



**Expanding and Enhancing Racial Diversity and Capacity of Workforce
to Address Behavioral Health Needs in Boston
March 2024**

Overview:

With million in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the City of Boston and Boston Public Health Commission's (BPHC) Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness is strengthening the behavioral health workforce in the City. The goal is to increase the number of diverse, accessible, and culturally competent behavioral health clinicians in Boston, through support provided to local academic, clinical partners, and BPHC's youth workforce training program.

Summary of Activities:

University of Massachusetts Boston:

From June 2023 to June 2026, UMass Boston is receiving \$2.5M in funding for Transforming Boston Access to Behavioral

Franciscan Children's (FC):

From June 2023 to June 2026, Franciscan Children's is receiving \$2.5M in funding to expand the "[Children's Wellness Initiative](#)," which provides mental health clinicians and psychiatry services in BPS schools. The funding will enable Franciscan to expand to an additional 10 BPS sites for a total of 22 BPS sites over three years. The funding will also grow recruitment efforts and provide at least 180 people advanced training in behavioral health. To date, nine clinicians have been placed across nine schools, serving 200 BPS students.

Boston Area Health Education Center (BAHEC):

From September 2023 to June 2026, BPHC's [Boston Area Health Education Center](#) is receiving \$1M to help train youth in careers in health education, particularly from BIPOC populations underrepresented in health. This funding will go towards after school and summer programs focused on behavioral health careers and will train 90 students per year.

Outcomes:

- Increase in school-based clinicians receiving licensure
- Increase in behavioral health providers from culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse backgrounds
- Increase in Black, Indigenous, and youth of color in Boston receiving behavioral health care
- Increase in BPS students receiving behavioral health care
- Increase in education and exposure for youth to behavioral health careers
- Increase in Boston residents receiving behavioral health care



Equipping Workforce with Trauma-informed Capacity and Supports March 2024

Overview:

With \$4M in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the City of Boston and Boston Public Health Commission's (BPHC) Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness will support trauma-informed and equity training for the behavioral health workforce and help build behavioral health capacity. City employees will improve ability to address the behavioral health needs of Boston residents. Ten selected Boston Public School (BPS) schools will promote school system trauma-informed transformation to address the impact of structural racism, oppression, and various traumas experienced by students and staff alike.

Summary of Activities:

Capacity Building and Training Initiative (CBTI):

From September 2023 to June 2026, BPHC [Capacity Building and Training Initiative](#) is receiving \$700,000 to provide trauma informed and equity training for City employees who serve youth and families. Training will reach about 600 staff over three years.

Trauma-Informed School System Transformation (TISST):

From February 2024 to June 2026 [Flourish Agenda](#) is receiving \$2.3M to pilot Trauma-informed School System Transformation at 10 BPS sites. This investment will reach up to 3,500 students and 750 staff. Centered on racially-just and trauma-informed methodologies, this work will bring innovation and increased support to BPS culture, policies and systems of care.

Enhancing Behavioral Health Capacity for Community- Based Organizations:

In March 2024, BPHC released an [RFP](#) of \$1M for vendors to provide behavioral health training for community-based organizations that serve youth of color in Boston.

Outcomes:

- Enhance understanding and increase education for City employees on trauma-informed care, behavioral health and equity
- Bring to 10 high-need BPS schools culturally sensitive, culturally humble, racially just trauma-informed care
- 10 high-need BPS school(s) use trauma-informed practices to respond to arising situations, de-escalate potential crises and resolve conflicts
- Burnout, vicarious trauma, and/or moral injury is addressed in a way that results in sustainable healthy practices for school-workforce



Decreasing Stigma and Increasing Awareness of Behavioral Health among Youth March 2024

Overview:

With \$1.3M in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the City of Boston and the Boston Public Health Commission's (BPHC) Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness is bolstering projects aimed at decreasing stigma and increasing awareness about behavioral health among youth. Additionally, BPHC is partnering with a community organization to showcase youth art projects to foster genuine conversation about behavioral health among youth of color in Boston. Moreover, funding for Cope Code Club at BPHC will help youth identify healthy coping strategies for stressful situations.

Summary of Activities:

Argus:

From May 2023 to June 2026, Argus is receiving \$1M to launch a youth-informed, youth focused communications campaign that aims to promote well-being, normalize lived experiences, and decrease stigma around behavioral health.

The Family Van:

From June 2023 to June 2024, The Family Van will receive \$200,000 to support youth arts-focused workshops, youth art projects, and collaborative community designed compositions to foster genuine conversation about behavioral health among youth of color in Boston in a compilation exhibition in June 2024.

CopeCode Club:

From January 2023 to June 2024, CopeCode Club received \$100,000 towards public marketing to increase awareness and engagement of youth in normalizing the stress they experience and identifying healthful ways to cope. The marketing campaign focuses its impact in areas frequented by youth and young adults and in historically under-resourced neighborhoods. This includes supporting youth in applying those skills through the annual #CopeCodeChallenge that BPHC conducts each spring.

Outcomes:

- Increase awareness of behavioral and behavioral health among youth
- Increase conversation amongst youth about behavioral health
- Increase in positive behavioral wellness skills among youth in historically under-resourced communities
- Youth are able to identify healthy coping strategies for managing difficult feelings and stressful situations
- Increase in community awareness about Boston youth behavioral health and resilience
- Reduction of behavioral health stigma through increase in knowledge about behavioral health