



# FY27 BUDGET HEARING

*José F. Massó, Chief*

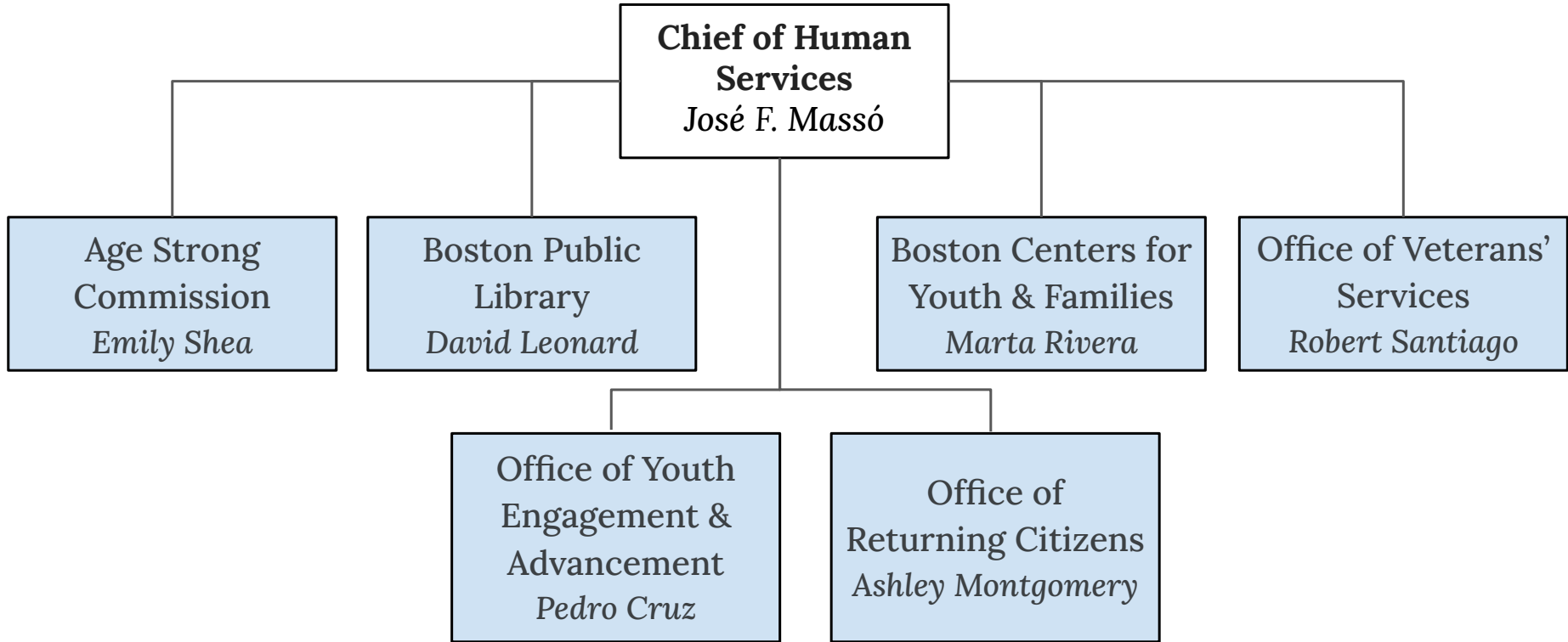
*Emily Shea, Commissioner, Age Strong Commission*

*Robert Santiago, Commissioner, Office of Veterans' Services*

*Ashley Montgomery, Executive Director, Office of Returning Citizens*

# HUMAN SERVICES CABINET

Who are we?



# HUMAN SERVICES VISION

*The future we want to see*



The Human Services Cabinet envisions Boston as a city where all residents have easy access to the services, resources and opportunities they need to truly thrive.

In this future state, residents are able to meet their basic needs while also having the opportunity to access better jobs, high quality programming, and safe places to come together with others.

# HUMAN SERVICES MISSION

*How we get to that future state*



The mission of the Human Services Cabinet is to provide equitable access to high quality services, resources, and opportunities so that every Boston resident - especially those with the greatest needs - has what they need to thrive.

Our departments meet residents where they are - in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities - to break down barriers to critical resources and advocate for policy and systems change.





