



FISCAL YEAR 2023

ANNUAL REPORT



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A Letter from the President & CEO

When I moved to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/New England region in June of 2022, I was thrilled to be enjoying the four seasons again. While some may see autumn as the chill of winter fast

approaching, I see autumn as a time of beautiful change and an opportunity to reflect on the possibilities that lie ahead.

NSCS experienced positive change during fiscal year 2023. For example, NSCS expanded and diversified the Board of Directors and enhanced our organizational structure to include positions and skill sets needed to align to the changing behavioral health landscape. Expanded our portfolio of services and focused on our current and future fiscal sustainability. Developed a centralized Admissions & Engagement department to improve the client experience and ensure consistent workflows. Embarked on a journey to become more data driven, began to fundraise and developed a grants management process. Increased our communications and marketing efforts to elevate our visibility in the communities we serve. Invested in our infrastructure and enhanced our recruitment, onboarding, and retention efforts.

We made a historic decision to change our name to North Suffolk Community Services (NSCS). We feel this name change honors where we started, acknowledges where we are, and announced where we are going as we continue to build beyond the behavioral health services we offer in order to strengthen the safety net and improve access to a continuum of community based services. We also revised our mission and vision statements and developed a values statement to guide our decision making, planning, and team member alignment.

I'm grateful to the Board of Directors, leadership, team members, and community partners for sharing your time, talents, and resources to advance our mission. Our collective efforts have assisted over 10,000 clients in their journey to independence and stability. NSCS looks forward to continuing our efforts to meet the needs in the communities we serve by having active partners like you. May this autumn season bring an abundant harvest and positive change.

With every wish and kind regard,

Damien Cabezas, President & CEO

MISSION STATEMENT

North Suffolk Community Services (NSCS) supports individuals and families in their pursuit of independence and stability by providing a comprehensive array of treatment and recovery services. Our approach is to intervene as early as possible; incorporate personal choices and promote prevention and education.

VISION

We believe that our organization is most effective when we treat the individuals we serve with dignity, cultural competence, compassion and excellence. To engage the individuals and families we serve effectively, we must acknowledge their strengths and understand their history. Every interaction must demonstrate respect for each person's culture, preferences, and goals. These values begin internally, with how we treat each other and our colleagues.

VALUES

NSCS promotes health and wellness through accessible and equitable early intervention, treatment, education and advocacy so that all residents of the communities we serve may live fulfilling lives.

Investing in our Infrastructure

Advancement & Grants Management

NSCS established an Advancement & Grants Management Department, which included weekly Grants Management Committee meetings. Our goal is to streamline and centralize all of our grant efforts.



During this fiscal year, NSCS saw a **60% increase in donations** from last year.

Admissions & Engagement Department

WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT

NSCS
North Suffolk
Community Services

ADMISSIONS & ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
has opened to meet your access to service needs!

OUR GOAL
is to provide the communities we serve and esteemed partners with exceptional quality and a seamless experience to all NSCS services.

We look forward to hearing from you, contact our **Admissions & Engagement Department** at
866-781-NSCS (6727)
or email
ADMISSIONS@NORTHSUFFOLK.ORG

www.northsuffolk.org

By the close of the fiscal year, NSCS was finalizing preparations to open its newly developed Admissions & Engagement Department in an effort to streamline our referral and admissions process.

Transitioning from a central intake process to investing in an Admissions & Engagement Department will enhance our ability to provide a single point of contact and phone number for referral sources and clients, verify insurance coverage, assess care and social determinants of health needs (SDOH), determine the availability of services and schedule appointments, and have the capacity to respond timely to referrals and clients with more succinct, organized workflows.

Call **866-781-NSCS (6727)** or
Email **admissions@northsuffolk.org**

Investing in our Talent

Behavioral Health Workforce Grant

This year NSCS received **\$1.4 million** through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to help strengthen its recruitment and retention efforts and to further its relationships with academic institutions and expand its internship program. NSCS partnered with Boston College and Tufts University Prison Initiative of Tisch College to ensure BIPOC students are provided the necessary skillset to work within their perspective cultures.

Through the grant NSCS also used the funding to create a pipeline targeted at individuals re-entering society from incarceration in order to provide education and mentorship to and by those who have been affected by the criminal justice system.



Return on Investment

to our Communities

Every **\$1**
Saves **\$9**
Provides **800%**

spent on childhood and youth health and development
in future spending on the health, social and justice services &
return on investment!

Every **\$1**
Saves **\$20**
Provides **1,900%**

invested in tobacco and substance use prevention programs
in future spending on future healthcare costs, which
return on investment!

Based on a 12-month budget, NSCS'...

