

HUB Boston- Outreach Solutions

MassHousing

Special Needs Housing: Combating Homelessness

HFA Staff Contact

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OVERVIEW

The concept that our affordable housing is about more than just “bricks and mortar” is a common theme at MassHousing – and certainly housing finance agencies across the country. The idea – that it is *people* whom we strive to serve – keeps us focused. We aren’t a typical bank – we don’t just finance housing. This truth is at the core of our mission.

In this same way, as we are able, MassHousing seeks to provide programs and services for the housing in our portfolio that keep our residents safe, improve their quality of life and create increased opportunities for these individuals and families who live in MassHousing developments. At our Agency, this is the work of our Community Services Division. But as its name suggests – this Division has a broader reach and broader scope as well.

Through this Division’s work, MassHousing joins residents, community-based organizations, housing communities, law enforcement and other stakeholders to develop and support programs and activities that nurture the social and emotional needs of families. But no housing development is an island unto itself – rather it is a part of the larger community where it is located. As such, there are times when MassHousing’s investment and its program participation must reach outside the housing in our portfolio to help serve the people who live in the communities where our developments are located.

This forward-thinking perspective is what has led us to a new model of service known as HUB. HUB seeks to address crises proactively, before they happen. It was first pioneered as a public safety model in Scotland, then Canada, and now increasingly in cities in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the nation. Specifically, the HUB model brings together local law enforcement and community organizations to address housing, health care, substance abuse and mental health issues.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, MassHousing’s Public Safety unit within its Community Services Division undertook a strategic planning process to analyze existing public safety programs to ensure that they were efficient, innovative and data driven. As part of this effort, the Public Safety Unit surveyed community partners and stakeholders about recommended next steps. Through the survey and feedback from stakeholders MassHousing became aware of a Violence Intervention and Prevention model that was being utilized with something known as the HUB & Center of Responsibility (COR) model. This COR model was developed by the City of Chelsea Police and a local housing developer. The partnership had proven very successful in Chelsea by connecting those “at risk” in the community with resources and increasing success in reducing crime through successful early intervention. MassHousing staff sought to capitalize on the success of this program and work to expand it to other urban centers in our state.

By June 2018, another HUB was launched by MassHousing in collaboration with the Boston Police Department in Jamaica Plain and East Boston. As part of this effort, the HUB team meets weekly to discuss clients facing elevated levels of risk and to develop immediate, coordinated and integrated responses. The team includes multiple human service providers, including social service agencies, schools, domestic violence shelters, recovery coaches, housing specialists, community health centers, courts including probation staff, local hospitals, neighborhood trauma response teams, child welfare agencies and staff from the City of Boston constituent services office.

HUB IN ACTION

Each meeting seeks to address situations involving individuals and families who are struggling with complex issues, spanning multiple service disciplines. In most cases, they are not necessarily connected to services and are often facing immediate and compounding risks of an incident of harm. These risk factors may include diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues, drug use and addiction, crime victimization, domestic violence, sexual violence, elder abuse, homelessness or inadequate housing, unemployment, poverty, criminal involvement, gang affiliation, self-harm, threats to public safety, cognitive impairments, runaway challenges, truancy and neglect.

The goal for HUB's involvement does not center on case management. Rather, its purpose is to mitigate risk within 24 - 48 hours and to connect individuals and families with local services. To honor confidentiality, members introduce new cases anonymously, using numbers, and then use the HUB and COR method of "Four Filter Process" to determine thresholds at which progressive levels of information sharing must occur while still respecting the person's privacy. Ultimately, case management functions remain with which ever Agency the members of the HUB team believe is the most appropriate to help. This model then relies on the accountability of the agency that steps in to work with the person or family at risk.

The Center of Responsibility (COR) is the component whose focus is on the broader notion of community safety and wellness with an eye towards longer-term community goals and initiatives. In particular, the role of the COR is to engage in collaborative analysis of HUB data and other recognized trends and data sources which serve to inform the identification of high value opportunities for systemic and strategic change. Not all communities with a HUB will require a COR as experience has shown that this level of analysis can be done effectively and efficiently on a regional basis, and a COR requires an additional investment of dedicated resources, tools, and specific skill sets.

MassHousing made the decision to invest in the HUB and work to expand this model into other cities because the HUB provides for direct intervention on identified and verified risk factors rather than conjecture and opinion about what might be causing crime and victimization in a community drawing on the resources and insights of multiple agencies. The HUB is proactive and preventative, with the ability to deliver a range of solutions not limited to reactive, enforcement options alone. Additionally, the HUB is data driven, evidence-based in its concept, design and execution and the HUB's activities and outcomes can be continually measured and assessed.

OUTCOMES

Since June 2018, the Jamaica Plain HUB has encountered 110 "situations". Of those situations, 76% were introduced by the Boston Police Department. 64% were men between the ages of 40 and 59 years old with the three top risk factors being diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse and a lack of housing. Approximately 80% of the situations presented at the weekly HUB meetings have resulted in individuals and/or families being connected to available services. Interestingly, the East Boston HUB table has addressed issues for clients with almost identical demographic characteristics, risk factors and outcomes.

