



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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CHARLES D. BAKER
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Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH
Commissioner

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November 4, 2016

Steven T. James
House Clerk
State House Room 145
Boston, MA 02133

William F. Welch
Senate Clerk
State House Room 335
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Clerk,

Pursuant to Line Item 4590-1506 of Chapter 133 of the Acts of 2016, please find the enclosed report regarding Primary Violence Prevention through Positive Youth Development.

Sincerely,

Monica Bharel, MD, MPH
Commissioner
Department of Public Health

Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn Polito
Lieutenant Governor



Marylou Sudders
Secretary

Monica Bharel, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Primary Violence Prevention through Positive Youth Development

November 2016



The following report is hereby issued pursuant to Line Item 4590-1506 of the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget:

For a competitive grant program to be administered by the department of public health to support the establishment of a comprehensive youth violence prevention program; provided, that eligibility shall be determined by the criteria set forth in item 4590-1506 of section 2 of chapter 182 of the acts of 2008; provided further, that no grants shall be awarded to law enforcement agencies; provided further, that funds shall be considered 1-time and grants may not annualize in fiscal year 2018; and provided further, that the department of public health shall report to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the executive office for administration and finance not later than November 3, 2016, detailing the grant amount awarded to each recipient and a description of each grant

\$1,337,124

Primary Violence Prevention through Positive Youth Development

As part of line item 4590-1506 of the Fiscal Year 2017 budget, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is required to report to the Legislature on the programs supported through this line item *“detailing the grant amount awarded to each recipient and a description of each grant.”* This report is in response to this mandate.

The DPH Youth Violence Prevention Services Program provides funding to community-based initiatives across the state working to prevent youth violence. In the second half of Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 DPH reconceived the Youth Violence Prevention Program and the Youth-At-Risk Program to simultaneously address the rise of violent crime and a decrease in responsive services. The programmatic merger aimed to streamline the effort to save lives and eliminate multiple forms of violence. The merged DPH Youth Violence Prevention through Positive Youth Development Program provides essential financial resources to reduce violence and identify high risk youth who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) that are not currently receiving support services or treatment. The funding continues to build the capacity of community based organizations throughout the Commonwealth to respond to the needs of high risk youth and interrupt the vicious cycle of youth violence. The Program aims to create safe, nurturing environments that allow providers to “teach and inspire” youth at the greatest risk for gang violence, substance use disorder, sexual violence, dating violence, sex trafficking and bullying. The 4590-1506 Primary Violence Prevention (PVP) Grant ensures a rich diversity in programming for youth across the Commonwealth; programming rooted in positive youth development “best practices” and the minimization of duplicative services.

The PVP Grant currently supports 20 programs across the state. The programs focus on elementary, middle, and high school aged young people (age 10-17), many of whom are currently involved or at high risk for gang involvement, street violence and sex trafficking. The funding provides crucial support to sub-populations of high risk youth, including: LGBTQ youth, homeless youth, immigrant/refugee youth, disabled youth, truant-youth and low income youth. The service population includes both in-school and out-of-school youth (including youth who are suspended, expelled, or who have dropped out of school). Funded providers work in high risk communities across the Commonwealth; high risk can be defined geographically (areas acutely impacted by violence), in terms of racial/ethnic minority status (recognizing some racial/ethnic groups are disproportionately impacted by violence), housing status (homeless/unaccompanied youth), differently abled, immigration/refugee status, sexual orientation/gender identity or other characteristics as some populations are at far greater risk of violence and victimization.

All funded programs utilize evidence-based youth development strategies including: mentoring programs; afterschool/out-of-school time programs; dropout prevention; employment readiness programs; financial literacy programs; youth leadership development programs; conflict resolution programs; street/youth worker outreach; case management; arts and self-expression; civic engagement and the inclusion of youth in all aspects of program development. This line item allows the youth of the Commonwealth the opportunity to receive adult mentorship, build leadership skills, and develop the resiliency skills necessary for navigating through the ever present influence of gang activities and street violence that exist in rural, urban and suburban communities.

In addition to the PVP grants, 4590-1506 supports Safe Spaces for LGBTQ Youth - a grant program that funds eight community based providers. Many LGBTQ youth experience violence and bullying at alarming rates; our providers not only create safe spaces for these youth but have also developed policies, procedures and resources that could be incorporated in the fabric of positive youth development programs *state-wide* if additional resources were available. The list of these providers for FY17 who deliver youth development and leadership building as well as sanctuary space for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning youth, is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

The attached spreadsheet shows provider names, target communities and populations, and funding levels for those providers funded by line item 4590-1506 in fiscal year 2017.

Note: The FY17 conference budget significantly reduced the line item that supports the Youth at Risk Grants (4590-1507). The YARG program is a sister program addressing youth at highest risk for violent victimization or perpetration. This funding reduction eliminated 36 community programs across the state serving over 26,000 youth. In addition, to fill the void created by this reduction, Primary Violence Prevention programs may be required to alter their focus to secondary violence prevention. By altering programs to address secondary violence, primary prevention services may be eliminated, reducing the ability to address the cycle of violence for our highest risk populations in a comprehensive manner. Prevention is imperative to long term success. The alignment of the funding for prevention work (4590-1506) and “intervention work” (4590-1507) has previously allowed for providers to address the spectrum of youth in their communities and to reduce the epidemic of youth violence by creating an effective safety net throughout the Commonwealth’s high risk and low resourced communities.