



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ◆ Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: Continuum of Care Leadership
FROM: Liz Rogers, Executive Director, Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness
DATE: December 10, 2013
RE: Engaging Partners in the 2014 MA Youth Count Initiative

Nationally and in Massachusetts there is a growing awareness of homelessness among unaccompanied youth, which has presented an opportunity to improve our ability as a Commonwealth to assist these young people in achieving stability and success. As you are aware, the Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission was established in 2012 and has been working since to outline a strategy for better understanding the scope and needs of unaccompanied homeless youth. Fortunately this year the state's budget includes resources to enhance the work of the Commission. The Commission defines unaccompanied homeless youth as a person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody or care of a parent or legal guardian, and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

In support of this, the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness have made one-time capacity building grants to each of the 18 Continua of Care (CoC) in Massachusetts. With these grants each CoC will conduct a count and survey of unaccompanied homeless youth during this year's Point In Time count in December 2013-January 2014.

Participation by a diverse group of partners will be critical to realizing our goal of becoming the first state in the nation to conduct a statewide count of unaccompanied homeless youth and obtain a statewide data set that will inform policy and program design. With a clearer understanding of this vulnerable population we will all be better positioned to allocate resources in a more effective and efficient manner, with the ultimate goal of ending homelessness among youth. I encourage you to seek the partnership, leadership, and expertise of key stakeholders throughout your community, including homeless shelters, drop-in centers, schools and educational programs, law enforcement, fire departments, child welfare agencies, juvenile courts, municipal agencies serving youth, faith-based organizations, health care facilities, youth employment programs, food banks, libraries, LGBTQ services, recreation centers, United Ways, children's mental health centers, universities, and others.

As you engage additional partners in this work, please share my expression of appreciation - and that of the Department - for their assistance. Thank you for your commitment to homeless youth and the MA Youth Count effort.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Rogers
Executive Director
Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ◆ Aaron Gomstein, Undersecretary

November 8, 2013

Kelly Elam
City of Somerville
50 Evergreen Ave.
Somerville, MA 02145

Dear Ms. Elam,

As you may be aware, the Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission was established in 2012 and has been working since to outline a strategy for better understanding the scope and needs of unaccompanied homeless youth. Fortunately this year the state's budget includes resources to enhance the work of the Commission. As a result, I am pleased to inform you that the Department of Housing and Community Development will make a one-time grant of \$4,750 available to the Somerville Continuum of Care in order to support efforts to conduct a count and survey of unaccompanied homeless youth during this year's Point In Time count. Expenses are permitted between the dates of 7/1/13 and 6/30/14.

Participation by the Somerville CoC will be important for our statewide goal of becoming the first state in the nation to conduct a statewide count of unaccompanied homeless youth and obtain a statewide data set that will inform policy and program design. With a clearer understanding of this vulnerable population we will all be better positioned to allocate resources in a more effective and efficient manner, with the ultimate goal of ending homelessness among youth.

Enclosed with this letter is a Scope of Services and an outline of required reporting elements associated with the grant. Please review these. I will be in touch with you soon to discuss additional details and answer any questions you may have. You will also need to prepare a budget for approval prior to invoicing. Invoices should be submitted by the 15th day after the end of each month and should be submitted via email to liz.rogers@state.ma.us or by mail to Liz Rogers, 100 Cambridge St., Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114. Invoices must be accompanied by supporting documentation, such as receipts.

Additionally, you have already received an invitation to attend the upcoming conference on November 18, 2013 at Clark University where all CoCs will have the opportunity to share their approaches to planning and executing this statewide count.

Thank you for your commitment to homeless youth and your partnership in the MA Youth Count effort.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Rogers
Executive Director
Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness

Enclosures



MEMORANDUM

TO: MA Youth Count Grantees

FROM: Liz Rogers, Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness

DATE: November 8, 2013

RE: Massachusetts Youth Count Reporting Requirements

All grantees will be required to report back to the Department of Housing and Community Development on the results of their efforts to count and survey unaccompanied homeless youth. The reporting requirements fall into three main categories as described below. Items I and II will be due no later than February 19, 2014, and should be submitted to Liz Rogers at liz.rogers@state.ma.us - 100 Cambridge St., Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114.

- I. Point in Time Census of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
 - a. Total number of HUD-defined homeless youth encountered during the PIT.
 - b. Total number of any *additional* homeless youth encountered during the PIT (i.e., beyond HUD's definition).

- II. Youth Count Survey
 - a. In an attempt to reduce the data entry burden on all parties, DHCD and the ICHH are exploring the possibility of using Scantron to process all paper surveys. Details of this are still being finalized, and if we are able to move forward CoCs will be asked to submit all paper surveys centrally to Liz Rogers at the address above. Grantees would receive original paper surveys and electronic data back from the state once surveys have been processed.

- III. Process Evaluation: 45-minute phone interview with state's data analysis team to be scheduled for February 2014. Interview questions will include the following:
 - a. What were the biggest successes for your count?
 - b. What were the biggest challenges for your count?
 - c. Do you think there were youth that were missed in your count? If so, what is your estimation of the undercount (e.g., youth in certain circumstances or in certain geographies)?
 - d. How well did your approach to survey administration work?
 - e. How well did the tool itself work? Was the length appropriate? Are there certain questions that posed challenges to obtaining strong information, or should be redesigned or removed?
 - f. What strategies did you employ to recruit volunteers and what was most effective? Least effective?
 - g. Did you initiate a local planning committee? What benefits, if any, did that bring to the implementation of the count?
 - h. What partner organizations did you engage in the count and survey administration? What partners were missing from your effort and why?
 - i. How did you train volunteers?
 - j. What coordination did you employ during the count and survey period?
 - k. Has this experience changed the way your CoC will approach the count in the future or how it will work with unaccompanied homeless youth?
 - l. What advice would you give the state as it looks to support future efforts to count unaccompanied homeless youth?