As the HUB continues to gain recognition for the work in the Jamaica Plain community, MassHousing has received a request from the Boston Police Department (BPD) and the Boston City Council President to expand into three additional police districts across the city. Both the BPD and the City Council have seen

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the benefit of increased and more effective collaboration through this program that has, in turn, fostered community trust and inter-agency collaboration while also increasing awareness surrounding the interconnectedness of issues that affect a community. This program has developed a means by which these most vulnerable and at-risk individuals can be supported and served more effectively.

One example is a woman identified as “DR” (Situation #44). DR is an older woman who was introduced to the HUB by the Boston Police Department in March of 2019. She was experiencing homelessness, suffered from prior addiction and mental health related issues, and could not meet the basic needs required to live a safe, healthy life free of contact with law enforcement. She first became known to police after they received a phone call from a local convenience store stating that there was a woman in need of services. When officers arrived, they found DR, 60+ years old with several physical health conditions. She was sleeping in her car which had remained parked at that lot 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Once the situation was introduced to the HUB table CM, the recovery coach, took the lead. Contact was made with DR after days of searching and CM began to advocate for her and ultimately worked to secure permanent housing for DR. Through the connections built at the HUB, CM was able to work with representatives from the Pine Street Inn system (a Boston homeless shelter) to locate and secure housing for DR at a scattered site development in the city. This meant that DR was able to move out of her car permanently. Weeks after the housing placement, CM received a phone call from DR, thanking her for all the work that she did to help her move out of homelessness and into affordable housing.

The work of HUB is case specific and client specific. As all of the organizations that participate in this effort become aware of specific individuals and their families who are struggling, HUB works to intervene and relieve a burden for these residents. This is work that helps to make changes at the community level on a person by person basis – and day to day. The change and the impact are real and they are significant. MassHousing is proud to be leading this group, which is helping to improve the lives of some of Boston’s most vulnerable residents. The plans to expand into three additional neighborhoods will help the reach of this effort expand even further. MassHousing’s investment in the program has supported its operation by paying a portion (\$5,000) of the HUB table training for community partners. Our Agency has also invested \$4,000 in the buildout of a salesforce arm through a Boston-based community development organization in order to manage data collection. Additionally, a Public Safety Assistant in MassHousing’s Community Services Department serves as the chair of HUB’s weekly meetings as well as the data collector/coordinator.

Hub Statistics

98%

of filter four situations include PAARI, MassHousing and BPD

80+

situations have been overseen by the Hub since June 2018

42%

of Hub situations involved 40-59 year olds

64%

of Hub situations involved men

76%

of Hub situations are originated by BPD

94%

of Hub situations involve the issue of housing/homelessness



Representatives from the JP HUB get ready to implement the “door knock” step of the four-filter process.



To learn more please contact us!

617-854-1299

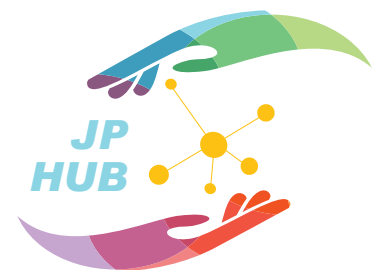
www.thejphub.com

The HUB was launched by a partnership between MassHousing and the Boston Police Department to mobilize resources in the community.



At JP Hub we are working together to reduce risk in our community.

The Hub is a team of law enforcement, community partners, service providers and government agencies who **meet weekly** to address specific situations involving individuals **facing elevated levels of risk**, and develop immediate, coordinated and integrated responses through the mobilization of resources. The JP Hub works with families and individuals that are facing difficult challenges and may need services from more than one community agency. Our goal is to work together to ensure that families and individuals are safe and healthy and have an opportunity to thrive.



THE HUB

FOUR FILTER PROCESS

AWAY FROM
THE TABLE

FILTER 1: Individual Agency Screening



Individuals within agencies, who have identified situations, where individuals and/or families are facing acutely elevated levels of risk, can complete the referral form and submit it to the designated individual within their agency to be brought forward at the Situation Table.

AT THE TABLE

FILTER 2: Determine Acutely Elevated Risk



First: Limited Follow-up from Prior Filter 4 Interventions

The Table is provided a high level update by the lead agency and a determination is made whether the AER has been addressed. This is to tell the table if services have been connected or not and to close the situation if possible. No details of the intervention or follow-up services are discussed.

Second: New Situations Brought Forward from Filter One

Limited de-identified data is disclosed to determine if Acutely Elevated Risk is present.

More information is required before being able to determine risks present

More work needs to be done by the originating Agency



FILTER 3: Limited disclosure, pause for recognition



Limited disclosure of information is presented to pause for recognition and to determine if (and which) agencies are already engaged with the individual, based on the evident acute risk factors, and if (and if so, which) other agencies should play a role.

