

Domus builds loving relationships with young people facing adversity, empowering them to pursue their path to self-sufficiency. Embedded in our mission is a commitment to achieving racial equity, utilizing a positive youth development approach, being trauma-responsive in our relationships, and showing our young people unconditional love. Our vision is no child shall be denied hope, love, or a fair chance in life.

Our work began in 1972, as a single residential group home for young men removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. We have since evolved, implementing new programs and models to respond to emerging community needs. Domus served a little over 1,000 young people annually through our programming, our target population being young people aged 12-26, primarily from Stamford, who, at enrollment, are disengaged or disconnected.

At Domus, we define these terms as

- Disengaged- youth with at least 1 of the following risk factors
 - School attendance rates between 50% and 85%
 - Excluded, suspended, or have documented externalizing behaviors
 - Out of school youth with no stable work history
- Disconnected- youth with at least one of the following risk factors
 - School attendance less than 50%
 - Two years over-age for grade in school
 - Not in school and not in the workforce
 - Recently incarcerated

We have two core outcome-producing programs, our School Engagement program and DomusWorks, a workforce development program.

1. School Engagement: Located in Stamford High School, Westhill Highschool, and Anchor, this program engages about 400 disengaged high school youth over four years in intensive, interpersonal relationships to help them acquire the social and emotional skills, attitudes, and habits needed to graduate high school and enroll and engage in their post-secondary environment.
2. DomusWorks: engages unemployed youth, 17-26, with the supports and skills they need to gain employment on the path to self-sufficiency.

Domus operates additional programs which support young people at a point in their journey on their path to self-sufficiency. These programs provide academic and social enrichment, skills building, and engagement opportunities. activities that empower young people by helping them build a sense of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

1. **Invictus:** Through our Invictus program, we serve about 50 young men annually, working with them one-on-one before their release from incarceration – and for more than a year afterward – to support their transition back to the community and help them find stable employment.
2. **Juvenile Review Board:** The JRB helps youth who have committed low-level misdemeanor crimes and who are deemed at low risk of recidivism to keep their records clean. The program does this by diverting them from the criminal justice system and providing them with a supportive adult who connects them to the services they need to avoid re-arrest.
3. **Vaping Diversionary Program:** The Vaping Diversionary Program teaches young people the consequences and dangers of vaping while ensuring they do not miss valuable educational time. Rather than further disengaging students who vape with a suspension and/or arrest, the program educates young people while encouraging them to continue engaging in school every day.
4. **Domus Drop-In Center:** For all middle and high school students enrolled in other Domus programs, after-school tutoring and enrichment activities are available at our drop-in center.
5. **Elementary and Middle School Afterschool Programs:** For Stamford students at Turn of River, Toquam, and KT Murphy, this program provides after-school spaces and activities for skills building in a pro-social environment.
6. **Work and Learn Afterschool Program:** For Stamford high school youth aged 15 to 18, this 10- week after-school enrichment program teaches both hard and soft skills needed for successful employment.
7. **Hartford Residential Center:** For incarcerated youth aged 12 to 18, this program provides full- year educational services that support their future re-entry into their community and high school.
8. **Bridgeport Residential Center Summer School Enrichment Program:** For incarcerated youth aged 12 to 18, this program provides engaging summer academic enrichment programming.
9. **Project New Hope:** The program seeks to prevent youth crime by building connections with these young people and connecting them to jobs, training, school, and/or other community resources. In the summer of 2023, as part of Project New Hope, Domus collaborated with Stamford Downtown and the Mayor's Office on a pilot downtown street outreach program, which was so successful that Domus was asked to run the program year-round.

10. Here2Help: The Here-to-Help program provides supportive services to reconnect students to school due to disengagement or disconnection. With Domus as the lead agency, these services are provided as part of a community-wide collaborative effort with Stamford Public Schools, The City of Stamford, and Family Centers.
11. Middle School Family Advocates: For Stamford middle school students at Rippowam, Turn of River, Dolan, and Cloonan, this program provides school-day support to navigate social and emotional obstacles to learning.

Through our core programs and initiatives, Domus provides critical resources and support that help young people overcome systemic barriers, achieve academic success, and build brighter futures.

One of our operational challenges is securing sustainable funding and contracts for DomusWorks. While the program has been successful in equipping participants with the skills and support needed to secure employment, the program's reliance on short-term grants and one-time funding sources creates uncertainty for long-term planning. This limits our ability to scale the program to meet the increasing demand for workforce development opportunities. We actively pursue multi-year contracts and sponsorships with employers and explore public funding opportunities through state and federal initiatives. However, on a city level, in FY24 we have renewed contracts with the City of Stamford and UConn Stamford, and we continue our strong partnership with Stamford Public Schools through our School Engagement program, which ensures we remain deeply integrated in addressing the community's educational and workforce needs.

Domus operates with a diverse funding portfolio, including individual contributions, foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, and government funding at federal, state, and city levels. Despite this diversification, many of our funding streams are one-time grants or restricted, creating challenges for long-term sustainability.

REQUEST: \$250,000 to support our workforce development program, DomusWorks

DomusWorks, our workforce development program, provides disconnected and opportunity youth with hands-on job training, life and employability skills, paid work experience, and the intensive support they need to succeed. Participants engage in meaningful employment opportunities through partnerships with local government, universities, unions, and businesses, while receiving wraparound services that address barriers such as transportation, housing insecurity, and limited access to healthcare.

Significant Changes:

- Increased program enrollment: DomusWorks plans to serve approximately 91 youth in FY25–26, compared to 80 youth in FY24–25, in response to growing need and successful outreach.
- Addition of a new partnership with the Carpenters Union, offering participants direct exposure to careers in skilled trades.
- New landscaping contract with Fairfield County Catholic Cemeteries, providing youth with expanded job sites and skill-building opportunities starting April 2025.
- We updated our DomusWorks program curriculum with the support of outside consultants to improve alignment with workforce readiness standards and incorporate trauma-informed practices.
- City park benches
- sidewalks

New or Expanded Services in 2025–26

- Business Builders: A new entrepreneurship program launched in FY24–25 for afterschool students is expanding to include DomusWorks participants interested in starting small businesses or side hustles.

FY2024–25 Highlights, Efficiencies, and Service Improvements

- Partnered with the City of Stamford to secure a \$400,000 grant to fund youth work crews maintaining public properties—impacting both skill development and civic pride.
- Created a formal partnership with the Carpenters Union to deliver direct training and career pathways.
- Youth advocacy success: DomusWorks participants spoke at the State Capitol, amplifying the needs of disconnected youth and informing statewide policy.