

Boston Herald

Boston gets fed grant to help young ex-cons find ‘road to redemption’

Chris Villani Thursday, April 28, 2016



Credit: Nicolaus Czarnecki

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh speaks during an event at the Lenox Camden Housing Development in the South End of Boston on Thursday, April 28, 2016.

Young people who have had run-ins with the law will be getting additional assistance to reenter society after Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh, along with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, announced \$100,000 for the Boston Housing Authority and Greater Boston Legal Services to help young offenders try to find work and affordable housing.

“Every one of us needs a second chance in our lives,” Walsh told a gathering at the Lenox/Camden Housing Development in Boston’s South End, where just last month 27 people were arrested in gang-related federal raids. “It’s very hard to stay off the streets if the streets are your home.”

Walsh called the funding a “smart, compassionate approach,” and said the reentry program is personal to him as someone who has needed second chances in his own life.

“As a kid, obviously drinking got me some trouble,” he said after the ceremony. “I never went to jail, but I believe in second chances. There’s a lot of kids in recovery who did things while they were under the influence of drugs and alcohol that they regret. As they get older, they start to realize those decisions were a tremendous mistake....This money here is going to help people understand what they have to do and try to put them on pathways (to reenter society).”

The BHA will use funding for the Juvenile Reentry Assistance Program to help people ages 16-24 with job training and interview skills, as well as providing guidance for readmission to school, counseling them on their legal rights in searching for jobs, and sealing or expunging their juvenile or adult records when permitted by law so they become eligible for public housing, according to a press release detailing the announcement.

Asked about the last month’s raid, Walsh stressed the importance of a “multi-stepped” approach focusing on crime prevention and enforcement, as well as reentry.

“We have to...