Determined agencies are actively engaged and services are moving forward so intervention not required



FILTER 4: The 'Door Knock' Intervention



Agencies involved will meet at the end of the meeting to discuss the next step, which should take place within the next 24-48 hours. This intervention is not about enforcing or apprehending. It is about gaining express consent from the client in order to collaborate in offering full support and assistance that, in many cases, the clients were not previously aware of, able to obtain, or had access to.



Wasn't interested initially, but then reached out

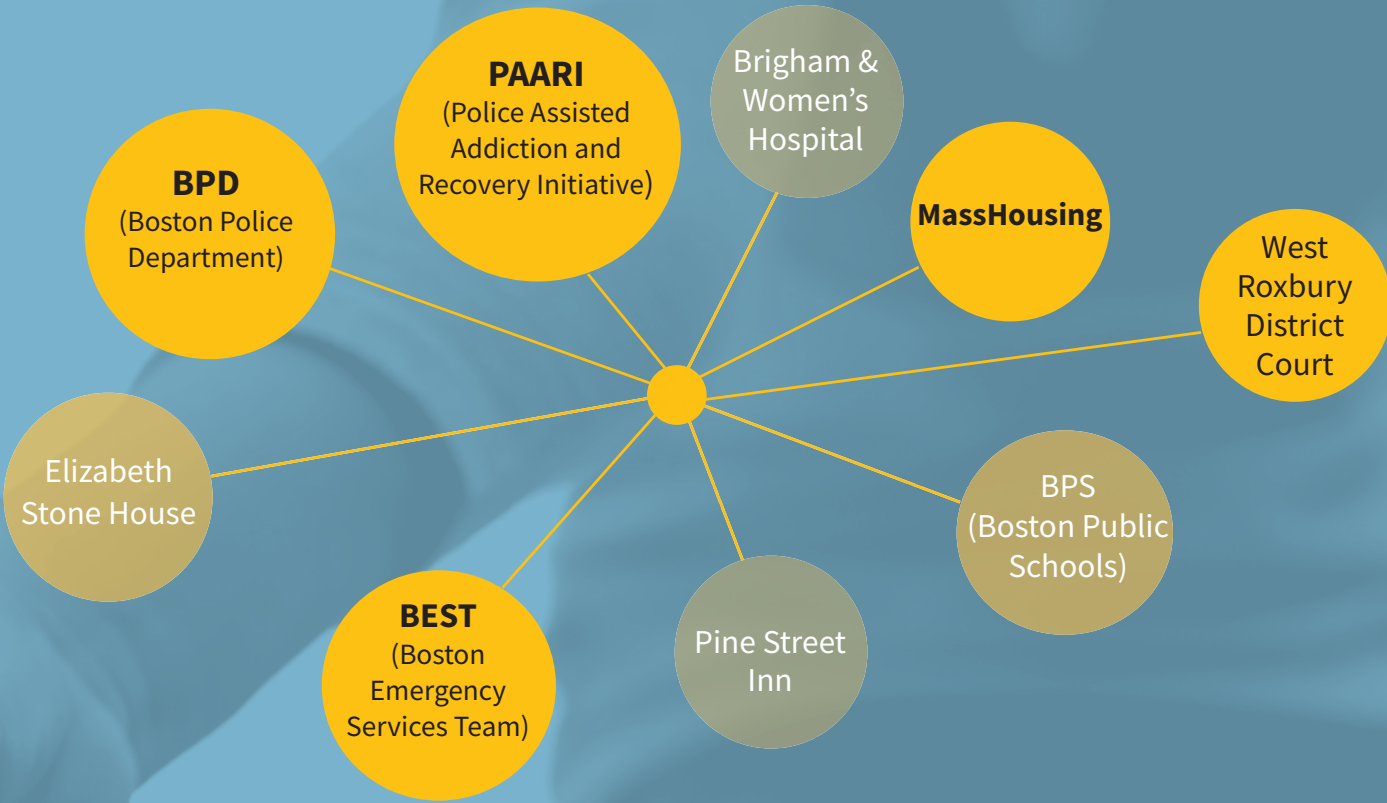


Open to Intervention—Consent Obtained—Services Connected



Not Interested—Sector-specific Options Remain for Consideration

AGENCIES INVOLVED



RISK FACTORS

- | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Poverty | Elderly Abuse | Sexual Violence | Crime Victimization |
| Gangs | Criminal Involvement | Physical Health | Basic Needs |
| Gambling | Cognitive Impairment | Supervision | Antisocial/Negative Behavior |
| Housing | Physical Violence | Negative Peers | Threat to Public Health/Safety |
| Emotional Violence | Substance Abuse | Social Environment | Human Trafficking |
| Parenting | Self-Harm/Suicide | Mental Health | Domestic Violence |
| Missing/Runaway | Truancy | Unemployment | |

COLLABORATIONS THAT:

Build community trust

Increase safety and security

Improve inter-agency relationships

Allow partners a better understanding of each other's work

Facilitate the ability to track social risks