



Members of the NoFIRES Board of Directors being recognized at the 2018 Massachusetts Firefighter of the Year ceremony in Worcester by Fire Marshal Peter Ostroskey

NoFIRES Annual Report | 2018

NoFIRES

Northwestern Youth Fire Intervention
Response, Education and Safety Partnership

A Community Response to Youth-Set Fires

NOFIRES, INC.

www.NoFIRES.net

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of NoFIRES,

What an exciting year for NoFIRES!

In November, we were honored to receive the State Fire Marshal Award at the 29th Annual Firefighter of the Year ceremony in Worcester with Governor Baker and Fire Marshal Ostroskey. In addition, we were nominated for the Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year Award at the annual SAFE Conference. Our fire safety classes, annual statewide conference, and consultation have reached every community in Massachusetts! We are proud to be a model program and will continue to ensure that all families have access to fire safety education when they need it.

The core mission of NoFIRES is to protect our youth, their families, and the communities in which they live, from the dangerous and sometimes fatal act of setting fires.

NoFIRES is proud to offer fire safety education to Hampshire County, Franklin County, the North Quabbin area, and The City of Holyoke. In the seven years that our program has been in operation, we have received more than 300 referrals for youth that have misused fire.

NoFIRES is one of the only programs statewide available for young people that have engaged in fire-related behavior. Our model of utilizing licensed clinical social workers for screenings and specialized fire educators for classes makes this program an invaluable asset to the 51 communities it serves.

Please visit our website at: www.NoFIRES.net to learn more about our program, make a referral, and find upcoming training opportunities.

Thank you for your continued support,



FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION

According to the National Fire and Protection Association, fires started by youth accounted for an average of 49,300 fires with associated losses of 80 civilian deaths, 860 civilian injuries, and \$235 million in direct property damage per year between 2007-2011. Fire safety education is effective in reducing recidivism. Educating as many youth as possible will reduce risk and expense for the community.

A collaboration of fire, law enforcement, mental healthcare providers and social service agencies; NoFIRES is committed to providing a consistent, coordinated and appropriate response to youths under the age of 18, who set fires or engage in fire-related behavior.

The components of this approach include intervention, education and prevention, and referrals for clinical treatment and counseling and/or to service agencies.



HOW IT WORKS

When there is a fire-related incident involving a youth, they are referred to the NoFIRES program. It is not required that charges be pending to participate in the program. NoFIRES is a referral-based program, and accepts referrals from the following sources:

- * State and local police departments
- * District Attorneys' Offices
- * Fire departments
- * Schools
- * Court personnel
- * Department of Children and Families
- * Department of Mental Health
- * Medical & Mental Health Providers
- * Other social service agencies
- * Parent/Guardian/Foster Parent



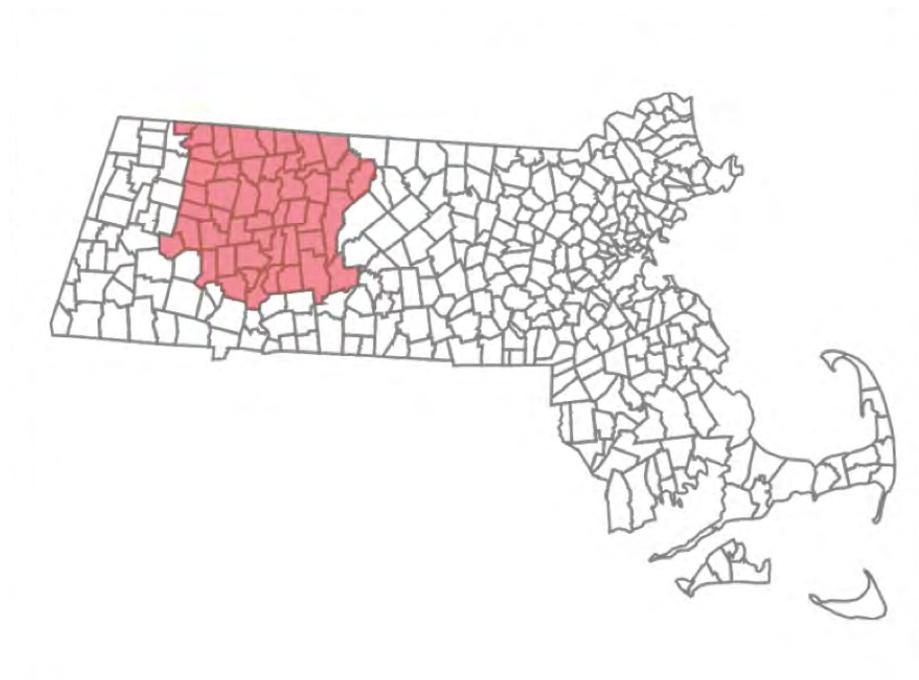
A screening interview of the youth and the youth's family will be conducted and a determination will follow as to whether the child is an appropriate candidate for the program. In addition, a Life Safety Inspection is conducted in the home to ensure the safety of the family. If the child is determined to be suitable for the program, a fire safety educational intervention program will be recommended. Referrals may also be made to social services agencies and/or for clinical mental health counseling and treatment.

