

Fiscal Year: 2022

Annual Report

Office of Recovery Services



City of Boston
Recovery Services

Context & Macroenvironment

During FY22 we lived and worked in the shadow of the lingering COVID-19 pandemic. The opioid epidemic remains in its 4th wave, characterized by an increasing overlap with stimulant usage and behavioral health issues. Against this backdrop, the City was faced with the challenge of addressing the needs of some of its most vulnerable constituents, living in encampments.

November 2022 Mayor Michelle Wu made history, elected as the first woman and first person of color to the mayorship of Boston. During her first months in office the Mayor prioritized addressing substance use and unsheltered homelessness by making new appointments to positions in her administration and committing significant investments.

"Together in FY2022, we created ground-breaking housing and supportive programs, and at the same time steadfastly continued to deliver on our core programming across all programs at Recovery Services.

From 2020 to 2021 opioid-related overdoses increased by 8.8% in Massachusetts. Despite the hardship experienced at work and home, staff met the challenges head on with compassion and expertise.

We continue to invest in programming that supports each individual we serve as a whole person. During FY22, we made it a priority to create neighborhood engagement programs, workforce opportunities, and strengthen the prevention continuum."



Fiscal Year: 2022 Overview



Core Activities:
Treatment &
Engagement



Overdose Prevention



Low-Threshold
Housing Initiative



Capacity Building



Youth Prevention



Innovative Programs



Looking Ahead



Core Activities: Treatment & Engagement



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Treatment Placements

Access to treatment is a top priority at Recovery Services.

Multiple programs act as points of access:



AHOPE
*Comprehensive Drug User
Health Program*



**Street
Outreach**



**Engagement
Center**



**PAATHS
Referral Service**



Additional Information: PAATHS

Providing Access to Addictions Treatment, Hope and Support provides information and referrals to individuals, families, providers, and more, helping people and systems navigate the treatment system.

2,364

**TOTAL SUBSTANCE USE
TREATMENT PLACEMENTS**



6,046

WALK-INS

4,614

PHONE CALLS



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Residential Treatment

The City operates three residential treatment programs for people in early recovery to help them stabilize and build pathways to the next step.



Transitions

A 40-bed, short-term treatment program serving both women and men.



Entre Familia

A six- to 12-month program providing bilingual and bicultural, gender-specific, treatment to pregnant and postpartum women and their children.



Wyman Recovery Home

A 30-bed recovery home with an average stay between four and six months, serving men.

These Programs Saw:

476

ADMISSIONS



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New Engagement Center

In December 2021 we began offering services at the new Engagement Center, a state-of-the-art building replacing the previous tent iteration. The design process integrated feedback from a range of stakeholders, including participants and staff.

The Engagement Center currently offers the following services:



Restroom and shower access



Medical clinical services



Housing case management



Treatment placement



Beverages and snacks



Support groups



Specialty programming for women



1,744

**REFERRALS TO
EMERGENCY SHELTERS**

451

**PLACEMENTS INTO SUD
TREATMENT**

374

**REFERRALS TO RECOVERY
SERVICES PROGRAMS**



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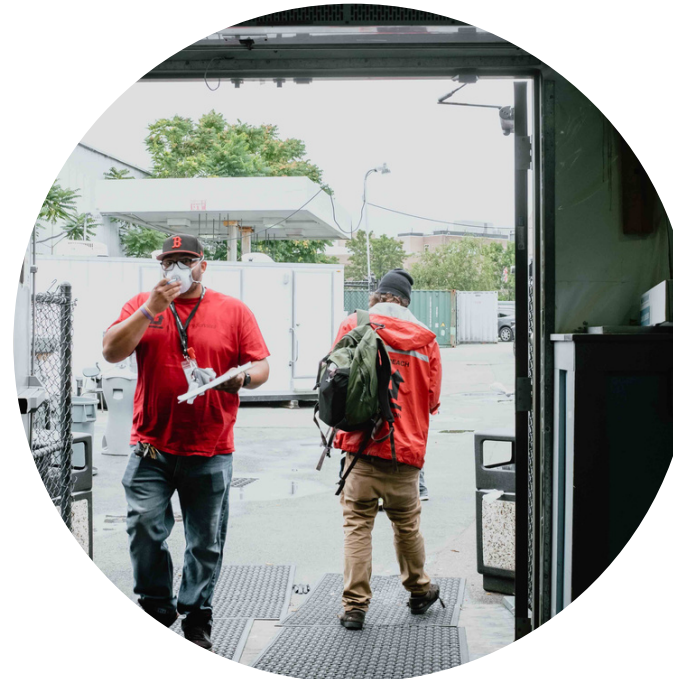
Compassionate Care

Safe and Sound Recovery Center

These services include recovery coaching and planning, access to a peer-led recovery support center, and peer leadership training opportunities. Safe and Sound provides two peer support group meetings per week.

