



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

Youth Without Homes Can't Wait:

Please Ask Your State Senator and Representative to Push for \$4 Million in the FY'17 Budget to More Fully Implement the Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness Law



Building upon the momentum from the January 2015 signing of the unaccompanied youth homelessness bill into law (Chapter 450 of the Acts of 2014) and the Legislature's inclusion of \$2 million in the final FY'16 budget, we are seeking \$4 million in the FY'17 budget to address the housing and support service needs of unaccompanied youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness.

Requests:

- \$4 million for housing and wraparound services for unaccompanied youth under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) line item, 4000-0007.
- This investment would provide expanded funding for the unaccompanied youth homelessness law, An Act promoting housing and support services for unaccompanied homeless youths, to ensure that the law truly is meaningful for youth without homes.
- The additional housing and service resources would be **targeted to youth and young adults age 24 and younger who are experiencing homelessness out on their own**, outside the custody or care of a parent/guardian.
- EOHHS plans to award performance-based contracts to providers to allocate the FY'16 funding in March 2016, so we also are requesting that Prior Appropriation Continued (PAC) language be inserted into the line item so as to carryover any unspent FY'16 funds. The PAC language would mitigate the negative effects of late timing of issuing contracts.

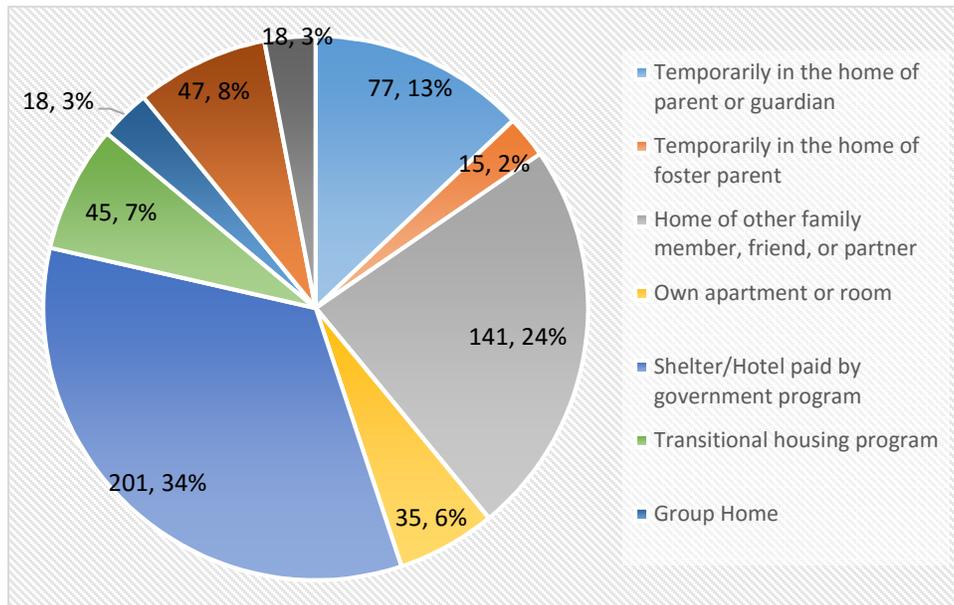
Why Now?

There is a desperate need for increased housing, shelter, and service options for youth and young adults age 24 or younger who are living outside the custody and care of their parents or guardians. We know all too well that youth homelessness takes its toll on both the youth and our society at large. People who experience homelessness as adolescents often face bleak outcomes. While many youth are resilient and are able to overcome the ravages of homelessness, homelessness often leads to poor health outcomes including increased risk of death, exposure to violence, susceptibility to exploitation and high risk behaviors, and poor academic performance with increased risk of dropping out of school.

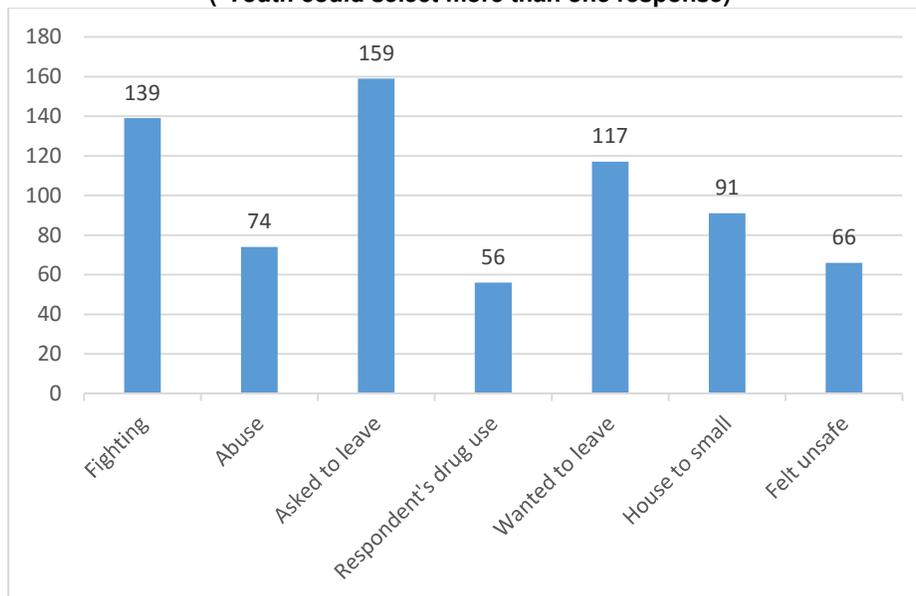
In winter 2015, under the leadership of the Massachusetts Special Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and in partnership with youth and youth providers, the state conducted its second annual statewide youth homelessness survey through the Continuum of Care networks. 1,964 of the young people who participated in the survey were under the age of 25, and of those young people, 31.1% (610 youth) indicated that they had experienced homelessness within the past year, and 26.3% indicated that they currently were experiencing homelessness. The results are helping to shed more light on the extent of youth homelessness and the needs of young people here in the Commonwealth. See the reverse side for some data from the survey.

We know that the time to act is now. **The \$4 million requested for FY'17 will provide much-needed resources to begin to build up a systematic, effective response to unaccompanied youth homelessness in Massachusetts.**

Where the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Were Currently Staying
 (*Youth could select more than one response)



Main Reasons Youth Were Unaccompanied and Experiencing Homelessness
 (*Youth could select more than one response)



Youth without homes can't wait! Please actively support a \$4 million investment in housing and services for unaccompanied youth in FY'17!

For more information, please contact Kelly Turley, Director of Legislative Advocacy, at 781-595-7570 x17 or kelly@mahomeless.org.
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