difficult to resolve legal issues.

Homeless Court is the court of second chances. It provides participants an opportunity to remove default warrants and have criminal cases dismissed with fines and court costs remitted.

As a result, legal barriers that prevent them from securing permanent housing, employment, education, drivers' licenses and other government benefits are eliminated, and individuals are able to move forward with their lives.

*"Many guests have shared their anxiety and fear of going into the court system. The minute they walk into Homeless Court, they can see and feel the difference. There is genuine compassion and understanding for the defendant."*

– Ken Brady  
Case Management Coordinator  
Pine Street Inn



## Who is Eligible?

HCP is open to any homeless individual who meets the following criteria:

- A warrant (for a missed court date or violation of probation) from Suffolk County (Boston Municipal Court Central, Brighton, Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Roxbury, South Boston and West Roxbury)
- The case must be a misdemeanor or a non-violent felony.
- The client be homeless or at risk of homelessness
- The client must be receiving services or working with a case manager

## WHEN AND WHERE ARE COURT SESSIONS HELD?

Court is held at 11:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month at:

Pine Street Inn  
444 Harrison Avenue  
Boston, MA 02118