Street Outreach:

Visible for the red uniforms they wear, our street outreach staff build relationships with individuals, providing them referrals, harm reduction kits, and Naloxone.



Street Outreach Impact:

10,413

OUTREACH KITS DISTRIBUTED

451

MEDICAL REFERRALS

365

DAYS PER YEAR OF SERVICE



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Overdose Prevention



Overdose Prevention Training

Recovery Services provides overdose prevention trainings to groups and individuals both through in-person and online trainings.

The trainings include information about how to recognize an overdose, how to respond, and how to administer the overdose-reversing medication Naloxone. In-person trainings also distribute Naloxone to attendees.



OD Prevention Impact

3,584

INDIVIDUALS WERE TRAINED IN-PERSON

959

INDIVIDUALS WERE TRAINED VIRTUALLY

170

IN-PERSON TRAININGS WERE CONDUCTED



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Naloxone Access & Distribution

The medication Naloxone reverses overdoses and is easily administered by laypeople.

We distribute Naloxone through our drug user health program AHOPE, overdose prevention trainings, street outreach, and partnership with the Boston Fire Department.

We work hard to put this lifesaving medication in the hands of people who use drugs, family members, caretakers, and community organizations.



Across FY22...

14,803

NALOXONE DOSES WERE DISTRIBUTED



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"Knock and Talk" Program

The Post Overdose Response Team is a partnership between BPHC, the Boston Fire Department, and Emergency Medical Services.

A team consisting of drug user health experts and firefighters visit the homes of individuals that were affected by narcotic related incidents.

These visits resulted in distribution of Naloxone, connections to resources, and access to treatment.

Across FY22...

296

HOME VISITS



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Low- Threshold Housing Initiative



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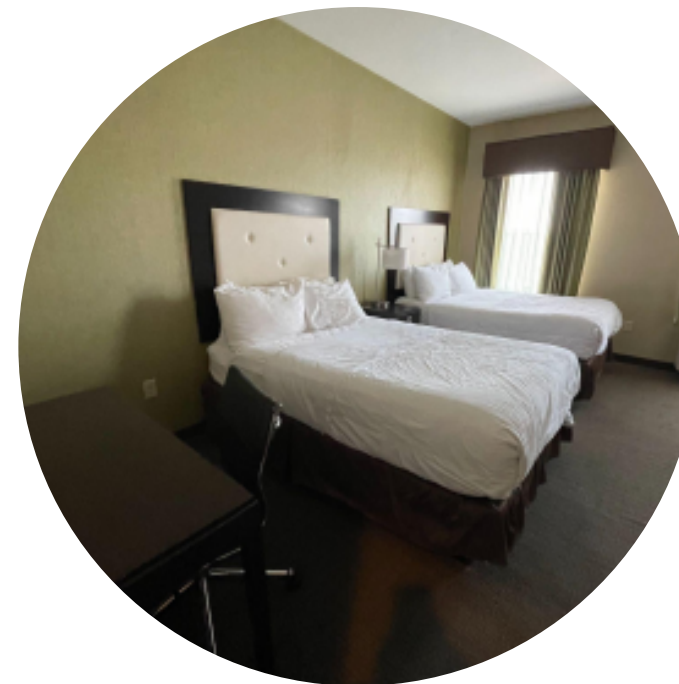
Low-Threshold Housing

Low-Threshold Programs do not have strict entry requirements related to abstinence or engagement in treatment and services. Beginning in the fall, the City of Boston collaborated with the State and community providers to establish 6 low-threshold housing sites, with the goal of housing all individuals living in encampments at Mass and Cass.

The six sites are located throughout Boston and express a range of programmatic features, including acute medical treatment, case management, gender-specific services, therapeutic support, and more.