The NoFIRES Fire Safety School usually consists of 3-5 classes which run approximately 2 hours each, depending on the program and needs of the child. The program focuses on preventing further fire-related incidents by encouraging the youth to adopt safe and healthy behaviors associated with fire.

OUR PARTNERS

The NoFIRES program is based on collaboration between different disciplines. Our strength is grounded in the participation of the following agencies:

Amherst Fire Department, Amherst Police Department, Amherst Regional Schools, Athol Fire Department, Chesterfield Fire Department, Clinical and Support Options, Department of Children & Families, Easthampton Fire Department, Easthampton Police Department, Franklin Clinical Liaison, Holyoke Fire Department, Granby Fire Department, Greenfield Fire Department, Greenfield Police Department, Montague Police Department, Northeast Center for Youth and Families, Northampton Fire Department, Northampton Police Department, Northwestern District Attorney's Office, Springfield Fire Department, Turners Falls Fire Department, Ware Police Department, Massachusetts State Fire Marshall's Office, and Massachusetts State Police



HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

1. Visit our website: www.NoFIRES.net
2. Complete the online Referral Form OR download a paper copy
3. Press Submit or scan/mail paper copy

The family will be contacted by NoFIRES to schedule a screening appointment. The screening team will gather more information and determine if our fire safety course would be appropriate intervention. The family will receive an enrollment letter with the dates and location of the classes. The child must attend all scheduled classes to earn a certificate of completion. Upon completion, the referral source will also receive a certificate of completion for their records.



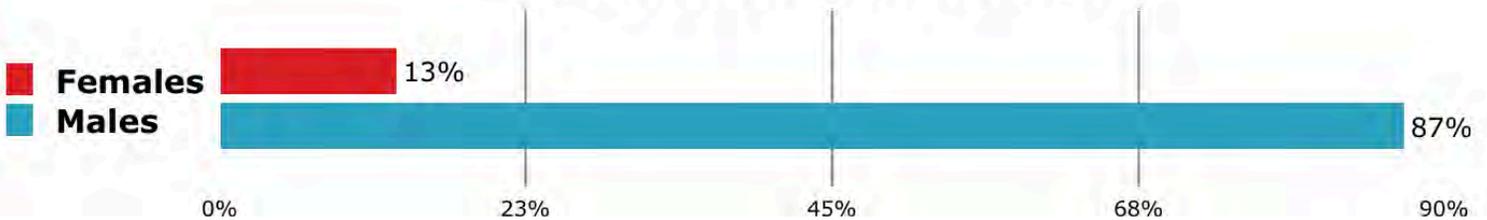
DATA

In 2018, we received 61 referrals for young people that have misused fire and taught 17 fire safety classes in Western MA. Our hope is that we can continue to work to better understand this serious issue and continue to offer our services to families in need of help.

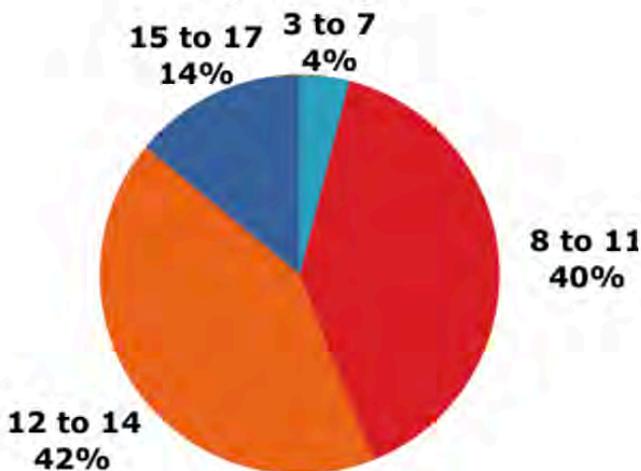
In January 2015, we created an extensive database to organize data and track information about the kinds of referrals we receive. This system helps us record additional information that may be helpful in learning more about youth firesetting. Among other things, we have added categories to track estimated damages, the nature of the fire, household makeup, location of fire, ignition source, and previous incidents.

