

# AIDS Action Committee

Savannah Wilkinson &  
Arushi Sood

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# Introduction

- Savannah

- Sociology major, Criminal Justice minor
- AIDS Action Committee
- High-Risk Negative CoOp

- Arushi

- Political Science major, Psychology & Health Science minors
- AIDS Action Committee
- Voucher-Based Housing Search CoOp



# Introduction, continued



# Meet the Team!

- Manager of Housing Search Services
- 2 Housing Search Specialists (one is a former cop!)
- Bilingual Housing Search Specialist
- Housing Search Navigator
- Tenant-Based Rental Specialist
- Housing Search Coordinator
  - High-Risk Negative CoOp
  - Voucher-Based Housing Search CoOp

Color	Corresponding Location
Black	Braintree, Milton, Quincy, Weymouth
Blue	Roxbury, Dorchester, South Boston
Green	Metrowest
Grey	Northeast
Lavender	West Roxbury, Roslindale, Hyde Park
Mauve	Central and Western Mass
Orange	Back Bay, South End, Chinatown, Fenway
Pink	Cape Cod and Southeast
Red	Chelsea, East Boston, Everett, Malden, Revere, Winthrop
Teal	
Violet	Allston, Brighton, Brookline, Jamaica Plain, Newton
Yellow	Arlington, Cambridge, Somerville

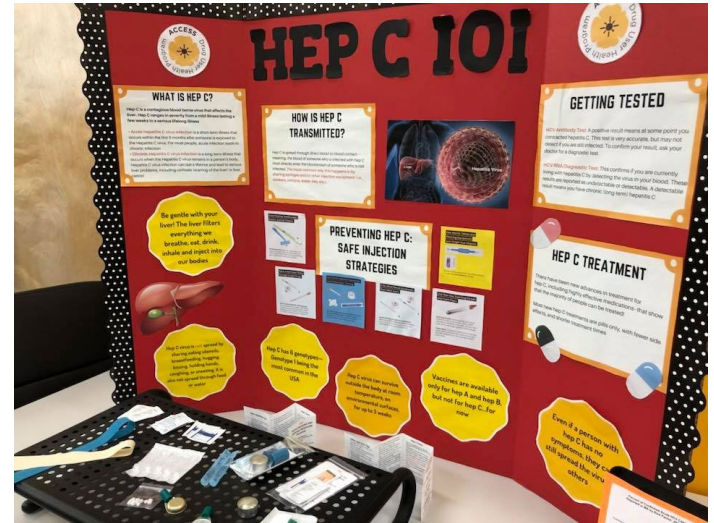


# Phinney's Friends



# High - Risk Negative Co-Op

- Caseload of 9 enrolled, highly engaged clients, light touch based work with many others
- Some voucher holders, most looking for project based subsidies
- Most HIV-, are clients of AAC through the Access Drug User Health Program



# A Day in the Life

- Housing Search Groups drop in hours for Access clients to ask housing questions, fill out applications
- Client meetings
- Connecting clients with services and agencies to help with housing search
  - C-CAN, Cambridge Multi-Service Center, HomeStart, CASPAR Outreach Services
- Complete and collect necessary documentation and paperwork
- Act as liaison between clients and PHAs or landlords
- Accompany clients to apartment viewings and screening interviews

# HRN Successes & Challenges

- Clients are not eligible for AAC funding and programs, have to find other resources
- Facing barriers in communication, documentation, and transportation
- Challenges in working with clients who are using drugs, have mental health issues, or are dealing with large amounts of trauma
- Working within the harm reduction model when the rest of the world does not
- High levels of emotional labor



# Reflections

- Didn't know anything about housing going in, now have a good grasp of how it works
  - Agencies and housing authorities, vouchers, tenant rights
  - Can now see the barriers and flaws in the system
- The importance of harm reduction
- Learning to not take work home with me
- Knew this was population that I wanted to work with, and wanted to try a position with more direct service

