



***THE* CORNERSTONE**

SUMMER 2025

THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING & SHELTER ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

WWW.MHSA.NET

MHSA Responds to Federal Uncertainty

MHSA is deeply concerned about the Trump Administration's ongoing response to **homelessness**, particularly July's Executive Order "Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets." The order shifts policy and funding away from proven solutions like Housing First. This evidence-based approach pairs housing with wraparound services, helping people have a stable foundation of housing while addressing other challenges like mental health conditions or substance use.

Housing First has decades of proven success, with housing retention rates over 85% and reduced health care costs. The Executive Order promotes criminalization, such as camping bans, which hides the crisis instead of solving it. **Homelessness is a public health emergency**, and without treatment on demand, mental health care, long-term recovery services, and housing, people will continue to suffer.

Federal policy changes threaten to destabilize many vulnerable households in Massachusetts and make it nearly impossible for others to end their homelessness.

Unsheltered homelessness continues to rise nationwide and has doubled in Massachusetts over the past decade, highlighting the urgent need for solutions rather than punitive measures. MHSA will continue to monitor federal actions closely and advocate with state and Congressional leaders for evidence-based solutions that prioritize housing, supportive services, and public health.



10,000

Total
supportive
housing units in
Massachusetts



45%

of units rely on
federal homeless
assistance
funding

These homes provide stability for people who are **disabled and were once chronically homeless**.

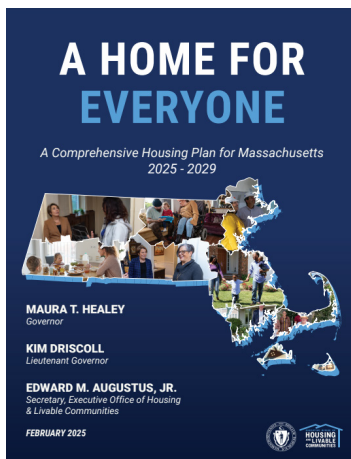
They are **now at risk** if the federal government withdraws Housing First support.

MHSA in Action

MHSA serves a unique role in our sector, as a statewide policy organization with over 100 member agencies, especially during times of uncertainty like today.

Here are some ways MHSA is speaking out about the challenges in our sector:

In July, MHSA CEO Joyce Tavon (right) testified at the State House alongside Reps. Lisa Field and Jim Hawkins to **support ending the criminalization of homelessness.**



MHSA completed the first-ever comprehensive data analysis for the entire Massachusetts supportive housing inventory.

This data was used by the Healey-Driscoll Administration **in the state's first comprehensive housing plan.**

MHSA CEO Joyce Tavon and Policy Associate Annie Martin (second from left) spoke as panelists at the **National Alliance to End Homelessness's annual conference** in Washington, D.C.



A GROWING CRISIS:

Older Adult Homelessness

It has become undeniably clear that older adult homelessness is now a crisis – both nationally and here in Massachusetts.

Here's some of what MHSA has been doing to respond:



People 50 and older now represent the **fastest growing segment** of the unhoused population.



Connecting Aging and Homeless Sectors

Co-sponsored the "Aging at Home" conference in May with 150+ participants from homelessness and aging services sectors to **strengthen collaboration on older adult homelessness.**



Amplifying the Message

Banker & Tradesman published a piece by MHSA CEO Joyce Tavon **focused on the growing crisis of older adult homelessness.**



Testifying at the State House

MHSA Chief Policy & Strategy Officer Caitlin Golden spoke at the State House in support of **a bill to help low-income older adults remain housed** while awaiting long-term subsidized housing.

Linda

Community Counseling of Bristol County

At 74, Linda lost her housing and was living in her car while dealing with COPD, heart and spine issues, and limited mobility. Now **stably housed in a Community Counseling of Bristol County program supported by MHSA's Home & Healthy for Good funding**, she feels safe and connected, has access to regular medical care, and enjoys greater independence with the use of her walker.

"[Being housed] helped me relax.

*I have health issues, so I lay down when I want, I get up when I want... Whenever I need my case manager, he's right here for me. **They're very good to us.**"*



IN THE NEWS:

Speaking Out about Homelessness

BANKER & TRADESMAN

REAL ESTATE & FINANCIAL INFORMATION SINCE 1872

Massachusetts' Growing Ranks of Older Homeless Straining the Safety Net

By Joyce Tavon | July 13, 2025

"Here in the United States, the wealthiest nation on Earth, a quiet crisis is unfolding as more and more older adults are losing their homes."