- **Let's Play Boston**
  - *\$275,000 invested in youth sports programs*
  - *She Coaches Campaign launch*
  - *Aspen Institute's Project Play Summit*
- **Swim Safe**
  - *6,600 youth received free lessons*
  - *15 lifeguards trained in adaptive swim*
  - *Increased adaptive swim programming*
- **Emerging Organization Cohort**
  - *Partnered with Urban College*
  - *Will graduate 20 emerging leaders in June*



# AGE STRONG COMMISSION

## A Vibrant & Growing Population

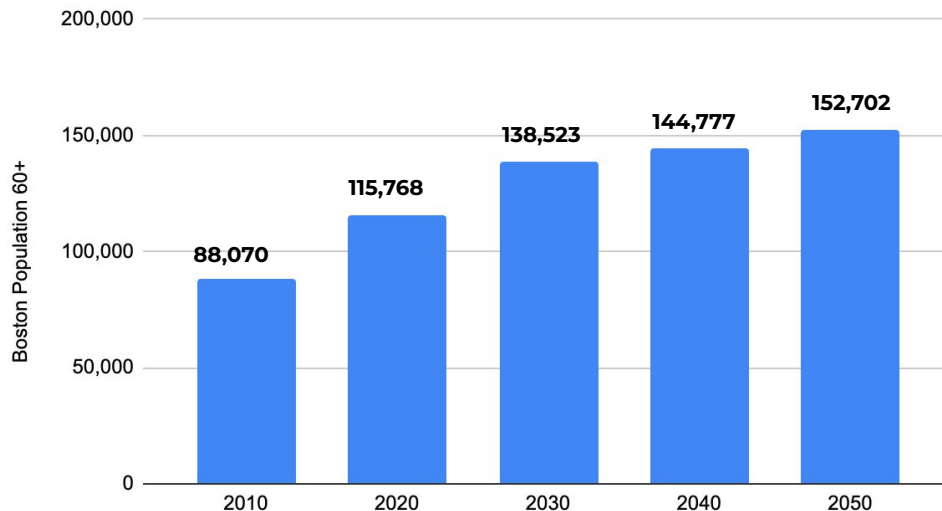
Boston's older adult population is growing rapidly and becoming more diverse

2010-2025 - 48% growth in 60+ population  
(42,000 more older residents)

By 2050, it is projected that one in five Boston residents will be an older adult

*Please note: 2025-2050 numbers are BPDA Interim projections. Subject to revision.*

Growth Projection: Boston Population 60+





- ★ **Benefits Enrollment:** Application assistance with Medicare/MassHealth, SNAP, fuel, property tax exemptions, and more.
- ★ **Transportation:** Age Strong Shuttle and Taxi Coupon program to provide more mobility.
- ★ **Community Engagement:** Hundreds of events/programs, senior centers and volunteer opportunities
- ★ **Information Access:** Print, in-person, social media, email, culturally and linguistically appropriate
- ★ **Strengthening Aging Service Systems:** Grantmaking, Behavioral Health Initiatives, Age and Dementia-Friendly Programs



## Expanding Access, Improving Economic Security, and Strengthening the Safety Net

**5,000+**

Hours of programming - a 67% increase from FY25

**20,000+**

Shuttle rides - a 15% increase from FY25

**95+**

Partners Funded

**65+**

Neighborhood-based Benefits Access Clinics and Workshops

- ★ **Launch Aging in Boston Plan**
- ★ **Hire all 15 Community Ambassadors Program** - 15 older adults to help build bridges with diverse communities
- ★ **Improve Transportation Access**
  - Introduce a transportation access plan
  - Modernize the Taxi Coupon Program
  - Expand Age Strong Shuttle Services
  - Expand on the successful rideshare pilot
- ★ **Increase Presence Across Neighborhoods**
  - Community Office Hours
  - Community Resource Events/Application Clinics
  - Expand Programming Offerings at regularly activated spaces



# OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES

- ★ **Mission:** To facilitate full and equal participation in all aspects of life by veterans in Boston. We **recognize, advocate** and **engage** with veterans and their families, by connecting them with the services and resources they've earned.
  - ★ **Vision:** Continue to find innovative ways of empowering veterans and military family members of Boston to live healthy and thriving lives.
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## Assist Veterans with Benefits Applications

Provide guidance and support to veterans and their dependents applying for local, state, and federal veterans' benefits to include M.G.L. Ch. 115 and V.A. Comp and Pen Claims.

