

PRIORITY 1

DO WHAT WORKS

DARE TO
HOPE



Programs that power dreams & empower futures

Our programs are the heart and soul of our work, providing essential support to children, adults, and families. Our services improve outcomes, expand opportunities, and strengthen communities.

GOAL: \$8 MILLION

How do we move the needle?

We target resources and supports where they're needed most to help children in our local communities across Massachusetts who — through no fault of their own — have become involved in the foster care system.

- ✓ **Provide top-notch supports directly to children and families going through a difficult time.**

We work to empower and uplift each child and family, ensuring they have the **personalized supports and trusting relationships** they need to heal and thrive along the way.

- ✓ **Build and sustain programs that meet unmet needs.**

HopeWell's **innovative programming** develops **practical, common-sense solutions** for meeting complex needs that aren't being effectively addressed via state programs.



The result is thousands more young people in Massachusetts are able to reach their full potential. Each person's improved experiences with the child welfare system expand their opportunities, improve their life trajectories, and lift up communities.

That's why we're mobilizing around these goals together...

GOAL 1.1

Expand and sustain our RISE program to help children in foster care become strong readers.

What is our RISE program and how does it work?

Our RISE program is the **first-of-its-kind in the nation** because it is specially designed to meet the unique educational needs of K-3 students who are experiencing foster care. The program works through a combination of:

- ✓ Personalized, 1:1 literacy tutoring that takes place in a child's home each week, so they don't lose access if they change foster care placements or schools.
- ✓ Embedded opportunities for children to practice social-emotional skills.
- ✓ Supports for caregivers to help them advocate for their child and promote learning.
- ✓ Coordination across families, schools, the Department of Children & Families (DCF), and other service providers.

Learn more about our RISE program at hopewellinc.org/RISE.

What We'll Do

GOAL 1.1A

Expand RISE beyond Boston Public Schools.

As we continue to deepen our work in Boston Public Schools, our goal is to **replicate and adapt our RISE model** in an additional school district by 2027. This will strengthen educational opportunities and outcomes for even more children who need our attention and support, and create a springboard for RISE to become a state and national model for early intervention.

GOAL 1.1B

Increase the early literacy skills of children experiencing foster care.

Learning to read is a complex process — from phonics, to fluency, to comprehension, and everything in between! We are committed to our goal of *all* children in RISE improving their reading skills and making progress toward **meeting or exceeding their personal learning goals**.

GOAL 1.1C

Equip all caregivers in a child's life with the knowledge, tools, and support necessary to advocate for their child's educational needs and promote learning at home and at school.

When families actively participate in a child's educational journey, it leads to better outcomes across the board, including improved academic performance, healthier social-emotional skills, higher self-esteem, and stronger relationships.

But many caregivers and families of children in foster care report needing help understanding and navigating the education system. Addressing those needs is why we are focused on **supporting caregivers too**, including direct guidance from RISE staff and facilitation across schools, families, and DCF.

BY 4TH GRADE:

Research shows that only about **1 in 10** students who are far behind in reading will ever catch up.⁴



GOAL 1.2

Support more young people “aging out” of foster care through our My First Place™ program and bolster pathways that will help them achieve economic self-sufficiency.

What We'll Do

GOAL 1.2A

Increase the number of “unfunded” youth we serve through My First Place™.

“Unfunded” youth are young people aging out of foster care who, for a variety of reasons, aren’t eligible to receive a referral from DCF for My First Place™ services. HopeWell pays out of pocket to provide critical services to these young people at **a pivotal time in their lives**.

GOAL 1.2B

Bolster pathways to economic self-sufficiency for young people who are aging out of foster care.

For young people who are transitioning out of the foster care system and into adulthood, economic self-sufficiency expands their opportunities, reduces future interrelated hardships and disparate outcomes, and makes it possible for them to **lead a life of their choosing**. Preventing and reducing poverty also decreases intergenerational involvement in the child welfare system.

We are working to strengthen pathways to economic self-sufficiency for young adults in our My First Place™ program in two key ways by 2027: **(1)** Helping youth access existing resources; and **(2)** Leveraging partnerships to enhance financial literacy skills, provide career mentorship opportunities, and organize around legislative solutions.




My First Place™ supports
young adults
ages 18-24.



