

OCHE Annual Report Fiscal Year 2026

Situated within the Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS), the **Office of Community Health & Equity** (OCHE) cultivates meaningful connections with Massachusetts residents and the organizations that serve them, empowering individuals and communities to make informed decisions about substances while prioritizing equity and wellbeing.

In strengthening partnerships and promoting public health approaches, OCHE seeks to ensure that all Massachusetts residents have access to the unique resources they need to thrive.

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Relationship building is the foundation of our work. In this report you'll find some of the ways we in OCHE worked this year to build connections, collective knowledge, and access to substance use resources - always in partnership with and co-designed by our partners in response to what they tell us they need in the communities where we live, work, and support one another.

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receive information and
updates from OCHE?

Complete our
[Community Partner
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Form!](#)

FY26 Highlights

Community Consultants

Community Consultants are individuals with lived, living, or professional expertise about topics related to substance use and identity-based needs who partner with BSAS in different ways to shape our work.



Trans + Gender Expansive Community Advisory Board (TGE CAB)

The TGE CAB is a group of community members, organizers, and professionals with lived experience and expertise at the intersection of gender expansive identities and substance use or other related services, CAB members serve as community consultants to increase and improve gender affirming substance use services across Massachusetts.

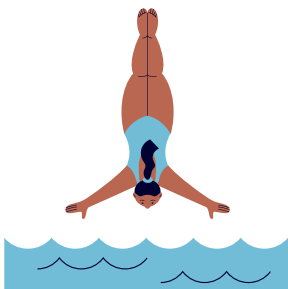
This year the TGE CAB focused on finalizing a Practice Guidance document for programs serving gender expansive clients, creating a CAB community engagement strategy, and developing a process to support BSAS staff and programs on topics related to gender identity. Stay tuned for more details in FY27 as these projects fully launch!



Catalyst for Advancing Racial Equity (CARE) Board

The vision of the CARE Board is to enable a comprehensive continuum of care that ensures all populations within the state of Massachusetts can receive high quality, culturally responsive and sustainable substance use and mental health services.

Originating in BSAS' Office of Youth & Young Adult Services (OYYAS), the CARE Board transitioned under OCHE this fiscal year and is working to finalize their strategy to support OCHE & BSAS in advancing our racial equity goals.



Living Expertise Advisory Pool (LEAP)

LEAP is a statewide body of Massachusetts residents who want to contribute their lived and professional expertise to short-term BSAS projects, ensuring community voice is integrated into work happening across the bureau.

Keep reading to learn more about LEAP!

LEAP Pilot Year

Piloting in January 2026, LEAP creates a mechanism to invite community consultants into BSAS projects, where their unique experiences and identities contribute invaluable perspectives to inform what we do. Want to get involved?

Complete a [LEAP application](#) and dive in!

FY26 LEAP Numbers

536

Completed
LEAP applications

120

Members completed
LEAP Orientation

123

LEAP contracts for community
consulting projects

LEAP members shared their expertise in a variety of ways, including:

- Providing feedback on documents related to
 - core competencies of harm reduction services
 - substance use treatment levels of care
 - Practice Guidance for supporting older adults and drug screening procedures
 - questions included in a program evaluation survey
- Participating in a pilot workforce training about culturally responsive care
- Shaping language in website content and funding opportunities
- Engaging community to share important public health information
- Identifying priorities and barriers for strategic planning purposes
- Finalizing OCHE's data collection and evaluation surveys
- Joining procurement review teams to identify vendors who will provide
 - co-occurring substance use and mental health services
 - residential and family supportive treatment services
 - access to healthy food and nutrition information
- Attending the first ever BSAS + Community Consultants Summit to build relationships and make sure BSAS knows what's important to our community partners

We're excited to see what LEAP members will contribute during our first full year in FY27!

Building Community Capacity

In OCHE, we recognize that both BSAS staff and our community partners hold expertise, influence, and resources. Because of this, we seek to advance a **knowledge democracy**, or equitable balance in the development and sharing of information that authentically values the contributions and lived experiences of those impacted by our work.

Our community capacity building initiatives offer opportunities for partners to share knowledge across silos, and to learn from BSAS staff so they can more easily navigate the systems that impact the work they're doing in community. In addition to **Community Consultants**, these initiatives include **Community Office Hours** and **Community Academies**.

Community Office Hours

Monthly virtual Community Office Hours feature a partner sharing information or a resource that may benefit OCHE's cross-sector network, which consists of individuals, organizations, and local leaders. Following this presentation, a facilitated dialogue engages the audience on the topic shared and invites those present to continue relationship building in ways that advance shared goals.

10

Community Office Hours
hosted during FY26

464

Unique participants during
FY26 Office Hours

Want to present at
upcoming Community
Office Hours?

Complete our
[Community Office Hours
Interest Form](#)

Community Academies

These virtual learning opportunities provide an introductory overview of internal BSAS processes, explained in laypersons' terms. The goals of these sessions are 1) to demystify and increase access to bureaucratic systems, 2) build new relationships between BSAS staff and community partners, and 3) prepare Community Consultants for partnering with BSAS on short-term projects.

117

Participants at
Procurement 101: Intro to
BSAS Funding

65

at Procurement 201:
Community Reviewer
Training

26

at Contracts 101:
Contracting With DPH

!

New Academies
coming in FY27

Contracted Partnerships

We have the privilege of managing several BSAS contracts with agencies delivering projects that build community capacity to respond to the impacts of substance use. Here's who we worked with this year:

Redefining Community Wellness (RCW)

Administered by Health Resources in Action (HRiA), [this community-shaped initiative](#) provides grant funding and capacity building to BIPOC-led and -serving community-based organizations and tribal nations that are substance use in culturally responsive ways.

Collective UpLIFT

Supplementing RCW, [this fellowship program](#) strengthens BIPOC-led and BIPOC-serving nonprofits through culturally grounded, trust-based capacity-building by providing leadership development, strategic guidance, and customized support.

Neighborhood Overdose Prevention and Education (NOPE)

Launched this year also through HRiA, NOPE utilizes mini-grants to deploy Community Wellness Navigators who engage populations most disproportionately impacted by fatal overdose in Boston and Springfield, offering information and tools to prevent overdose.

Support After Death by Overdose (SADOD)

[This peer grief support organization](#) provides resources, information, and assistance to people who have been affected by the death of someone they care about from a substance-use-related cause. Services include training peer grief helpers to facilitate support meetings, helping frontline workers process traumas experienced on the job, and matching bereaved individuals with peer grief allies.

UMass Boston CANALA Institutes

[This collective of ethnic institutes](#) bridges deep community relationships with academic research to inform evidence-based practices that will increase BSAS' ability to provide culturally responsive substance use care. Their work includes focus groups, key informant interviews, and the development of health promotion materials grounded in what communities of color across Massachusetts share about substance use needs.

25

Community Partners
Funded

13

Organizational Fellows

5

Wellness Navigators