



**Step 1:** Tell us where you want to find services

**Step 2:** Use our tools to pick the services you want

**Step 3:** We provide the information you need to connect to the resources you chose

## Trainings & Info Sessions:

Interested in learning more? Contact the Mayor's Health Line to schedule an on-site HelpSteps training & information session.

[edasilva@bphc.org](mailto:edasilva@bphc.org)

## Feedback & Questions?

Let us know about Your experience!

Mayor's Health Line  
617-534-5050  
[info@helpsteps.com](mailto:info@helpsteps.com)



## Bridging The Gap

Through a partnership between Boston University, Boston Housing Authority (BHA), and Boston Public Health Commission, and a three year funding opportunity from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Boston Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health: Partners in Health and Housing (REACH: PHH) is working with BHA staff and residents to increase access to healthy foods, smoke-free environments, and general resources to improve health.

Boston Housing Authority (BHA) is the largest provider of public housing in New England providing affordable and quality housing to nearly 58,000 low-income individuals. BHA residents consistently identify access to healthy and affordable food among their highest priorities. The mission of Boston REACH: PHH is to reduce health inequities of Black and Hispanic residents of BHA developments, Section 8 and mixed financing housing. To achieve this goal Boston REACH: PHH is working to create community linkages between residents and their local health centers to enhance patient care coordination especially for those with chronic diseases, increase and improve smoke-free housing environments and to expand access to healthy foods and beverages in BHA developments.

To facilitate these goals, Boston REACH: PHH, in partnership with BHA, is using HelpSteps to connect residents to affordable health and social services based on individual needs. BHA has trained Resident Health Advocates (RHAs), Youth Health Ambassadors (YHAs) and Local Tenant Organizations to administer HelpSteps to BHA residents. RHAs and YHAs also attend leadership meetings, resource fairs and development block parties called Unity Day. Last summer over 1,000 residents attended the Unity Day events where RHAs and YHAs used mobile devices to connect residents to a wide range of social and health resources.

Recent data suggest that there are higher rates of smoking, diabetes and obesity among public housing residents and that they also experience greater difficulty accessing external health and social resources than other residents. The majority of these barriers are associated with affordability, mobility and lack of knowledge about existing resources.

HelpSteps has been piloted at two BHA block parties called Unity Days and one Wellness Connect event. Based on initial reports of HelpSteps searches, it appears that help accessing health insurance, food stamps, and free care are among the most popular inquiries by BHA residents. HelpSteps also has several resource categories that can address primary health challenges that BHA residents face such as diabetes prevention services, access to low cost nutritional foods, transitional services, and more. Through this partnership, Boston REACH: PHH is linking BHA residents with important health-promoting resources that will have lasting impact beyond the 3 years of this project.