2 locations:

- ✓ Greater Boston
- ✓ Greater Springfield



68%
of youth served identify
as people of color.

What is our My First Place™ program and how does it work?

Young people often face uncertainty as they enter adulthood — and this is especially true for those who are **aging out of the foster care system**.

To help them reach their full potential, our My First Place™ program provides youth with shared, rent-free apartments. With a stable place to call home and personalized supports from our team, youth focus on their education and employment goals, build community, and establish foundations for long-term self-sufficiency. The program works through a combination of:

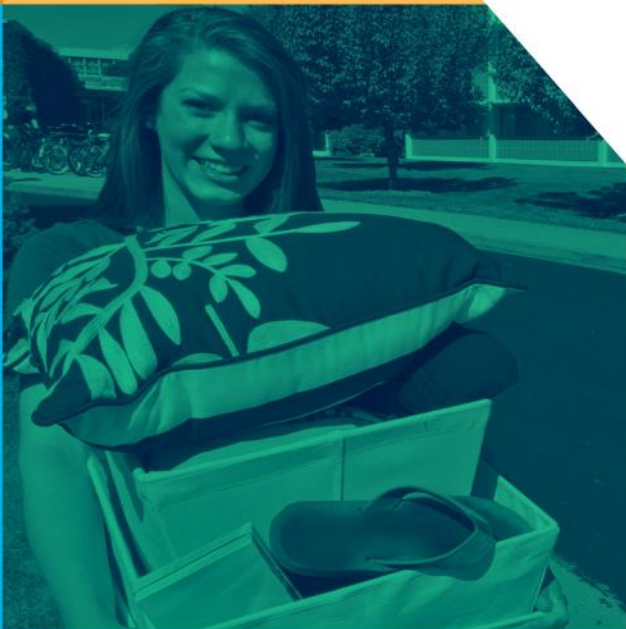
- ✓ **Safe, stable housing** located near public transportation, colleges, and work opportunities, as well as guidance with good tenancy skills.
- ✓ **Education and employment support** to pursue their educational plans and secure sustainable, living-wage employment. Youth participating in My First Place™ are studying a variety of fields, from pre-med, to film production, to cosmetology.
- ✓ **Individualized case management** to help remove barriers to reaching their goals and promote independence. Each youth works with our team on the goals most important to them, such as saving money, getting their driver's license, or strengthening relationships.
- ✓ **Healthy living skills** to balance physical, mental, and emotional health, including financial literacy, personal well-being, and parenting.

Learn more at hopewellinc.org/my-first-place.



I WISH

PEOPLE KNEW...



that some people transitioning out of foster care don't necessarily have a safety net.

Like some could be transitioning out with no money, no job, or no educational skills.

Some may not even qualify for their own apartment due to us being young and only making so much money.

-My First Place™ participant

BY THE NUMBERS

My First Place™ Empowers Futures

HopeWell is moving the needle toward better housing, education, and employment outcomes for young people aging out of foster care.⁵



~50%

of youth who age out of foster care in MA experience homelessness



~20%

of youth who age out of foster care nationally enroll in college



~50%

of youth who recently aged out of foster care nationally are employed

My First Place™ Impacts

OVER

80%

of youth exited to stable housing

NEARLY

60%

of youth enrolled in a post-secondary education program

NEARLY

80%

of youth held the same job for 90 days or more

*Program data is for FY24. Post-secondary enrollment data only includes youth with a high school diploma or equivalent.

GOAL 1.3

Ensure families at risk of becoming or remaining separated have access to material resources that will help them stay together.

What is our Family Support & Stabilization program and how does it work?

The goal of Family Support & Stabilization is to **help families stay intact**. The program works with families who are at risk of having their children removed from their home, as well as those who have lost custody and are actively working toward reunification.

To address the factors that contributed to their involvement in the child welfare system, our team of skilled clinicians and clinical supervisors provides each family with a combination of home-based therapeutic supports and referrals to community services. Together, they navigate the effects of trauma, recognize strengths, practice effective parenting and conflict resolution skills, engage in problem-solving, and make progress toward their goals.

This program “intervenes upstream” — when more parents can safely maintain or regain custody of their children, fewer kids enter or stay in foster care.

Learn more at hopewellinc.org/families.