Ⓢ Youth Elemento program has saved	\$4,626,000
Ⓢ Recovery on the Harbor team has saved	\$8,260,000
Ⓢ Recovery Coaches team has saved	\$15,440,000
Ⓢ Services over Sentences team has saved	\$7,200,000

...in future healthcare costs!



Successes

Community Behavioral Health Center (CBHC)

NSCS was designated a **Community Behavioral Health Center (CBHC)** by the state of Massachusetts and received funding to develop a new model of behavioral health care. The new CBHC model expands local access to routine, urgent, and crisis treatment for mental health conditions and substance use disorders. Through our Community Behavioral Health Center, NSCS is now offering front door to mental health care and treatment for substance use disorders by further expanding same-day evaluations and referrals to treatment; adding more evening and weekend hours; enhancing timely follow-up appointments; and offering more peer support and evidence-based behavioral health treatment – including medication-assisted treatment (MAT) – both in-person and via telehealth. NSCS' CBHC opened on January 3, 2023 and partners with a network of 25 centers around the state as well as the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Helpline.

NSCS' 24/7 Mobile Crisis Intervention (MCI) Crisis Line is available for both adults and children and can be used 24 hours a day, seven days a week to obtain emergency behavioral health services.



888-309-1989 if you or someone you know is in crisis

Since the opening of the program, we have seen many **successes**:

- Non-crisis intakes are up more than **95%**
- NSCS Call Center has fielded **2,382 crisis calls** and an additional **900 non-crisis calls**.
- NSCS Mobile Crisis team has issued **107 Section-12's**,
- Of the 2,382 crisis calls, **96%** of those we see for MCI remain in a voluntary community setting

Specialty Outpatient Counseling & Psychiatry Services

NSCS' Outpatient Counseling Centers provide specialized individual and group therapy as well as psychiatric services for youth and adults experiencing emotional difficulties, family struggles, mental illness, or other challenges to daily living.

Services include:

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services at NSCS' Freedom Trail Clinic
- Southeast Asian Treatment Services at the Revere Clinic
- Conexions Day Treatment program for adults struggling with mental illness



A SAMHSA grant, **Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC)**, finished its second and final year cycle and allowed NSCS' East Boston outpatient clinic to expand and improve its Rapid Access services, allowing more people in our community to receive services more quickly.

As a result, the clinic has been able to serve a higher volume of clients and provide them with timely and same-day intake services.

To learn more about NSCS' services, **contact our Admissions & Engagement Department** at



866-781-NSCS (6727)

or



admissions@northsuffolk.org

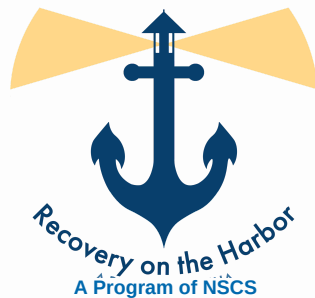
Successes

Addiction Services

Addiction Treatment and Recovery Support is available for adults and adolescents experiencing substance misuse, as well as families affected by addiction. NSCS offers:

- Outpatient Treatment and Urgent Care clinical assessments
- Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)
- Structured Outpatient Addiction Program (SOAP)
- Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) and psychiatry
- Residential addiction treatment at Meridian House and Hanton House

In April 2023, NSCS **Recovery on the Harbor (ROH)**, a Recovery Support Center located at 989 Bennington Street, East Boston, celebrated its 2 year anniversary. ROH has grown steadily with **over 420 active members** enrolled in 2023.



STEPRox Recovery Support Center, located at 153 Blue Hill Avenue, Roxbury, is NSCS' second recovery support center, with over **1,500** participants.



During the 2023 fiscal year, our **Building Communities of Recovery (BCOR)** grant assisted **719** individuals and made **547 referrals** to substance use disorder (SUD) services. **152** of those referrals were people successfully navigated to a detox program.



NSCS **Services Over Sentences (SOS)** program is a recovery program of North Suffolk in partnership with the Suffolk District Attorney's office that serves individuals trapped in the cycle of addiction. During FY23, NSCS received **124 referrals** for the program. Of those who opted to engage in SOS, **91%** have gone on to successfully complete the program.

Our Recovery Support team launched a peer-lead, evidence based support group called '**It Takes a Village**' for parents in recovery. NSCS Recovery Support Team also launched '**Returning Connections**' support group for individuals returning from incarceration. Group topics include both MRT and psycho education on life skills.

NSCS
North Suffolk
Community Services

844-NSPEERS
844-677-3377

FREE 24/7 RECOVERY SUPPORT HOTLINE
for anyone affected by addiction

Talk to us!

