



Housing Subcommittee of the State Mental Health Planning Council

January 4th, 2024

Co-Chairs

Joe Finn, MSHA

Jill Gichuhi, NAMI MA

Adrienne Cassidy, Advocates



Mission Statement & Vision Statement

Mission Statement (revised & adopted August 17, 2023)

To promote decent, safe, affordable, and **integrated housing for people in Massachusetts who are living with mental health conditions, including people served by the Department of Mental Health.** This is accomplished through educational outreach to a wide range of stakeholders, research, planning, and advocacy that leads to increased access to existing housing resources and securing new resources to meet the growing need.

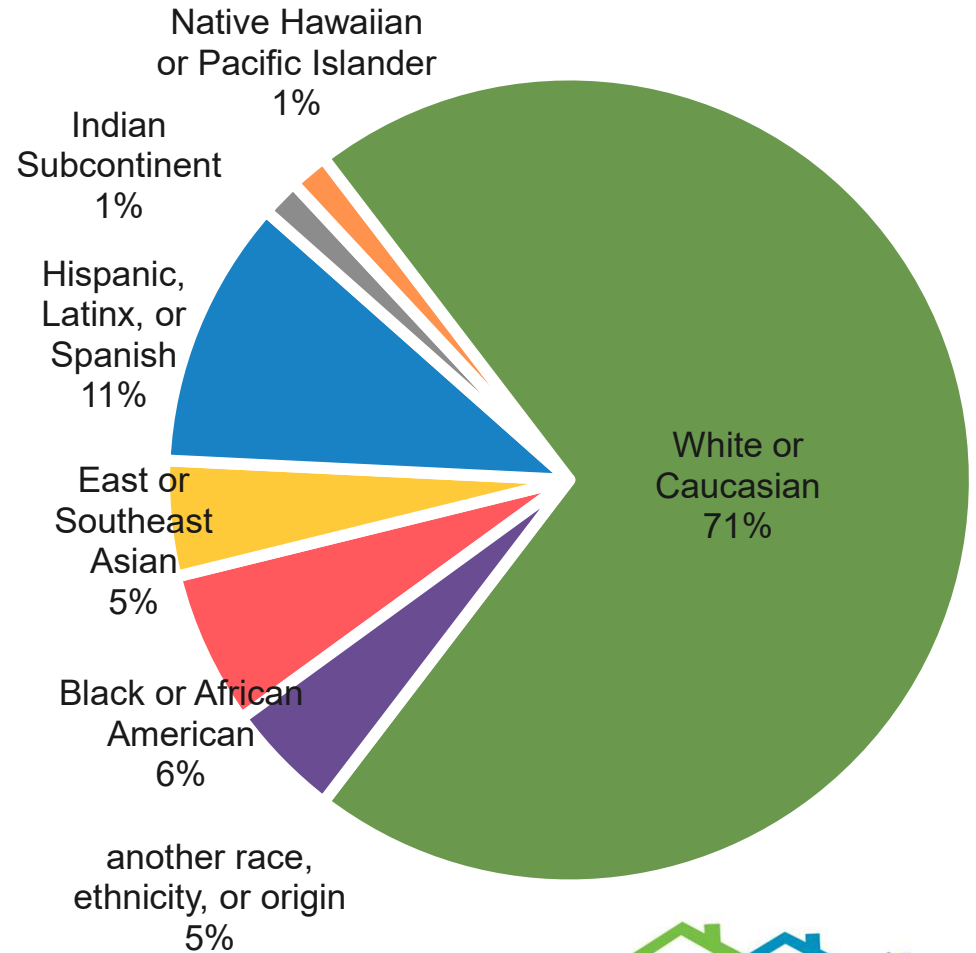
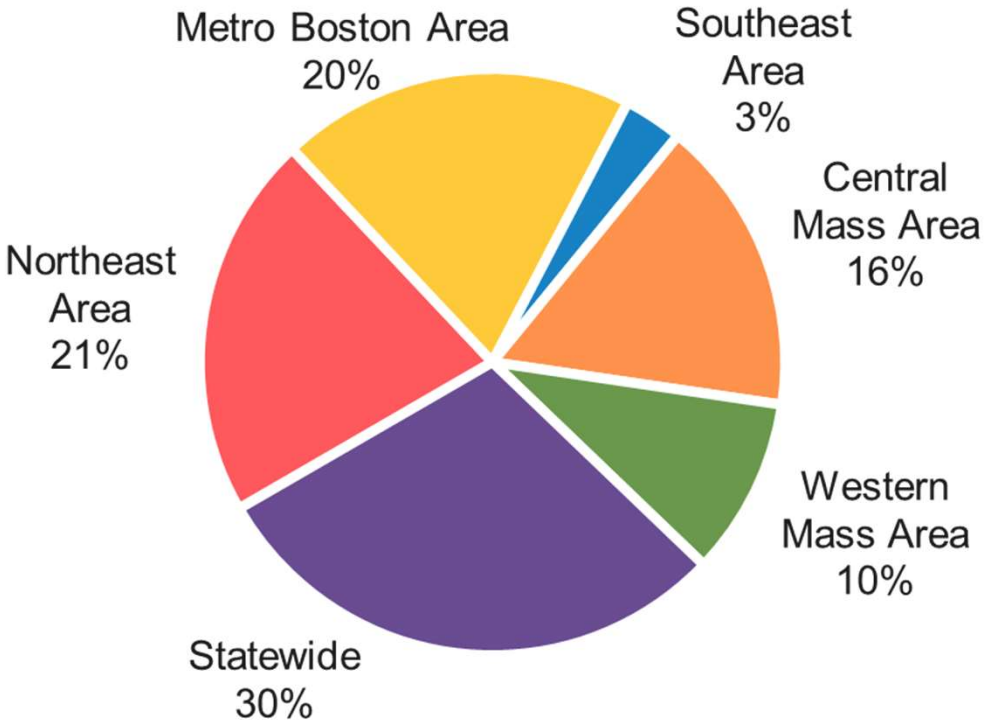
Vision Statement (revised & adopted August 17, 2023)

