

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS HENRY SANTANA, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPEN, WEBER, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 2024 AS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, 1 in 30 youth ages 13 to 17, and 1 in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 in the United States will experience some form of homelessness this year; *and,*

WHEREAS, Many factors contribute to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, including neglect, lack of housing security, being kicked out after coming out or being outed as LGBTQIA+, transitioning out of the foster care system, intergenerational poverty, abuse, and lack of employment; *and,*

WHEREAS, Nationally, the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness increased by 15% between 2022 and 2023, with a 22% increase in major cities, and increased prevalence reported in 39 states and the District of Columbia (Boston 44th Annual Homeless Census); *and,*

WHEREAS, With every day that a youth or young adult experiences homelessness, the likelihood of future homelessness increases by 2%; *and,*

WHEREAS, In Massachusetts, amongst unaccompanied youth and young adults under the age of 25 who are unstably housed or experiencing homelessness, 60% identify as BIPOC, and 30% identify as LGBTQ+ (Massachusetts Youth Count 2022); *and,*

WHEREAS, Youth and young adults with intersectional identities are often at greater risk of poverty and homelessness; amongst LGBTQ+ youth of color in Greater Boston, 32.7% are unemployed, 15.5% are unstably housed, and 30.9% are food insecure (Williams Institute); *and,*

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ youth are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than their cisgender heterosexual counterparts (True Colors United), and 28% of LGBTQ+ youth reported experiencing homelessness or housing instability at some point in their lives (The Trevor Project); *and,*

WHEREAS, Transgender youth report the highest prevalence of homelessness, as well as the highest levels of discrimination within the shelter system, compared to cisgender heterosexual and cisgender LGBTQ+ youth (Deal, Doshi, and Gonzales 2023), and there was a 28% increase in transgender youth homelessness in just one year from 2022 to 2023 (Housing and Urban Development); *and,*

WHEREAS, Data collection and reporting on youth and young adults experiencing homelessness tends to underestimate the scale of the problem due to a lack of a national standard for defining unaccompanied youth, as well as overlooking housing instability like couch surfing and sleeping in cars, and there is often a particular lack of LGBTQIA+ respondents to surveys due to exclusion, fear, or denial, so the number of youth and young adults who are impacted is likely even larger than existing data reveals (MA Commission on LGBTQ+ Youth FY2025 Recommendations); *and,*

WHEREAS, Nationally, amongst unaccompanied homeless youth between ages 13 and 25, 29% have spent time in foster care, compared to approximately 6% of all children, and 46% have spent time in juvenile detention, jail, or prison (HUD Voices of Youth Count); *and,*

WHEREAS, More than 5,000 Boston Public Schools students, comprising 10% of the district, were homeless at some point during the 2023-2024 school year; *and,*

WHEREAS, Nationally in 2021, high school students experiencing homelessness were nearly twice as likely to have seriously considered suicide or made a suicide plan, and more than 3 times as likely to have made a suicide attempt within the past year; *and,*

WHEREAS, A 2019 national study found the high school graduation rate for students experiencing homelessness was 68%, compared to 80% for low-income students and 85.5% for all students; *and,*

WHEREAS, The January 31, 2024 Boston Annual Homelessness Census identified 132 unaccompanied youth up to age 24, a 17.9% increase from 2023, as well as 1,150 families, a 1.7% increase from 2023, who were sleeping on the street or staying in emergency shelter, transitional housing, or domestic violence shelter programs; *and,*

WHEREAS, Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts identify transportation as one of the most significant barriers to accessing shelter and long-term housing (Massachusetts 2022 Youth Count); *and,*

WHEREAS, Since 2007, November has been officially recognized by the United States Congress as National Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Awareness Month, to elevate awareness of the causes and potential solutions of youth and young adult homelessness, and to uplift the experiences and needs of the young people who experience homelessness; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council:

- (1) Commits itself to ensuring continued awareness year-round by both the Council and the public about the causes and impacts of youth and young adult homelessness in Boston, and further dedicates itself to the pursuit of solutions;
- (2) Commends and supports the many organizations and volunteers who work tirelessly to prevent youth and young adult homelessness in Boston, and who support Boston's young people experiencing homelessness, including but not limited to BAGLY, Boston CASA, Boston Youth Action Board, Breaktime, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Home for Little Wanderers, More than Words, Roca, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children, Y2Y, and the Boston Public Schools Homeless Education Resource Network (HERN) and Re-Engagement Center (REC);
- (3) Recognizes the month of November 2024 as Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Awareness Month to support and further encourage such efforts.

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