To learn more about NSCS' services, contact our Admissions & Engagement Department at

 **866-781-NSCS (6727)** or  **admissions@northsuffolk.org**

Successes

Child, Youth and Family Services

North Suffolk Community Services' offer an array of services for child, youth & families. This division serves children and families living in East Boston, Chelsea, Revere, Winthrop, and the Boston neighborhood of Charlestown. Some examples of services provided include:

- Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI)
- Community Service Agency
- In-Home Therapy
- Children's After School Program
- Latino Community Advance Response Team (Latino CART)
- MINDeaze Winthrop/Chelsea therapeutic teams embedded in school systems
- Revere High School Response Team
- Community Support Program

In July of 2022, NSCS celebrated a grand opening of its newest youth program, **Youth Elemento**. Youth Elemento is a drop-in center for youth ages 16-21 in Chelsea and offers a variety of amenities and resources and strives to break the stigma surrounding mental health by empowering the youth voices and providing culturally appropriate supports.

Youth Elemento is a low-barrier center which means that no referral, insurance, or mental health diagnosis is required. The program is designed to bridge the gap between youth needs and mental wellness. In the past year, the program has **served 140 youth**.



Successes

Contracted Services

NSCS provides an array of community-based services and residential supports that support safe, healthy, meaningful and productive living for some of our communities' most vulnerable members.

Our **Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS)** program assists adults diagnosed with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders who have been referred by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and are in need of support for their recovery efforts.

NSCS'also offers other services, including:

- NSCS' Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Residential Services provide residential services throughout greater Boston for individuals living with intellectual disabilities
- Housing and Home Supports serves adults who have developmental disabilities and live in semi-independent apartments and 24-hour supported homes
- DDS In-Home Supports for adults who have developmental disabilities in Metro Boston
- The Behavioral Health Community Partners (BHCP) provides person-centered care coordination with behavioral health, medical, and social needs

During the fiscal year 2023, ACCS supported:



541 total individuals



7 individuals moving from long term hospitalization to the community



18 individuals moving from Group Living Environments (GLE) to independent housing

Early Childhood Services

NSCS' **Harbor Area Early Intervention (EI)** program provides services to infants and toddlers from birth to age 2 who meet state criteria of developmental delay or who have risk of delay due to environmental, medical and/or biological factors.

NSCS' EI Program also offers other services, including:

- Neonatal services
- Service Coordination
- Home-based services
- Infant Mental Health/Family Support
- Developmental assessment and evaluation of strengths & needs
- Developmental and family support services for children presenting on the autism spectrum
- Preschool services for children ages 3 to 6 years who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or identified with complex trauma

NSCS' Early Intervention program received over **1200 referrals** in this fiscal year, seeing a return to pre-pandemic referral need/volume in our community.

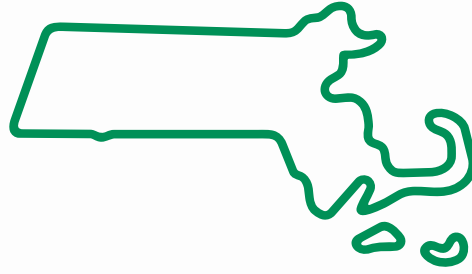
NSCS continues to act as leaders in health equity initiatives within community developmental and behavioral health and early intervention, and this commitment is recognized statewide.



Quality Care, Close to Home.

NSCS serves the following Massachusetts neighborhoods:

- Chelsea
- Revere
- East Boston
- Winthrop
- Charlestown
- Roxbury



Locations

Corporate Offices

301 Broadway
Chelsea, MA 02150

Continuous Quality Management

256 Beach Street,
Revere, MA 02151

NSCS Training Center

37 Hawthorne Street
Chelsea, MA 02150

Early Childhood Services

530 Border Street
East Boston, MA 02128

Recovery on the Harbor

983 Bennington Street
East Boston, MA 02128

STEPRox Recovery Support Center

153 Blue Hill Avenue
Roxbury, MA 02119

Chelsea Counseling Center

301 Broadway
Chelsea, MA 02150

CBHC

14 Porter Street
East Boston, MA 02128

Freedom Trail Clinic

25 Staniford Street
Boston, MA 02114



Hear it from our clients:

“I learn a lot, I learn structure and procedure. That’s how I heal. When the whole agency takes care of a person you know it’s good structure.”

“My experience with NSCS has been remarkable. I would definitely refer NSCS to a friend or family member.”

“[NSCS] helped me get on the right track with housing, medical and finances.”

“I love [NSCS], it’s helped me a lot. I was homeless before with no place to live.”

“Thank you for helping me through the most difficult time in my life.”