Housing is acknowledged as a basic human right in many circles. **For individuals with mental health conditions,** it should be considered an essential component in the recovery process. Experience demonstrates that multiple factors influence a person's recovery and well-being, some are less defined or understood than others; housing is one factor that is primary and undeniable.

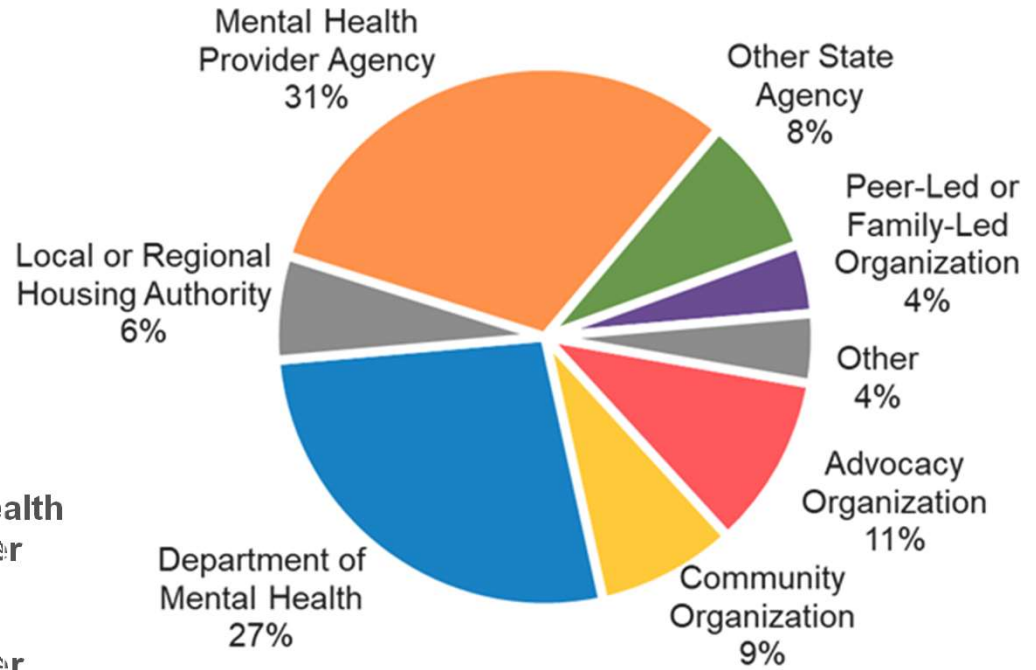
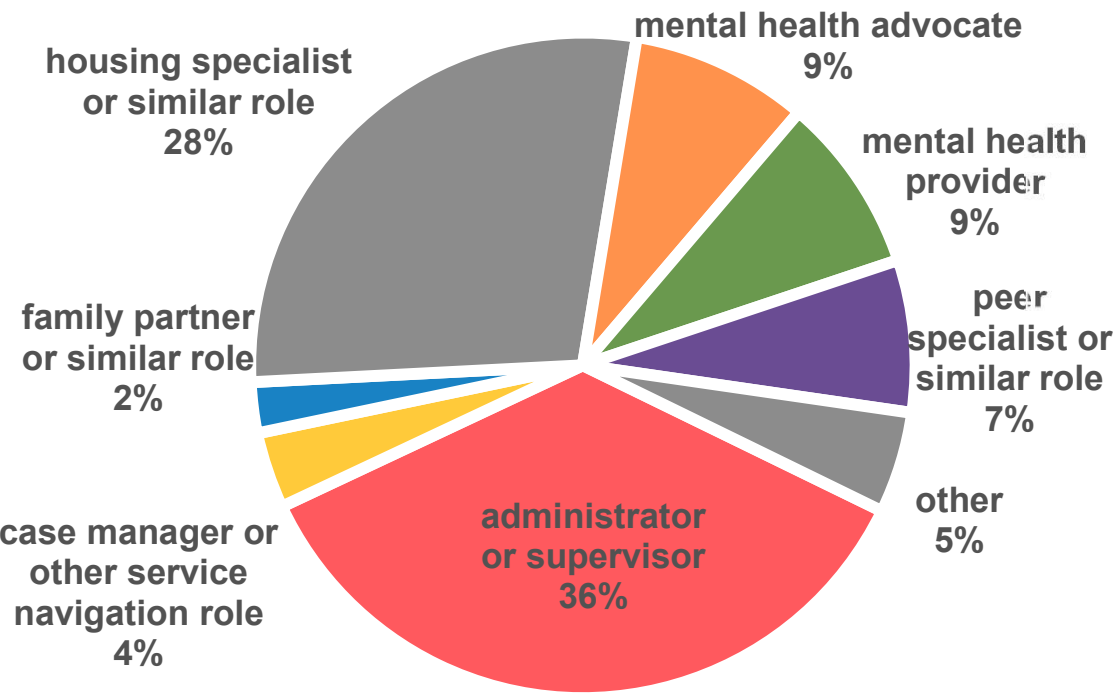


Who We Are

72 Members as of today!



What Members Do

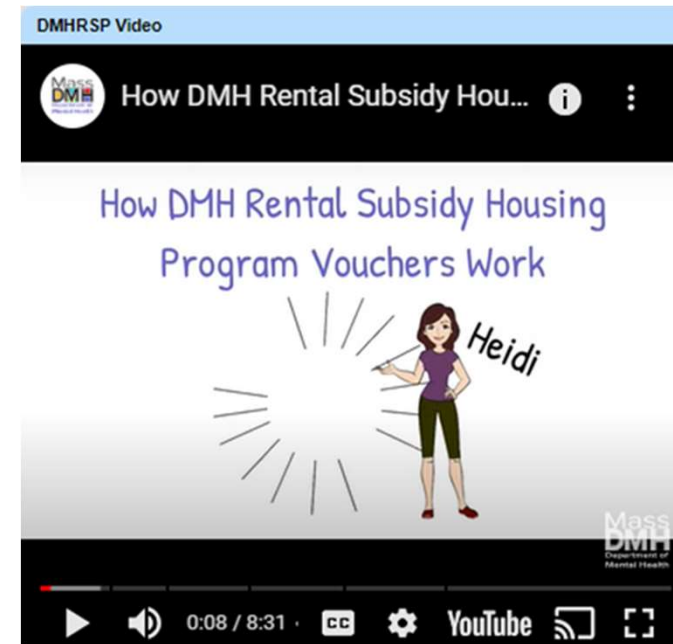


Historical Goals & Achievements

The committee has worked to:

- Eliminate barriers to utilizing DMHRSP rental subsidies
- Decreased the number of inspections from 3 (BoH, AA, & DMH) to 1 inspection
- Allow Property Owners to use their own leases vs a specific lease previously required by the DMHRSP program
- Create a video used to educate stakeholders on how the DMHRSP voucher program works

[Video Link Here](#)



Historical Goals & Achievements

Advocacy for budget increases to the DMH-Rental Subsidy Program & Safe Havens



Safe Havens

- FY22 3 new sites
- FY23 3 new sites
- FY24 added \$4M for 4-5 sites

DMH- Rental Subsidy Program



*FY24 budgeted

DMHRSP

- In partnership with MAMH there has been ongoing advocacy for increasing funding to the DMH-Rental Subsidy Program
- Toolkit
- Letters of support to legislatures
- Videos from individuals that utilize DMHRSP vouchers, highlighting the impact that housing has had on their mental health & recovery
- FY23- **2,254** individuals housed
- 107 additional people housing in FY24
- 55- AA participating in program

Events- Educational Opportunity



SAVE THE DATE!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5th, 2017

DMH Central Mass Area, South Middlesex Opportunity Council & Advocates, Inc.

Present:

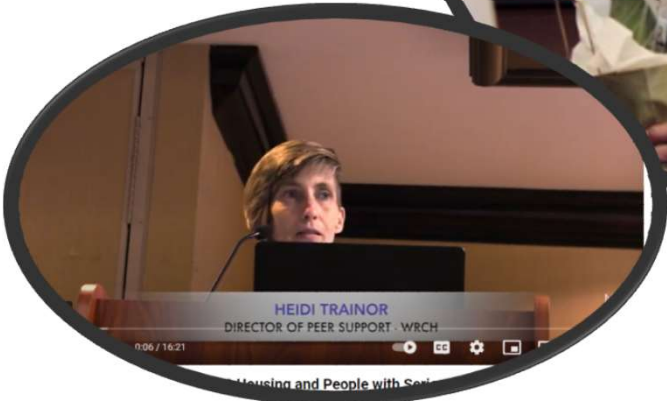
"HOUSING 101: Obtaining and Sustaining Housing for the Individuals We Serve"

Covering topics like applying for subsidies, housing search, supporting individuals in their homes, fair housing and reasonable accommodation.

Rodriguez Auditorium
Hadley Building
167 Lyman Street, Westborough, MA
Thursday October 5
9:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Events- Housing Conference:

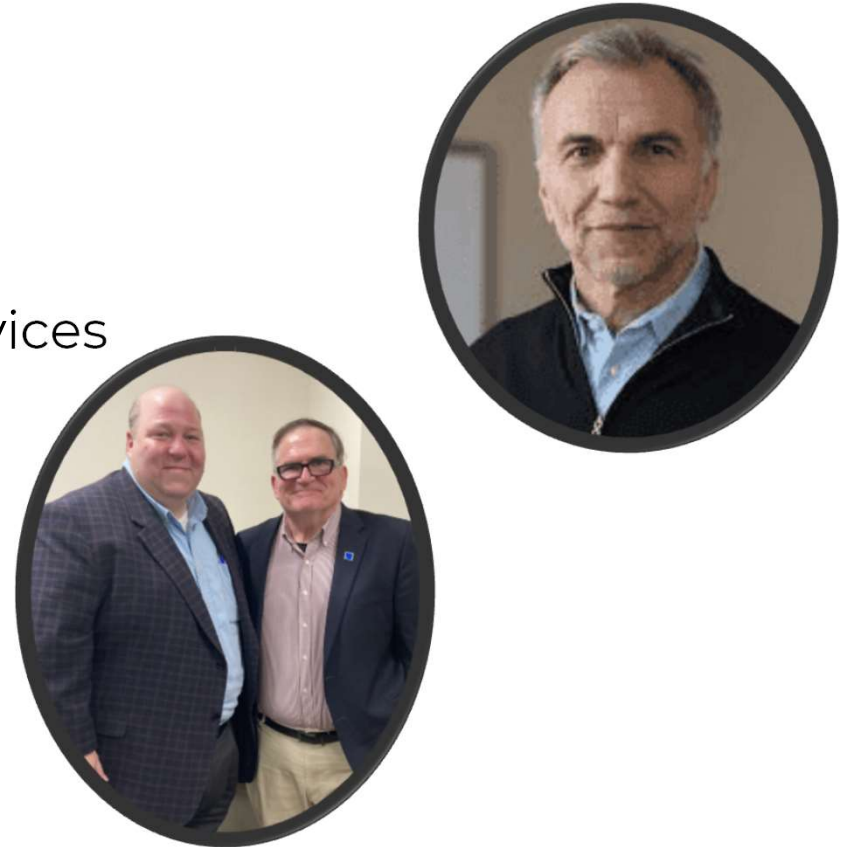
Housing & People with
Serious Mental Illness
September 25, 2018
Natick, MA
Over 190 people registered
Keynote Speakers:
Senate President Karen Spilka
Heidi Trainor- Peer Support
Commissioner Joan Mikula



[Link to video here](#)

Events & Special Guests

- Statewide Provider Meeting: Exploring barriers, successes, & best practices for housing individuals receiving DMH services
- Dr. Sam Tsemberis
- Senator Feeney
- Joyce Tavon, MSHA
- Peer Support & Housing



Current Subcommittee Goal Areas

Subcommittee Membership

building membership to include people from a variety of backgrounds

Peer Support & Housing

including regional conferences & networking meetings

Housing Advocacy

including advocacy for Safe Havens, the DMH RSP, & creating more housing inventory

Peer Support & Housing

- The Peer Support & Housing workgroup started in 2020 with a goal of better resourcing peer supporters who are supporting people with finding or keeping housing
- Feedback sessions were held in 2021 in each DMH region, to get insight from peer supporters and people working alongside them
- Feedback from the sessions were used to create a list of recommendations for DMH, behavioral health providers, and peer supporters



Peer Support & Housing

- In 2022, the workgroup shifted focus to create opportunities for peer supporters to network and share resources
- The workgroup held an event highlighting the value of peer support in housing in January 2023, featuring peer supporters and allies from the Central and Western Mass regions
- A second event was held in December 2023, featuring folks working in the Northeast area



Peer Support & Housing

PROMOTING PEER SUPPORT TO HELP PEOPLE FIND AND KEEP HOUSING

CENTRAL MASS and WESTERN MASS

Join us for a series of intersectional, cross-system panel discussions on strategies and challenges as peer workers, housing advocates, multi-service agencies, and housing placement agencies gather together for a conversation on supporting people to find and maintain housing

Featuring



Our Discussion

- What are the most significant barriers for people with mental health struggles to finding and maintaining housing?
- How does your team coordinate across those barriers when supporting someone to keep their housing?
- What other types of organizations do you commonly work with to fulfill those needs?

TUESDAY, JAN. 17TH FROM 9AM TO 2:30PM

9am - 9:45am Keynote speakers. Join Rafael Rodriguez and Ashley Sproul as they share their personal journeys to becoming powerful advocates for system transformation through their many lived experiences and their direct work in peer support.

10am - 11:30am Central Mass Regional Panel. Advocates, SMOC, and the KIVA Centers. Moderated by Genesis Clubhouse.

12pm - 1:30pm Western Mass Regional Panel. Wildflower Alliance, Eliot Community Human Services, and the 3County Continuum of Care. Moderated by the Western Mass Coalition to End Homelessness.