Across the country, including here in our commonwealth, people 50 and older now represent the fastest growing segment of the unhoused population."



<https://bankerandtradesman.com/massachusetts-growing-ranks-of-older-homeless-straining-the-safety-net/>

As housing costs rise in Boston, homelessness soars in the cities that surround it

The Boston Globe

By Andrew Brinker | June 9, 2025



<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/09/business/boston-brockton-homeless-gateway-cities/>

Commentary: Models for success for housing the homeless

Boston Business Journal

Op-Ed by Jennifer Hanlon Wigon and Joyce Tavon | Nov. 13, 2024



<https://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2024/09/10/commentary-housing-homeless-models-for-success.html>

MHSA Welcomes New Member Agencies

MHSA membership includes over 100 community-based organizations across Massachusetts dedicated to ending homelessness. MHSA relies on the on-the-ground experience of our member agencies to shape our advocacy. **Welcome to our new member agencies!**

New member agencies include:

- Casa Esperanza
- Community Counseling of Bristol County
- Friends of Boston's Homeless
- Home City Development
- Justice 4 Housing
- Open Sky Community Services
- Renaissance Development, LLC
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay



MHSA's annual Member Retreat



Photo Credit: Osa Igiiede Photography

MHSA Celebrates Annual Spring Fundraiser

On May 8, more than 200 people gathered at WBUR CitySpace in Boston for MHSA's annual spring fundraiser, Home for Good.

Donna Quirk, a dedicated volunteer, advocate, and philanthropist, received the **Bob Ray Partnership Award**. Donna served 14 years on the board of directors of MHSA member agency Heading Home and has spent 20 years volunteering for organizations with missions to end homelessness.

Joe Finn, MHSA's former President & Executive Director, spent over 30 years helping people experiencing chronic homelessness. Joe retired in January and received the **Representative Byron Rushing Commitment to Housing Award**.

Many thanks to all the attendees, sponsors, volunteers, staff, raffle donors, and vendors who helped make Home for Good a great success!



*Congratulations
on your
retirement,
Joe!*

Thank you for your commitment to creating more housing across the Commonwealth and your dedication to helping our most vulnerable neighbors find a place to call home.

THANK YOU to this year's many generous sponsors, including **Headline sponsors** Adage Capital Management, L.P. and United Way of Massachusetts Bay, and **Raise the Roof sponsors** Eastern Bank and Steve Rosenfeld and Margot Botsford.

SAVE THE DATE

• Join us next year! •

JUNE 11, 2026
WBUR CitySpace

Home & Healthy For Good

MHSA's Home & Healthy for Good (HHG) provides **flexible funding for permanent supportive housing** for adults who are disabled and once were chronically homeless. It also funds **critical systems change work** to further the creation of supportive housing and solutions to homelessness.

HHG advances housing solutions that **save money, strengthen communities, and transform lives.**

Accomplishments with HHG funding this past fiscal year (FY25) include:

Systems change to end homelessness

- Building **partnerships with local government & nonprofits** to develop alternatives to camping bans
- **Convening 100+ supportive housing providers statewide** for monthly learning and collaboration sessions
- **Promoting innovative approaches** to create supportive housing quickly, like modular construction

\$5,267

Estimated annual health care savings, per person, per year, with the implementation of the HHG program.

In addition to positive housing outcomes, HHG helps to decrease use of emergency and acute health services, and decreases Medicaid costs.



1,329



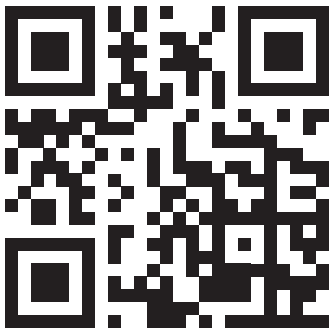
Supportive housing units received flexible funding for existing or new developments



P.O. Box 8638 | Boston, MA 02114

YOU can help end homelessness

SCAN to
DONATE



Cover photo: A new permanent supportive housing property in southeastern Massachusetts

WAYS TO DONATE:

► Donate online

Visit www.mhsa.net/donate or scan the QR code to the left using your smartphone's camera

► Send a check

Send checks made payable to Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance, cash, or money orders via mail to our address at **PO Box 8638, Boston, MA 02114**

MHSA's tax ID is 22-3068653

Questions? Contact us at development@mhsa.net
or **617-367-6447**