“I don’t know what my life would be if I did not get the help from this clinic. I’m very grateful to have staff who speaks my native language.”

CLIENT STORY

Rhonda B: Independence House

Crippled by depression and anxiety after her husband left, Rhonda Belissimo did not leave her bedroom for nearly 10 years. “My son took care of me for a whole decade,” Rhonda said. He moved in with her while she struggled hoping he could help her get better. During that time period Rhonda tried to take her own life 14 times. She returned to McLean Hospital so many times, the staff knew her. The last time she was there, her son and the hospital staff convinced her to go to North Suffolk Community Services’ Independence House.



That was 20 months ago.

Before she experienced agoraphobia, Rhonda had a great career as an Executive Assistant, owned her own homes, and by all accounts maneuvered through life quite well, even with a diagnosis of bipolar and PTSD at the age of 19. Rhonda, now 56, matter-of-factly says “I learned to live with it through medication and therapy. I did well enough to get through life.”

When Rhonda first got to Independence House she did not leave her room. Slowly though, she began to roam around the house, then she tried the front porch. When she got comfortable with that, Rhonda walked to a store. Now, she frequents Market Basket for groceries regularly. Recently, Rhonda went to the Museum of Science with her social worker, and a few months before that went to the Franklin Park Zoo with her housemates. “I’ve been doing things like a real person again,” Rhonda exclaimed, her voice filled with joy, and what seemed like a huge sense of relief.

A turning point toward wellness was when Rhonda began to let herself believe that other people really did love her. Today she has a beautiful and healthy relationship with her son, who she talks with every day. She FaceTime’s with her six year old granddaughter daily as well. Prior to Independence House, her granddaughter only ever saw her in her bedroom. “She is obsessed with me,” Rhonda says of her granddaughter, the joy of it obvious.

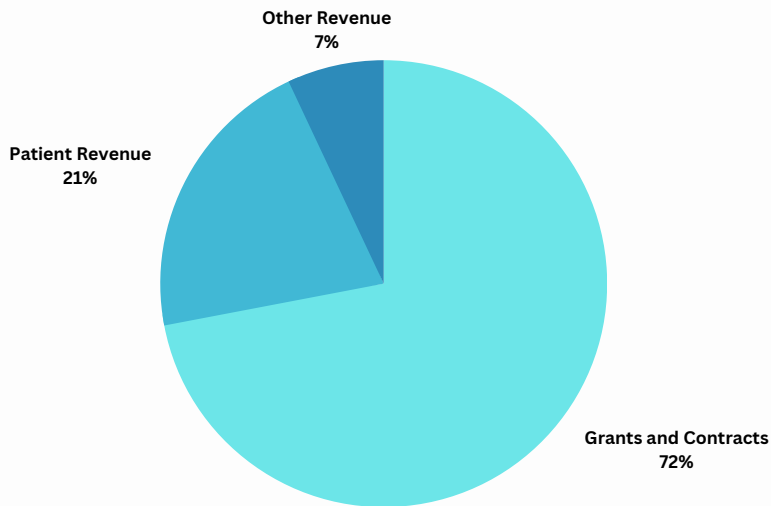
Today, 20 months after showing up at Independence House, Rhonda says, “I feel like I am wasting a room [at Independence House], I feel guilty that I’m taking up someone’s chance to get better here. I give all the credit to Chrissy and her team.”

Rhonda’s suicidal thoughts have abated. She has a strong and engaged care team. And Rhonda has loving and healthy family relationships. It is with this backdrop that Rhonda is giving up that room so someone else can benefit from caring team at Independence House.

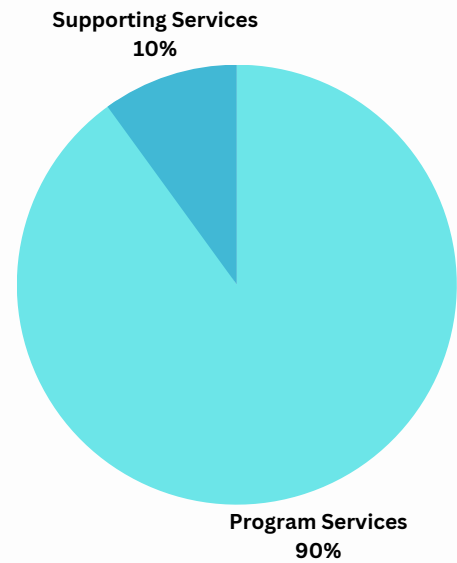
Rhonda is moving into her own place but she won’t live there alone. She will be sharing her new home with her gray and white, green-eyed cat Leo.

FINANCIALS

Total Revenue: \$73 million



Total Expenses



Nearly **1,000** talented team members!