A follow-up survey has also been instituted to evaluate program satisfaction and fire setting behavior after program participation. To date, we were able to contact most of the participants (80%) all respondents felt that the NoFIREs program was valuable. We have received 100% positive feedback about NoFIREs and have not received any reports of additional fire setting behavior after program completion. We will be conducting follow-up surveys again to survey our most recent referrals.

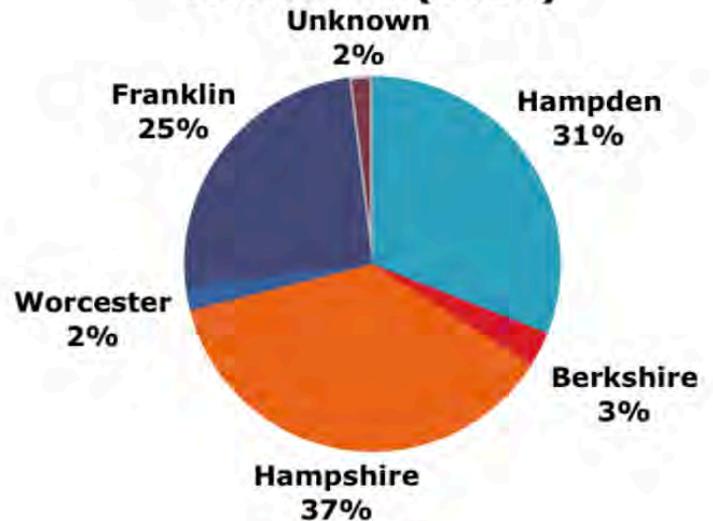
Gender of Youth Referred (2018)



Age at Referral (2018)



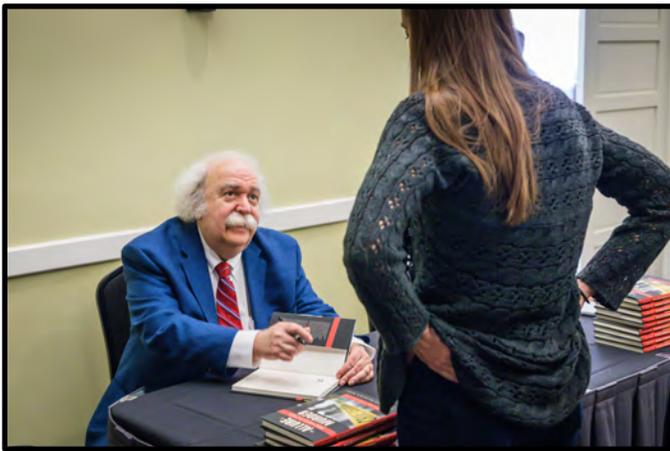
Referrals by County of Residence (2018)



2018 CONFERENCE: *Understanding Serial Murder & Arson*

In addition to offering fire safety education, NoFIRES has worked hard to provide high quality low-cost trainings to prosecutors, police, and firefighters from around the Commonwealth. On November 7-8, 2018, our annual conference focused on the issue of *Understanding Serial Murder & Serial Arson Through Case Analysis*.

Topics included: Criminal behavioral analysis by renown expert in the field Dr. Jack Levin, techniques for investigating unsolved homicides, solving cold cases, criminal investigation of a serial arsonist and concluded with a live burn presentation using the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services burn trailer.



MEET OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice President: Martha Murphy Kane, Northwestern District Attorney's Office

Clerk: Ellen Brower Gately, Juvenile Court Clinic

Deputy Chief Wayne Hennemann, Easthampton Fire Department

Chief Robert Authier, South Hadley Fire District #1

Detective Michael Briggs, Northampton Police Department

Chief John Ingram, Leverett Fire Department



BECOME A FRIEND OF NoFIRES

- Serve on our Board of Directors or Friends of NoFIRES Advisory Team
- Help with fundraising efforts
- Donate a raffle item
- Make a tax-deductible donation

CONTACT US

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