**Cottage Community,
Jamaica Plain**



**Envision Hotel,
Mission Hill**

These programs create a pipeline to long-term housing:

320

**INDIVIDUALS UTILIZED THE
LOW-THRESHOLD HOUSING
SITES**

39

**INDIVIDUALS WERE
PLACED IN PERMANENT
HOUSING**



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Empowering the Transition to Long-Term Housing

Storage Program:

Understanding lack of storage can be a barrier to lack of treatment and housing, the City launched an unsheltered storage program. From January 10th-May 10th, the program collected 94 bins for 34 individuals.

Move-In Supplies:

Recovery Services partnered with RIZE Massachusetts and community organizations such as The Phoenix and Gavin Foundation to provide essential items to individuals moving into long-term housing.



*Move-In Supplies
Program Impact:*

25

**TOTAL MOVE-IN KITS WERE
PRODUCED**

\$350

**WORTH OF KITCHENWARE,
BEDDING, & HOUSEHOLD
GOODS PER BIN**



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Capacity Building



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City of Boston Harm Reduction Toolkit

In early FY22, we released the City of Boston Harm Reduction Toolkit

This document was created to support community health centers and providers on harm reduction and how to better serve and interact with people who have substance use disorder. The report is available on our [website](#).

We held three trainings to introduce the toolkit to local providers.



CITY of BOSTON



BOSTON HARM REDUCTION TOOLKIT



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Business Trainings

Across FY22 we partnered with Health Resources in Action to design a training series building capacity on issues related to overdose prevention and de-escalation. The series is geared towards supporting businesses.

We conducted the first round of the training series in the early months of FY23, serving 131 individuals.

86% of respondents reported the usefulness of the training was either excellent or good.



Health Resources in Action presents:

De-Escalation Trainings

for Boston Businesses, Main Streets, and Neighborhood Associations

In partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission



3 FREE Virtual Training Offerings

Tuesday 7/26 from 8-9:30am

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Thursday 8/18 from 1-2:30pm

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Wednesday 8/31 from 4:30-6pm

[REGISTER HERE](#)

In this **FREE 1.5-hour virtual training**, we will focus on ways we can begin to support people through escalated feelings. We will also underscore the importance of understanding the context for why escalations may occur and how we can utilize a trauma-informed approach to better support our community members who are experiencing homelessness and using drugs.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule an individual training for your specific site or agency, please contact Gracie Rolfe (grolge@hria.org / 617.391.9192)



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Youth Prevention Capacity Building

The Youth Prevention Program provides training to youth providers and community partners on topics related to youth substance use prevention.

Both virtual and in-person trainings are available on topics such as:

- Adolescent Substance Use Disorder 101
- Addressing Cannabis with Youth: Reframing the Conversation
- Harm Reduction 101



Trainings Impact:

125

**YOUTH WERE PROVIDED
TRAINING & TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE**

83

**PROVIDERS WERE SUPPORTED
WITH TRAINING & TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE**



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Youth Prevention



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CopeCode Club

The CopeCode Club is a youth prevention campaign that was launched in March 2020 which centers on promoting healthy coping strategies among youth. The campaign includes posters, activity kits, and a social media challenge.

For the #CopeCodeChallenge, over a series of 9 weeks we encourage youth to lead healthy lives by highlighting activities that reduce stress and are informed by science.



Merchandise

This season, we also developed CopeCode Club merchandise with the support of our Youth Advisory Board.

Over FY22...

2,969,777

**SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS
GENERATED**

36,579

**CLICKS ACROSS ALL SOCIAL MEDIA
PLATFORMS**

3,053

INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS REACHED

29

**YOUTH ENGAGED THROUGH OUR
YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD**



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Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

This year, we hired 11 youth from different neighborhoods across the City of Boston to participate in our first Youth Advisory Board (YAB).

YAB members act as activists and advisors on topics such as substance use, harm reduction, mental health, and restorative prevention.

YAB members also act as ambassadors for our social media prevention campaign, the #CopeCodeChallenge. During the 9-week challenge, they posted a total of 43 pieces of content on social media.



The YAB are leaders in the prevention space. In FY22, they gave keynote presentations at two conferences organized by SparkShare and Health Resources in Action.



Partnerships & Community Engagement

State Partnership: MassCALL 3

We engaged 18 organizations from different neighborhoods across the City of Boston in a Youth Prevention Advisory Board (YPAB), funded by a state grant.

