



## **Children's Services of Roxbury Receives Grant to Fund Mental Health Counselor Master's Degrees for Employees**

*Program Will Help Address Behavioral Health Provider Shortage and Diversity*

### **For Immediate Release**

April 24, 2025

BOSTON, MASS — [Children's Services of Roxbury \(CSR\)](#) is pleased to announce it has received a grant from Franciscan Children's Community Health Initiative, a part of the Boston Children's Collaboration for Community Health, to support behavioral health master's level education for its staff. The \$600,000 grant — part of the “Expanding and Diversifying the Children's Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce” initiative — will enable CSR to offer 38 employees entrance into a free master's degree from Framingham State University to become Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHCs). As part of the program, CSR will accommodate on-site courses, the completion of clinical internships, and licensure support and study groups.

“We are deeply honored to receive this funding from Franciscan Children's Community Health Initiative, which will allow us to meaningfully expand educational assistance to employees,” said CSR President and CEO Sandra M. McCroom. “CSR's role in providing the opportunity for our dedicated staff to pursue advanced degrees is one of the most important ways we support their professional development. In turn, this funding will allow us to increase culturally responsive services that are crucial to the wellbeing of the children and families we serve.”

The program will help address critical mental/behavioral health care issues in the Commonwealth:

- “Catastrophic workforce shortages” of Community Mental Health Providers ([NRI State Behavioral Health Workforce Shortages and Initiatives, 2023-2024](#))
- The need to grow and diversify the behavioral health workforce to close the gap between need and equitable accessibility ([Mass. Taxpayers Foundation Behavioral Health Workforce Shortages, 2024](#))
- Only about 20% of independently licensed clinicians identify as people of color ([CHIA Mass. Health Care Workforce Survey: Behavioral Health Key Findings, 2023-2024](#))

By offering the means for nearly 40 CSR staff members to become LMHCs, this grant program will ease the state's mental health provider shortage. In addition, 95% of CSR's staff identify as people of color, which carries over to those pursuing licensure through this grant. Having behavioral health counselors who reflect the community that CSR serves is pivotal to providing more effective care.

“Boston Children's and Franciscan Children's have long recognized that one of the best ways for us to make a difference is to partner with others in the community,” said Shari Nethersole, MD, Vice

President for Community Health and Engagement at Boston Children's. "Through our institutional affiliation, we are excited to provide Children's Services of Roxbury with funding to strengthen behavioral health services for the children, youth, and families that need it most."

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**About Children's Services of Roxbury:**

*Children's Services of Roxbury (CSR) is celebrating 50 years of providing wraparound programs for children and families that include family shelter, culturally attuned behavioral health services, foster care and family support services, early education and childcare, and youth development programs. CSR is one of Massachusetts' largest Black-run nonprofit organizations, led by a Board and staff that represent the diverse communities it serves. CSR's programs and services demonstrate practices that break the cycle of systemic racism for future generations and empower families and young adults on their journey from poverty to stability and wealth-building. Learn more at [www.csrox.org](http://www.csrox.org).*

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