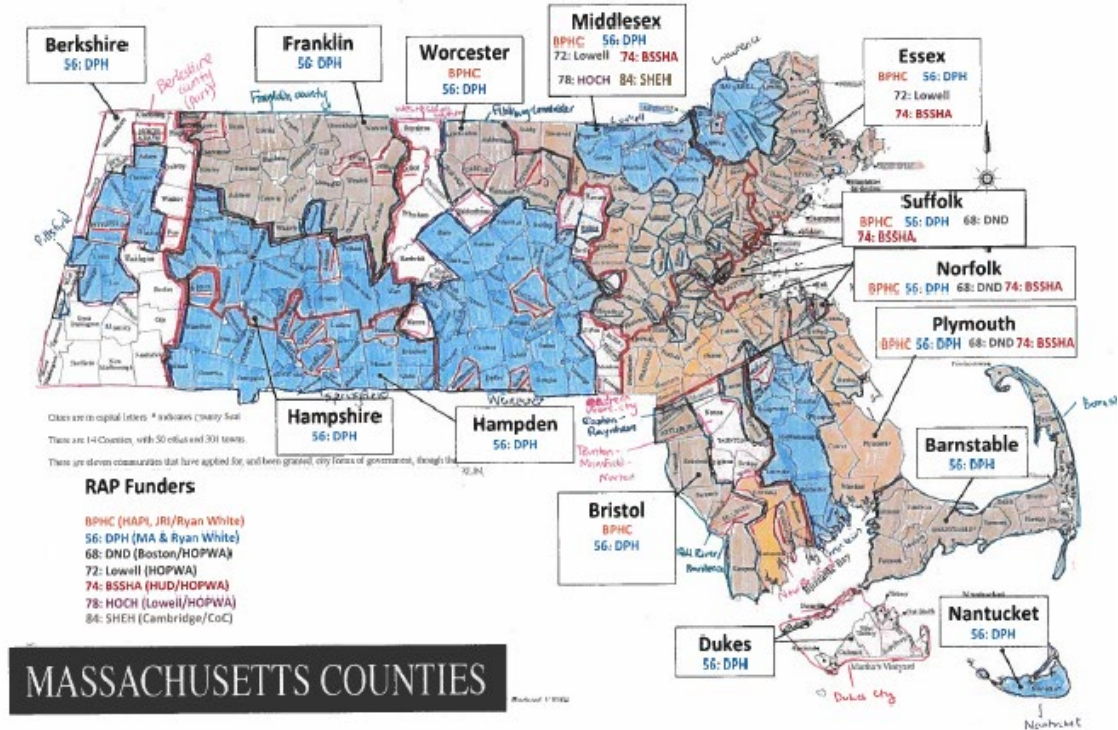
# Voucher - Based Housing Search Co-Op

- Caseload of 17 clients, all of them are HIV + and Section 8 voucher holders
  - Boston Housing Authority
  - Metro Housing Boston
- Some newly issued vouchers with upcoming expirations, some with vouchers not on the clock
- Geographically diverse interests
- Trulia, ForRent, CraigsList, Metro List, AAC Housing Weekly
  - <https://www.boston.gov/departments/neighborhood-development/metrolist>

# Payment Standards (FY 2018 vs. 2019)

- FMR: HUD established (BostonCambridge-Quincy) - 40%, non-luxury
  - <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>
    - One-Bedroom
      - 2017: \$1372
      - 2018: \$1421
      - 2019: \$1801
      - 2020: \$1900
- SAFMR: zip code
  - [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2020\\_code/2020summary\\_sa.odn](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2020_code/2020summary_sa.odn)
  - Only BHA & CHA in MA
    - Boston Housing 2020 payment standards
      - [https://www.bostonhousing.org/BHA/media/Documents/Leased%20Housing/BHA-All-Bedrooms-Payment-Standards-Eff-01012020\\_1.pdf](https://www.bostonhousing.org/BHA/media/Documents/Leased%20Housing/BHA-All-Bedrooms-Payment-Standards-Eff-01012020_1.pdf)
        - 2019 one bedroom in 02115: \$2200
        - 2020 one bedroom in 02115: \$2225

# FMR Boston - Cambridge - Quincy



# A Day in The Life

- Review emails and voicemails, call back clients
- Client meetings
  - Let the leasing officer know the client is looking to move, make sure they are not breaking their lease
  - Search online, call landlords, set up viewings
  - Attend viewings - apartment viewing guide
  - Apply, submit an RFTA to their leasing officer if approved
  - Depending on the PHA, either the leasing officer or the landlord initiates the inspection process
  - If the unit passes, the tenant must sign a lease and bring updated income for their rent share to be determined
  - PHAs cannot pay two landlords at one time!
- Housing Search Groups market search on computers

# Financial Assistance

- Rental and moving assistance applications
  - Security deposit and client's portion of the first month's rent
  - Moving expenses
- Amazon for cleaning supplies, sheets
- Bob's Card for mattresses
- Furniture banks (once in a lifetime)
- Boomerangs \$25 certificate

**BOB'S**  
DISCOUNT  
**FURNITURE**



# VBHS Reflection

- Hoped to have client interactions, field experience, and see Boston's geography
- Prefer open communication and medium level of structure
- Independence
- Two certifications & three trainings



# VBHS Reflection, continued

- Engaged with legal services
  - Sealing a CORI, working with notaries
- Shared my interests in housing and health (policy!)
  - Managed our relationship with the Suffolk Law Housing Discrimination Tester program
  - Meeting with the executive director of AAC about housing policy





# VBHS Successes and Challenges

- Most difficult/challenging
  - Client facing eviction in two weeks, did not read or write so met every other day until we could sort out what we can do
  - Landlord refused to work with us in the beginning
  - Ended up paying his back rent in the “cure period” so it didn’t go on his record and hand delivered the check
- Strengthened organizational skills
  - 50 page relocation packets, updated client files, data entry
- Most exciting
  - 3 moves on 12/1, 1 on 1/1
  - Reporting a case to the Suffolk Tester Program

# Client Challenges

- BMC methadone policy
- Lack of safe injection sites
- Transportation's impact on services
  - Access based on location, cost, mobility
- Communication's impact on services
  - Not having phone/internet access
  - Language barriers
- Lost/stolen documents or identification
- Discrimination (against various identities)
- Urban development by universities
  - Northeastern, UMass, Suffolk



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**Department of Criminal Justice Information Services**

200 Arlington Street, Suite 2200, Chelsea, MA 02150

TEL: 617-660-4640 | TTY: 617-660-4606 | FAX: 617-660-5973

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# Local Advocacy

- Pacific Interpreter Line
- DTA Lifeline phones
- Boston Bar Association's Free CORI sealing clinics
- Somerville Safe Injection Site
- BU Eradicating AIDS Event
- Mayor Walsh housing policy



With the right funding, we can eliminate HIV discrimination, AIDS related deaths, and new HIV cases.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Come take part in an Advocacy 101 training to learn how YOU can encourage state legislators to increase funding for critical HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C services.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5TH, 2019  
3 - 5 PM  
BOSTON LIVING CENTER:  
29 STANHOPE ST, BOSTON

Please use this link to RSVP:  
<https://forms.gle/BdtrY11u2sbJrBGF8>  
projectablema.org || gettingtozeroma.org



**Thank you!**