My Family Support & Stabilization worker has gone way over and beyond her job description by far. She will go through the grind right with me. She will make sure me and my lil' family will be okay with her by my side! She makes the awful life experience I'm having right now a blessing.

-Family member

What We'll Do

One of the biggest challenges in the child welfare system is **disentangling poverty from neglect**. This is because poverty can interfere with a family's ability to provide basic resources and safety. The cycle of poverty is hard to break because being poor is expensive — from overdraft and late fees, to a lack of insurance coverage that leaves families more affected by unexpected costs, to jobs that often don't provide health insurance or parental leave.⁶

In many cases, the availability of additional resources can play a significant role in stabilizing a family and preventing children from entering foster care altogether. Establishing funding to **address the following three gaps** would have an immediate positive impact in the lives of children and families who receive services through our Family Support & Stabilization program:

1. Strong Foundations:

Help address immediate needs that could create a barrier to a family staying intact, such as covering a bill to avoid utilities being cut off. These resources will ensure basic needs are met and help families rebound if a crisis arises.

2. Strong Relationships:

Carve out opportunities for families to connect with one another, communicate, practice skills, celebrate milestones, and make happy memories together — for example, going bowling together or visiting the local zoo.

3. Meaningful Experiences:

Ensure all kids have access to the types of enriching experiences and activities that allow them to connect to the best parts of being a kid, like dance classes, driving lessons, or learning how to play a musical instrument.

Stabilizing families in crisis is one of the most powerful levers for *reducing* family separation and the number of children in foster care, while simultaneously *improving* the trajectories of kids, families, and communities.

Your support is a step toward preventative approaches to ensuring every child is safe, healthy, and loved.



GOAL 1.4

Roll out the tools and technology needed to track and analyze data.

What We'll Do

The child welfare field persistently lags behind other fields, such as medicine and public education, when it comes to using data to track, understand, and inform the services being provided to children and families.

The importance of data is **a common thread across all our work**, and HopeWell has made significant progress in recent years to incorporate data as a core part of how we achieve our mission. But candidly, despite the ground we've gained, a lack of access to high-quality data tools is still **a major pain point** for us.

With the right tools, technology, and infrastructure in place, we will develop, launch, and use a new **centralized database**. This database will equip us to collect, understand, share, and apply important information and insights as part of our work.

THE ROLE OF DATA

Why does access to reliable data matter?



How Philanthropy Helps

How will your donation have an immediate and direct impact?

Supporting young children in foster care as they learn to read, such as:

- ✓ Providing tools and technology to plan and deliver effective and engaging lessons, assess students' learning, and understand their strengths and gaps.
- ✓ Underwriting the cost of a team of well-trained tutors who are paid a living wage.

Providing more young adults who are aging out of foster care with wraparound support, including:

- ✓ Underwriting the cost of offering My First Place™ services to "unfunded" youth, for whom HopeWell receives no reimbursement from the State.
- ✓ Providing financial assistance to help youth overcome barriers to their educational and/or employment success, such as purchasing uniforms for a job or paying for college textbooks.

Helping families overcome their challenges and stay together, such as:

- ✓ Covering an urgent car repair so a parent doesn't lose time at work, or covering a medical bill so a family doesn't have to choose between paying the bill or buying groceries.
- ✓ Underwriting a family membership at the local YMCA so parents and children have a healthy outlet to try new activities together.
- ✓ Paying for driver's ed so a teenager can join their peers in learning how to drive safely.

Advancing a higher standard of care for children and families by:

- ✓ Supporting the tools, technology, and infrastructure necessary for effective data collection and analysis.
- ✓ Using data-driven insights to continuously refine and evolve our programs.
- ✓ Sharing our learnings with other organizations and service providers, state leaders, and policymakers, to help move the whole field forward.

Budget Breakdown

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Child & Family Support Staff | \$8.3M |
| Youth & Family Support Needs | \$1.6M |
| External Consultants & Researchers | \$1.5M |
| Core Mission Support | \$1.8M |
| TOTAL | \$13.2M |
| PROJECTED STATE CONTRIBUTION | -\$5.2M |
| OUR GOAL | \$8M |





DARE TO HOPE

HOPEWELLINC.ORG/DARE-TO-HOPE