As members of the YPAB, organizations receive additional support and capacity-building related to youth substance use prevention. Organizations also work together as a cross-sector network to inform the Boston Youth Substance Use Prevention Strategic Plan.

Federal Partnership: BYRRC

The goal of the Boston Youth Resiliency & Recovery Collaborative is to support Boston youth and families affected by the opioid crisis and substance use through three strategies:

- 1.) Learning collaborative to increase representation of people of color in the mental health workforce.
- 2.) Mentorship program for youth of color.
- 3.) Outreach and support to agencies to strengthen referral networks and build data management systems.





Innovative Programs



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From January 10 to May 26th:

Newmarket Work Program

Building on the success of the pay-per-day program at the Engagement Center, we funded the Newmarket Business Association to provide low-threshold work opportunities to individuals living on the street.



56

**PEOPLE EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS ACCESSED
WORK OPPORTUNITIES**

50%

**OF THESE INDIVIDUALS
ENGAGED IN SUD
TREATMENT**

30%

**OF THESE INDIVIDUALS
WERE HIRED INTO MEANINGFUL
LONG-TERM EMPLOYMENT**



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Community Syringe Redemption Program

Through our partner, Addiction Recovery Resources, we support a program that reduces the amount of improperly discarded needles by offering a cash incentive for participants to return syringes.



Over FY22...

1,320,868

TOTAL SYRINGES COLLECTED

1,228

NALOXONE DOSES DISTRIBUTED

108

CLIENTS SERVED PER DAY

The CSRP Engaged 14 people in a 12-week low threshold work program while providing wraparound case management to assist with housing and treatment placement.



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Pilot: Nubian Engagement Team

Recovery Services began piloting the Nubian Engagement Team last summer.



The team provides recovery and service referrals to people on the street, and acts as a liaison between businesses, residents, and the City.



An advisory group guides the team, consisting of faith-based leaders and representatives from businesses, nonprofits, police, and City government.



12,831

INTERACTIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS

1,462

INTERACTIONS WITH BUSINESSES

77

HOURS OF RECOVERY COACHING

475

TOTAL REFERRALS

 → **232**

SUD

 → **106**

HOUSING

 → **82**

EMPLOYMENT



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Story Feature: Neighborhood Engagement

Each day the Nubian Engagement Team documents experiences and stories of the community they serve, adding important context to the quantitative metrics. The themes from this qualitative data are relationship-building, emotional support, de-escalation.



Over time individuals have become familiar with the team, sharing stories, and eventually relying on the team for referrals to treatment and aftercare.



"Today, a gentleman we have been working with dating back to the first initiative who was not ready for help, found himself ready today. He thanked us for being good role models. For standing by him from day one. And being consistent."



The team recounted numerous instances where they supported someone in distress or coping with grief.



"We dealt with a Gentleman today. He was under the influence expressing deep sorrow over the recent loss of a friend. Depressed and self disappointed we spoke with him for 40-45 minutes. Encouraging him to develop some level of self love."



The team diffuses tension and violence merely by being present, but also by actively engaging in de-escalation techniques.



"Today we noticed a man screaming in the face of someone who happened to be his significant other and myself and 2 Team members approached the situation. I took the lead and was able to de-escalate the situation and got the man to walk away without further incident. He was in a very volatile state and by the end of it he was in a state of reasoning."



Looking Ahead



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Looking Ahead: FY23

Increasing Access in Neighborhoods

- Funding two neighborhood engagement teams
- Funding two low-threshold day engagement spaces
- Stewarding \$800,000 awarded to community organizations, The Phoenix, NamaStay Sober, and Gavin Foundation.

Treating the Whole Person

- Implementation of a Mass and Cass "Hub," a model famously operated in Chelsea, which brings together multiple agencies and social services to case conference and problem solve how to support individuals with multiple and complex needs.
- Expanding the Newmarket Work program.

Strategic Direction

- Release the updated Boston Youth Substance Use Prevention Strategic Plan

Opioid Litigation Funding

- MA Attorney General Maura Healey successfully litigated opioid manufacturers for their role in contributing to the opioid epidemic. Approximately \$2 million in funding will go to Recovery Services for spending in FY23.

Schools

- Build staff capacity at 10-20 Boston-based schools in topics such as adolescent substance use disorder, marijuana, and vaping.

Equity

- Launch a mentorship program targeting BIPOC LGBTQ+ youth





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