## Coordinate Burial Expenses for Indigent Veterans

Assist eligible veterans and/or family members apply for burial benefits.

## Oversee Memorial Day Decorations

Organize and supervise Memorial Day grave decorations, ceremonies, and other commemorative activities honoring veterans and military service members.

## Outreach and Community Engagement

Connecting with veterans community members, organizations, and stakeholders.

### Other Programs

- ★ Veterans Arrangement of free burial plot at City of Boston Mt. Hope Cemetery, Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Winchendon, or Bourne National Cemetery
- ★ Hero Square and Bio Plaque Program- to honor our service members who were killed in action and recognize their family members
- ★ Memorial Day and Veterans Day- Flag and wreath decoration

### State Benefits

- ★ **M.G.L. Ch. 115** - Is a Massachusetts General Law that provides financial assistance for qualifying low-income veterans. Each town or city in Massachusetts is required to provide a Veterans Service Officer (VSO), as well as a Burial Agent and Graves Officer, to support the needs of the local veterans within their town/city limits.
- ★ **Welcome Home Bonus** - bonus for active or discharged veterans who have served after September 11, 2001

- ★ **Annuity** - \$2,500 annual payment for
  - 100% VA service-connected disabled veterans
  - Surviving Spouse or Parent

### Veterans Affairs Benefits Support

- ★ VA Pension
- ★ Aid and Attendance
- ★ Disability Compensation
- ★ VA Healthcare enrollment

### Internal/External Partnerships & Referrals

- ★ City, State, and Federal
- ★ Legal services
- ★ SNAP, local food banks
- ★ Transitional Housing, HUD-Vash, SSVF
- ★ Employment, MassHire
- ★ Nonprofit Organizations

## Engaging Boston's Veteran Community Through Year-Round Programs & Services

*These events and outreach initiatives are designed to engage, honor, and support veterans, service members, and their families while connecting them to important resources and services.*

- ★ African American Veterans Brunch
- ★ Women Veterans Roundtable
- ★ Welcome Home Breakfast
- ★ Medal of Honor Recognition Day
- ★ Gold Star Spouses Day
- ★ Hero Square dedications and re-dedications
- ★ Memorial Day Flag Decoration & Wreaths
- ★ Veterans Day Parade
- ★ Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- ★ PTSD Awareness Golf Tournament
- ★ Veterans Fair and Expo
- ★ POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony & Greater
- ★ JROTC Scholarships & Awards Program
- ★ Veterans & Military Appreciation Night
- ★ Army-Navy Football Game
- ★ Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony

- ★ Army Birthday- **June**
- ★ Independence Day - **July**
- ★ Korean War Veterans Armistice Day - **July**
- ★ Coast Guard Birthday - **August**
- ★ Purple Heart Day - **August**
- ★ Patriot Day (National Day of service and remembrance for 9/11 victims) - **September**
- ★ POW/MIA - **September**
- ★ Air Force Birthday - **September**
- ★ Gold Star Mother's and Family Day - **September**
- ★ Navy Birthday - **October**
- ★ Marine Corps Birthday - **November**
- ★ Veterans Day - **November**
- ★ Pearl Harbor Day - **December**
- ★ National Guard Birthday - **December**
- ★ Space Force Birthday- **December**
- ★ National Wreaths Across America Day - **December**

# FY 26 EVENTS PHOTOS



# FY26 CORE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



**\$1 Million+** of direct financial payments to veterans



**200+** veterans and dependents assisted each month



**40+** families assisted with burials



**50+** Outreach and commemorative events



**59,000+** Graves and Hero Squares decorated




**\$300,000+** in grants serving the veteran community

## [www.boston.gov/veterans](http://www.boston.gov/veterans)

### *One Stop Shop for Veterans - One Place, Every Resource*

- ★ Suicide Prevention - Veterans Crisis Hotline, 22Mohawks, Home Base, Vet Center
- ★ Apply for Chapter 115 Benefits
- ★ Community Outreach and advocacy
- ★ Apply for VA Compensation & Pension
- ★ Food Assistance Intake for Veterans - Food Bank, Food Access Dept., YMCA
- ★ Volunteer Opportunities
- ★ Resources for Women & LGBTQ+ Veterans
- ★ Veterans and Military Family Support - Blue Star Families, Hidden Heroes, Military Friends, etc
- ★ Updates on veteran specific legislations to include information on the PACT Act & MA HERO Act
- ★ Upcoming Events & Programs
- ★ Memorial Day Flag and Wreath Placement
- ★ Rights and Benefits for Military Personnel and their families
- ★ Military Honors and Flag Raising Ceremonies
- ★ Monuments and Memorials database of City of Boston
- ★ Meet our Veterans Program (veterans recognition)
- ★ Hero Square Dedications & Database
- ★ Contact & Location Information



