



**BOSTON'S WAY HOME**  
MAYOR MARTIN J. WALSH

We have been working on “**Boston’s Way Home: An Action Plan to End Veteran and Chronic Homelessness**”, a new plan to house Boston’s homeless, for **exactly one year. Here’s what we have accomplished:**

### **Veteran homelessness**

*In 2014, Mayor Walsh joined the “Homes for the Brave” initiative, in which the City pledged to end veterans’ homelessness by 2015. In January of 2016, Mayor Walsh announced in his State of the City address that the City of Boston had ended chronic homelessness among veterans.*

*Unfortunately, new veterans do continue to become homeless, but our new system is designed to quickly get people the housing and services they need so that their stay in shelter or on the street is as brief as possible. On the way to creating this system, we have accomplished a great deal:*

- 684 homeless veterans housed since July 2014.
- Currently, only five veterans sleep on the street. They are regularly offered shelter and housing, but continue to turn down these resources.
- On average, 60 percent of all veterans who are homeless in Boston are staying in a transitional housing program, from which they typically exit to permanent housing.
- The overall number of homeless veterans has dropped 44 percent in just over 2 years.
- We have built a community + a system to make sure that all veterans are on a path to housing.
- Working with our partners, we continue to house approximately one homeless veteran per day.
- Brighton Marine established a \$200,000 endowment to support our initiative to end chronic veterans homelessness in Boston.



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## **We are now scaling up our efforts to end chronic individual homelessness**

*People who are chronically homeless have been homeless the longest, and struggle with the most complex set of issues. Research has shown that the longer people stay in shelter, the harder it becomes for them to become housed and stable.*

*To truly solve Boston's homeless issue, we must end chronic homelessness -- reforming our system to not only find housing for homeless people, but also to get them the services they need.*

- We have created a name-by-name list: every chronically homeless person in the City of Boston has been identified, and we are systematically helping each of them find housing.
- In January 2016, there were 612 chronically homeless individuals in Boston.
- Since January 2016, we have housed 101 chronically homeless individuals.
- 15 of our chronically homeless individuals are inactive – they have not entered shelter for 90 days or longer. Of course, if they return, they will be placed back on the active list.
- This leaves just 497 chronically homeless individuals on our active list in Boston; the list will be updated periodically.
- We will soon be launching a new partnership with the State's Department of Elder Affairs to help house our chronically homeless elders.



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**We are re-creating the way we deliver services to our homeless residents.**

Boston's network of providers delivers high quality services for Boston's homeless individuals, which has resulted in one of the nation's lowest rates of urban street homelessness. **But we need a better, more coordinated way to get results.**

**We have spent the last year putting into place significant system reform.** New systems and partnerships are in place. Teams meet weekly, setting clear targets and using data to track progress. And our partners continue to bring new resources and ideas to the table. **In just one year, we have accomplished so much:**

**Front door triage**

*Staff are now meeting newly homeless people as they enter shelter to discover their individual needs and explore the options available to them.*

- Mayor Walsh's FY17 budget included new resources to fund front door triage:
  - \$150,000 for staff at Pine Street Inn, and
  - additional resources for the Boston Public Health Commission to fund front door triage positions at the Southampton Street, and Woods Mullen shelters.
- Boston's emergency shelters have worked together to develop a shared Front Door Triage Assessment Tool and share client level data to avoid duplication of services.



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## Coordinated Access

*Boston has created a centralized technology system to match homeless individuals with the housing and services they need.*

- After a competitive RFP process, Boston hired [Green River](#) to create this new platform.
- The platform is complete, and will soon be populated with data. The pilot is expected to roll out in August, 2016.

## Rapid Rehousing

*Rapid rehousing assists homeless individuals in returning to housing as quickly as possible by providing the amount, type, and duration of assistance needed to stabilize a household.*

- Mayor Walsh's FY17 budget invests nearly \$1m in rapid rehousing, which will help move people out of shelter and into housing, and help them with move-in costs and services once they move into housing.
- The Rapid Rehousing program is targeting people who have been in shelter for less than 180 days, in order to prevent them from becoming chronically homeless.