Central & Western Mass Event

Speakers included people from Recovery Learning Communities, behavioral health provider agencies, clubhouses, community action programs, regional housing authorities, Continuum of Care programs, and more.

people registered = 364

people attended = 192



Peer Support & Housing

I loved the opportunity for all of us to bring down the walls and see what we are all doing to work in the fight against homelessness

I appreciated the panelists brutal honesty and I feel like I have a better understanding of what the housing market looks like today. I feel like I know how to better support the people I work with.

I really enjoyed the opening speakers. The first one moved my heart and the second one added to the feeling of why we do this work.

I liked the mix of topics and appreciated starting with first person testimony to set the stage for why we were there.

Peer Support & Housing



Success in Housing

Peer Support to Help People Find & Keep Housing
November 29th
1 pm to 4 pm
on Zoom

1 pm opening
Welcome & Keynote Speaker
1:30 pm panel 1
Housing & Young People
2:40 pm panel 2
Partnering For Success
3:40 pm Wrap Up
Closing & Reflection

ASL interpretation has been requested

Join us for a series of cross-system conversations on the importance of peer support when helping people to find and keep housing.

with speakers from
*Bridgewell
Department of Mental Health
Disability Resource Center
Elliot Community Human Service
Essex County Youth Action Board
Northeast Recovery Learning Community
YouForward*

Northeast Event

Speakers included people from local housing authorities, Recovery Learning Communities, behavioral health provider agencies, the Department of Mental Health, independent living centers, and more.

people registered = 146

people attended = 95



Peer Support & Housing

Thank you to all the panelists for sharing your story and the great resources provided to us to shared and support our clients.

Hearing lived experiences, housing resources, and the experiences and success stories.

Thank you all for sharing this information. It is inspiring and very important to advocate with legislation for housing needs which the advisory boards are able to do.

Thank you to all the presenters for sharing such amazing stories of survival and resilience!

2024 Goals

- 01** Educational Opportunities for Participants, Housing Specialists & Other Stakeholders
- 02** Barriers to Utilization of the DMH RSP & Other Housing Opportunities
- 03** Revisiting & Updating the DMH Housing Plan

Next Steps

- Email to Committee Members
- Workgroups
- January meetings to define 3 goals
- Present at our next meeting on Feb. 8th

Housing Subcommittee Goal Workgroups

Dear Housing Subcommittee members -

Based on feedback, through both the survey and most recent committee meeting, we are going to take on 3 committee goals: Educational Opportunities, DMH RSP Utilization & Other Housing Resources, and updating the DMH Housing Plan. If there is another goal that you feel is important please contact one of the co-chairs so we can present at the next meeting.

We are looking for people to volunteer to be involved with defining these goals. We would ask that you meet for one to two hours in January so that we can present to the larger committee on Feb. 8th.

Thanks for your help!

- Adrienne, Jill, & Joe (Co-Chairs)



Educational Opportunities

This coming year the Committee will explore what educational needs exist.

- Housing Programs/Funding
- Housing Resources
- Housing Trainings for Staff or People Receiving Services



DMH Housing Plan

This coming year the Committee will focus on the updating the Departments Housing Plan.

The key objectives of the current plan are to:

- 1. Expand DMH Rental Subsidy Program** (DMHRSP) funding annually and improve fiscal management in conjunction with EOHLC
2. Increase utilization of the DMHRSP **Tenant-Based subsidy**
- 3. Expand Safe Haven** beds and resources for Program Staffing Support contracts across the State
4. Increase the use of both State and Federal **affordable housing resources** to serve DMH clients.
5. Effectively **manage housing resources** and track movement through the DMH system



Barriers to Utilization of the DMHRSP & Other Housing Opportunities

- Lack of Inventory
- Discrimination/Fair Housing Violations
- Rent Reasonableness
- Delays with Leasing Up New Units
- Program Requirements
- Documentation Barriers
- Inspection Barriers
- Diversity in Housing Opportunities (not a one size fits all solution)



Creating Inventory

- Educating the development community about opportunities for financing & DMH Supported Housing Programs
- Conference to Engage Developers

Barriers:

- Developers that are not on the “approved list” can not access funding
- Complexity of application process for capital funds which can create significant delays in procuring resources
- Zoning/Permitting/NIMBYism



Questions & Comments?