# OFFICE OF RETURNING CITIZENS

# OVERVIEW - CASE MANAGEMENT

Case Management | Employment and Housing Services | Program Services



## “PERSON FORWARD” SUPPORT

- Currently, **564** clients are enrolled in ORC services.
- Across 3 case managers and one Director of Case Management Services.
  - CMs provide individualized support plans.

## OPEN OFFICE HOURS

- Two days per week for direct client engagement through walk ins.
- ORC receives at least 10 new client registrations per week.
- Clients remain engaged for an average of 368 days and often continue participating in internal programming after case closure.
- Case Managers engage in Community Case Office Hours.
  - Different Boston Neighborhood Every Month.

## INTERNAL REFERRALS

- Clients assigned a CM before they are referred to internal housing and employment specialist.

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

### 01 REGISTRATION

Register In Person:  
Mondays: 2:00pm-5:00pm  
Thursdays: 10:00am-2:00pm  
30 Dimock Street Roxbury, MA  
All other days/times: by appointment only  
Register Online: [boston.gov/returning-citizens](https://boston.gov/returning-citizens)

### 02 INTAKE

Connect with a Reentry Case Manager to complete your intake and talk about your personal goals, needs, and next steps.

### 03 GOAL SETTING

Partner with your Case Manager to create goals, identify barriers to success, and learn more about internal ORC resources.

### 04 ACHIEVING

Your individualized goal plan will help us to provide direct support referrals, track your progress, and walk alongside you as you work towards your goals.

# OVERVIEW - EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Case Management | **Employment** and Housing Services | Program Services



## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

98 clients employed during this fiscal year (June 2025 - Current).

## JOB READINESS SUPPORT

### Internal Workforce Development Services

- **Resumes to Results:** Internal ORC employment workshops with soft skill development, resume building, job applications, and mock interviews.
- **CORI Approved Job Board:** A platform connecting returning citizens with employment opportunities.

## WORKFORCE PIPELINES

- 175 local employer collaborations.
  - 30 New Employer Partnerships during FY 2026.
  - 27 Workforce Development Partners.



# OVERVIEW - HOUSING SERVICES

Case Management | Employment and **Housing Services** | Program Services



## HOUSING SERVICES

**125** clients active on Housing Specialist Caseload.

- **38%** of clients active on caseload were placed in BHA housing programs and remain connected for case management services.
- Housing specialist also places clients in market rate housing, subsidized housing, and single room occupancy units.

## TENANCY RETENTION

- **100%** retention for all placements under 12 months.

## HOUSING ASSISTANCE

- Housing Specialist provides support with access to housing assistance funding, RAFT applications, and furniture assistance.
- Housing Readiness Workshop Launched in April 2026.



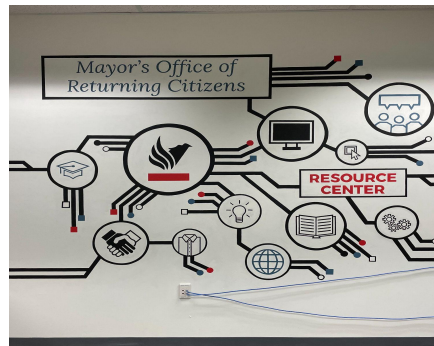
# OVERVIEW - PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES

Case Management | Employment and Housing Services | Program Services



## INTERNAL WORKSHOPS

- Filling gaps in case management services on digital literacy, credit building, and job application assistance.
- Hybrid offerings to increase accessibility
  - *Build Your Credit*
  - *Build Your Tech Skills*
  - *Library Essentials*



## PARTNERSHIPS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Transitional Assistance
- Free CORI Sealing
- Programming Pop Ups
- CPR Training
- Entrepreneurship

## COMMUNITY BASED EVENTS

- Family Reunification
- Town Hall
- Advisory Groups





**THANK YOU!**