

RISING TOGETHER

Creating New Pathways to Employment for Youth and Young Adults At-Risk of or Experiencing Homelessness

Rising Together is a community-driven, equity-focused workforce development initiative that builds the capacity of employers and service providers in Boston to train, hire, retain, and advance the careers of youth and young adults (YYA) at-risk of or experiencing homelessness. The initiative builds on the work of Rising to the Challenge, a citywide plan to end homelessness in Boston among YYA.

Rising Together began in May 2019 with a grant from Heartland Alliance's National Center on Employment and Homelessness. Boston was one of seven communities nationwide to receive this grant. In January 2020, Rising Together also received pivotal support from the Liberty Mutual Foundation.

WHY FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT FOR YYA EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS?

- In 2019, Boston's Homeless Census counted approximately 325 YYA sleeping in shelters, transitional housing, or on the street. Recent statewide and national surveys reveal that many more YYA are typically doubled-up or couch-surfing.¹
- Minority groups make up a disproportionately large percentage of people experiencing homelessness. This is in direct relation to the oppression experienced by these communities and is especially significant for LGBTQ+, Black, Latinx, and Native Americans.^{2,3}
- Meaningful and sustainable employment is key to housing stability and long-term success. Yet, less than half of 18-24-year-olds experiencing homelessness in Boston report active employment.

THE RISING TOGETHER MODEL

Rising Together is informed by a Community Engagement Framework infused with an equity lens. Employers and service providers from the public, private, and non-profit sectors convene at least quarterly to coordinate efforts and receive trainings that expand their capacity to better engage and employ YYA experiencing homelessness. The initiative will ultimately issue policy recommendations for creating more career opportunities that account for the diversity of YYA experiencing homelessness.

THE RISING TOGETHER STEERING COMMITTEE

- Boston Private Industry Council (on behalf of the Opportunity Youth Collaborative)
- Boston Youth Action Board
- Bridge Over Troubled Waters
- City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development
- City of Boston Health & Human Services
- Mayor's Office of Workforce Development
- More than Words
- St. Francis House

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information or to contact Rising Together visit owd.boston.gov/rising-together or email RisingTogether@boston.gov

¹ Mass.gov. (2017). "Massachusetts Youth Count 2017" Retrieved September 11, 2018.
² In Boston, roughly 50% of YYA experiencing homelessness are Black, while only 23% of the general population is Black; among Latinx or Hispanics, 21-35% of YYA experience homelessness, though they are 19% of the population; 25 and 29% identify as LGBTQ., compared to 15.5% of all 18-24 yr olds.
³ Mass.gov.(2017). "Massachusetts Youth Count 2017": HMIS 2017. Homeless Management Information System: Boston CoC: U.S. Census Bureau (2016). American Community Survey 1-year estimate.