

Please Co-Sponsor Amendment #555

Expanding Safe Havens across Massachusetts

A Proven Program for Ending Homelessness and Saving Lives

Fund DMH Statewide Homelessness Support Services (5046-2000)
at \$25.615M, a \$1M increase over H2, for 3 new Safe Havens

Filed by Senator Comerford

What are Safe Havens?

Safe Havens are **supervised and supportive housing for homeless individuals with multiple disabilities** who haven't been successful in traditional shelters. The program provides individuals with transitional housing, connects them to behavioral health and medical services, and serves as a bridge to permanent housing. It is a proven model that saves and transforms lives, and reduces health care and other public health costs.

Who is Served by Safe Havens?

The model serves hard-to-reach, hard-to-engage individuals who are chronically unhoused with severe and often co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions. These individuals are among the **highest users of EDs, hospital beds, and emergency medical services, and have high rates of trauma and criminal justice involvement.**

Why Expand the Safe Havens Program?

- Safe Haven programs offers a pathway to supportive housing and treatment to the many people **suffering from the effects of the pandemic**, including those who lost housing when congregate care shelters closed or decreased capacity and those with emerging or worsening mental health and substance use issues.
- Safe Havens work, **keeping people housed and moving many to independent housing.**
- Individuals enrolled in permanent supportive housing programs in Massachusetts have **significantly lower total per-person, per-year MassHealth costs** compared to a similar group of chronically homeless individuals (BCBSMA Foundation, 2020).

What are the Funding Needs of the Safe Haven Program?

- DMH is committed to **expanding the Safe Haven program across the state.**
- In FY22, DMH received funding to open new programs in Greenfield, Haverhill, and Hyannis, and to staff Pine Street's New Chardon Street location.
- We urge support for **three new, 7-bed Safe Haven programs across the Commonwealth** at a cost of approximately \$1M over the Governor's FY23 H2 Budget.

For additional information, contact Jennifer Honig, Co-Director for Public Policy and Government Relations, MAMH at (339) 440-3573 or jenniferhonig@mamh.org

**Advocates**
Caring Partners. Creative Solutions. Better Lives.

**ABH** ASSOCIATION
FOR BEHAVIORAL
HEALTHCARE

**BAY COVE**
HUMAN SERVICES

**CPR** Center for Public
Representation

**CSO** CLINICAL & SUPPORT OPTIONS

**DLC** THE PROTECTION & ADVOCACY
AGENCY FOR PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES

**Eliot**

**Housing Subcommittee of the State Mental Health Planning Council**

**MAMH**
Massachusetts Association
for Mental Health

**Massachusetts Association
of Behavioral Health Systems**

**Massachusetts
Clubhouse Coalition**

**MASSACHUSETTS
COALITION
FOR THE HOMELESS**

**MHLAC**
Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee

**MBRLC** National Alliance on Mental Illness
Massachusetts

**Pine Street Inn**
Ending Homelessness

**SERIC**
SOUTH EAST RECOVERY LEARNING COMMUNITY

**Vinfen**

**Western
Massachusetts
network to end
homelessness**