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## **Permanent Supportive Housing**

*This type of housing assists individuals with complex issues by combining subsidized housing with the support they need to become stable.*

- We have created a new partnership with the Boston Housing Authority. Through this partnership, we are helping chronically homeless people move into permanent housing that offers them the support they need to become stable.
- The State is assisting this plan with 75 new vouchers to help veterans and chronically homeless people pay for housing.
- The City is now partnering with the State's Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to use mainstream health care programs to pay for support services in housing.
- Along with state and community partners, we recently cut the ribbon on the Francis Grady Apartments and Stacy Kirkpatrick House: 30 studio apartments for people who have been homeless, with on-site support including counseling, job-readiness training, home budgeting, and crisis intervention, along with a 20-bed medical respite facility for homeless individuals.



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## Housing Surges

*Recognizing that one of the highest barriers for homeless people to get housed is the proximity of services to one another, the City of Boston and our partners have pioneered the concept of the "housing surge" -- an event where representatives from government and nonprofit agencies gather in one place to efficiently assist homeless people to connect with housing and supportive services.*

- With our partners, we have hosted five "housing surge" events since November 2015
  - Housing search experts from HomeStart, the VA and the Boston Housing Authority help homeless individuals become certified for housing vouchers that will enable them to find apartments in the private market.
  - Veterans can speak to the Veterans Administration to apply for benefits.
  - Homeless individuals can get their health insurance upgraded.
  - Individuals can obtain same-day proof of income and identification.
  - Individuals also receive a hot meal, gift cards, and transportation to and from the event.
  
- Our next "housing surge" will focus on chronically homeless elders (50+)
  - Connect elders with home-based services that will keep them out of nursing homes and stable in housing.
  - Once an elderly homeless person is connected with services that meets their needs, the Boston Housing Authority will provide offers of housing in their elderly housing developments.



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## **Improvements to the shelter system**

*While we assist homeless individuals with the support and housing they need to become stable, we recognize that there is a continued need for an emergency shelter system to offer safe, supportive shelter to those in need.*

- Opened new facility at 112 Southamptton Street for more than 400 men.
- Redesigned Woods Mullen shelter to now be the largest shelter for women in the Commonwealth.
- Southamptton and Woods Mullen shelters are now open 24 hours, with new staffing that enables them to open during daytime and provide needed outreach, engagement, and housing referral services.
- The HUES Collaborative identifies and reaches out to high utilizers of emergency services, who are then brought to BPHC shelters for outreach and engagement.
- Increased interagency collaboration around providing supportive housing and behavioral health counseling at emergency shelters.
- Increased access to addiction and recovery services in collaboration with the Boston Public Health Commission's Bureau of Recovery Services. Shelter staff are trained in naran administration and response protocols to client emergencies, including those resulting from substance abuse and mental illness.



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**Changing the way we deliver services to our homeless in Boston would be impossible without the help of partners including Federal, State, City, and non-profit agencies, as well as local faith communities.**

**Our thanks go out to each and every one of these agencies for their tireless commitment to helping our most vulnerable residents.**

**City of Boston**

- Department of Neighborhood Development
- Boston Public Health Commission
- Boston Housing Authority
- Office of Veterans' Services
- Elderly Commission
- Inspectional Services Department
- Boston Police Department
- Boston Emergency Medical Services

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

- Department of Veterans' Services
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Public Health
- Executive Office of Elder Affairs
- Department of Criminal Justice Information Services
- Department of Transportation
- MassHealth
- Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness
- Executive Office of Health and Human Services





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### **Federal Partners**

- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

### **Nonprofit Partners**

- Pine Street Inn
- New England Center and Homes for Veterans
- Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance
- The Boston Foundation
- HomeStart, Inc.
- St. Francis House
- Hearth, Inc.
- Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
- Bay Cove Human Services
- Corporation for Supportive Housing
- Vinfen
- Volunteers of America Massachusetts
- Veterans, Inc.
- Boston Health Care for the Homeless
- Project Place
- Boston Rescue Mission
- Casa Esperanza
- Commonwealth Land Trust
- Children's Services of Roxbury
- Brighton Marine Health Center
- Downtown Boston Business Improvement District