

United Youth and Youth Workers of Boston

A Call to the City for a Multifaceted Solution to Violence: Invest \$8 Million More for Boston Youth

United Youth and Youth Workers of Boston is a grassroots alliance working to build a just and equitable future for youth workers, the youth of Boston, and our communities.

With homicide rates staying at the highest levels in 10 years, youth and youth workers are calling for a solution to violence that emphasizes young people's long-term development, not short-term reactions to violence. We are looking to have a voice along with elected officials, clergy, police, and other community leaders to create a multifaceted solution to violence. This solution includes:

➤ **\$4.5 Million More for Youth Jobs**

Increase the number of year-round and summer jobs for youth, including youth with CORIs, 14 year olds, and 18 year olds.

Increasing jobs funding to \$8.3 million would bring City funding for jobs close to its previous level of \$8.6 million. Together with existing funding, this could bring the total number of jobs to:

- 6,000 summer jobs for the 7,686 people registered with BYF (6 weeks, 25hrs/week, \$7.50/ hr.)
- 1,000 year-round jobs for youth (35 weeks, 10 hrs/week, \$7.50/hr.)
- 500 summer jobs for youth with CORIs.
- *Youth jobs develop young people's strengths.* Jobs teach life and employment skills, building long-term strengths that deter youth from violence, as well as provide positive alternatives in the short term.
- *Youth need year-round jobs* to build their skills and strengths throughout the whole year.
- *The City should build on its existing year-round jobs program.* Currently the City funds approximately 150 year-round jobs, only from January through May, and with little time for organizations to plan. A structured program will increase the number, duration, and predictability of year-round jobs.
- *The City can use a year-round jobs program as leverage for State funding.* As the State moves to fund \$2 million for year-round jobs, Boston will be well-positioned to apply for these funds.

➤ **\$2 Million for Grants to Youth Organizations**

Distribute funds through a community board that includes youth and youth workers.

Through FY02, the City's Safe Neighborhood Youth Fund provided \$400,000 in grants each year, including one- and three-year grants of \$7,000 per year. The City can seize the opportunity to invest in youth programs once again.

- *Like jobs, youth programs invest in young people's growth and prevent violence.*
- *Grants — especially multi-year — allow programs to keep the doors open and keep their staff.*
- *Grants complement the City's jobs program.* Organizations can fund youth workers to run teen programs, supervise jobs, and do violence prevention. Or, they can provide jobs for 14/18-year olds and youth with CORIs.
- *Community participation builds our investment in the city.* If youth strengthen our communities, they will be unlikely to tear them down. Also, youth and youth workers know what will effectively reach young people.

➤ **\$1.5 Million More for Street Workers**

Increase the number of street workers to 50 (about 3 per community) and increase their starting salary to \$35,000.

- *Increased numbers and salaries allow for consistent, caring relationships.* Street workers need to stay in one community, not shift frequently. In 2001, The Boston Foundation estimated that somebody needed to earn \$66,400 a year to afford a typical 2-bedroom apartment; higher salaries allow street workers to stay in the field.
- *There should be multiple street workers working in each community,* including Boston's many neighborhoods, as well as communities of homeless youth, BGLTQ youth, and immigrant youth.