

# Assisting Families Experiencing Homelessness: Emergency Assistance Shelter and Benefits



Basic Benefits Training Series  
September 23, 2025

# Welcome & Introductions

- ★ Introduction to trainers
- ★ Please put questions into the chat (note that there is a brief delay between presenters and audience)
- ★ Materials will be provided and available on the MCLE page as well as on [masslegalservices.org](https://masslegalservices.org)

# Agenda

- 9:30**
  - Introduction to the EA Shelter System**
  - How to Apply for Shelter**
  - 5 minute break**
  - Shelter Tracks and Placements**
  - 10 minute break**
  - Q&A discussion**
  - Length of Stay Time Limits**
- 12:00**
  - Lunch break**
  - Noncompliances and Terminations**
  - Language Access**
  - HomeBASE Basics**
  - 10-minute break (Questions)**
  - RAFT and Other Resources**
  - Legislative and Other Systemic Advocacy**
- 2:45**
  - Questions and Discussion**

# **About Emergency Assistance Shelter**

# What is Emergency Assistance (EA)?

- The Emergency Assistance program provides emergency shelter and services to families with children and pregnant people in Massachusetts who are experiencing homelessness.
- Families eligible for EA also are eligible for HomeBASE assistance
  - HomeBASE generally provides up to \$30,000 over 24 months
  - Available for housing costs to divert families from entering shelter or to help families exit shelter
- The Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC, formerly DHCD) administers both EA and HomeBASE.

# The Numbers: Participants

Number of families participating in EA

- **September 4, 2025: 2,720 families**
  - Families staying in Bridge shelter: 2,619
  - Families staying in Rapid shelter: 101
- **September 18, 2024: 7,250 families**
  - Families staying in traditional shelters: 3,732
  - Families staying in hotel/motel placements: 3,518
- **September 28, 2023: 6,726 families**

\*EOHLC Emergency Assistance Placement Data Report:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/emergency-assistance-ea-family-shelter-resources-and-data>

# The Numbers: Application Snapshot

- 601 families applied for EA during the 14-day period of 8/21/25–9/3/25
- Of the 305 families who couldn't provide requested documentation in the reporting period,
  - 275 still had their application pending
  - 5 were denied
  - 6 withdrew their applications
  - 19 received a waiver

# The Numbers: Families' Reasons for Homelessness

# families in shelter qualified due to...	As of 9/4/25, based on 2,725 families (2,623 families in bridge track shelters and 102 in rapid track shelters)*
Domestic violence or abuse	283
Health and safety risks/asked to leave/threatened eviction	289
Housing situation not meant for human habitation	1,072
Fire, flood, or natural disaster	13
Asked to leave a Teen Living Program	6
Eviction (no-fault or excused fault)	324
Other reasons	738

\* See the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (A&F) and Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) Biweekly Emergency Housing Assistance Program report from September 8, 2025:

[https://www.mahomeless.org/files/ugd/6c63ec\\_6ae932d333a049a8baa889118c8c2816.pdf](https://www.mahomeless.org/files/ugd/6c63ec_6ae932d333a049a8baa889118c8c2816.pdf)



# The Numbers: Recent EA Shelter Exits and Lengths of Stay

<b><i>During the 14-day period of 8/21/25–9/3/25*</i></b>	<b>Families in Bridge Track shelters</b>	<b>Families in Rapid Track shelters</b>
Total exits from shelter	259 families	4 families
Exits to market-rate housing, with or without HomeBASE	144 families	2 families
Exits to subsidized housing	23 families	2 families
Exits to other stable housing	4 families	0 families
Exits to other situations	88 families	0 families
Average length of stay for families who exited	503 days (~16.5 months)	58 days (~ 2 months)
Average length of stay for families still in shelter as of 9/4/25	318 days (~10.4 months)	71 days (~2.3 months)
Median length of stay for families still in shelter as of 9/4/25	289 days (~9.5 months)	27 days (~0.9 months)

\* See the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (A&F) and Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) Biweekly Emergency Housing Assistance Program report from September 8, 2025:

[https://www.mahomeless.org/\\_files/ugd/6c63ec\\_6ae932d333a049a8baa889118c8c2816.pdf](https://www.mahomeless.org/_files/ugd/6c63ec_6ae932d333a049a8baa889118c8c2816.pdf)

# The Numbers: Comparing Lengths of Stay

Average length of stay:

- 2025: Bridge Track - 318 days, Rapid Track - 71 days\*
- 2024: 365 days (for part of the year, families were not subject to a time limit)\*\*
- 2023: 284 days
  - Maximum length of stay at the end of Q1 FY23 was 3,097 days (almost 8.5 years)
  - Maximum length of stay at the end of Q2 FY23 was 2,880 days\*\*\*
- 2022: 431 days
- 2021: 455 days

\*EOHLC Biweekly EA Report, September 8, 2025:

[https://www.mahomeless.org/\\_files/ugd/6c63ec\\_6ae932d333a049a8baa889118c8c2816.pdf](https://www.mahomeless.org/_files/ugd/6c63ec_6ae932d333a049a8baa889118c8c2816.pdf)

\*\*EA Commission Kickoff slides:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/emergency-assistance-ea-commission-kickoff-july-18-2024-presentation/download>

\*\*\*DHCD Emergency Assistance Legislative Report (Q2): <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy2023-q2-ea-report-0/download>

# **History of Emergency Assistance (EA) Shelter**

# Origins of EA and HomeBASE

- **1983:** Emergency Assistance program established (Chapter 450 of the Acts of 1983) and administered by the Department of Public Welfare (which later became the Department of Transitional Assistance or DTA)
- **2009:** Administration of EA moved from DTA to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), now the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)
- **2011:** HomeBASE established to provide shelter diversion and rehousing resources
  - Originally included a two-year subsidy component
  - Because of costs, the Legislature changed the program to cap the benefit level

# Timeline of Recent Policy Changes

- **June 2023:** Healey Administration creates Family Welcome Centers
- **August 2023:** Governor declares state of emergency related to family homelessness and the Emergency Assistance program
- **October 2023:** Governor caps shelter at 7,500 placements and announces waitlist for families above the cap
- **December 2023:** Governor signs supplemental budget for EA shelter costs
  - State overflow shelter opens for families on waitlist
  - Work authorization clinics begin

# Timeline of Recent Policy Changes (cont.)

- **April 2024:** Legislature approves 9-month limit on EA stays
- **July 2024:** Governor bans families from sleeping at Logan Airport
- **August 2024:** EOHLC limits overflow shelter stays to 5 days and 6-month bar to EA shelter
- **November 2025:** EOHLC establishes two shelter tracks: Bridge Shelter Track and Rapid Shelter Track
- **January 2025:** EOHLC begins performing criminal record, or CORI, checks for families in EA shelter
- **March 2025:** EOHLC implements length of stay policy and begins to terminate families under new CORI regulations
- **April 2025:** EOHLC ends use of presumptive eligibility and updates immigration rules to require that the child have the eligible status

# Impact of Policy Changes

These changes have:

- Put eligible families in positions where they have no safe places to go
- Rendered previously eligible families ineligible for shelter
- Forced families to sleep in unsafe places while they gather documents and complete the application process
- Increased unsheltered homelessness
- Disproportionately harmed immigrant families and perpetuated an anti-immigrant and racist framework
- Created chaos and uncertainty for families and communities across the state

# **Eligibility & Application Process**



# Step 1: Household Eligibility

*See the EA regulations at 760 CMR 67.02*

- Children and young adults under age 21 and their parents, caretaker relatives, or legal guardians
  - Step-parents and siblings under 21 (including step-siblings or half-siblings) are included by right.
  - Other family members need special permission to be included. Those people must be able to assist the family with rehousing or a critical medical need. \**HSN 2010-01*
- Pregnant people and their partners
  - “Spouse” is defined in HSN 2011-02 as the person with whom the pregnant person is in an interdependent, long-term relationship. Couples are not required to be married.

# Household Eligibility (cont.)

- Households must also:
  - Verify identity and pregnancy or relationship to child;
  - Have income of less than 115% of federal poverty level;
    - 2025: \$2,554 a month for a family of 3
    - If recent loss of income, income should be calculated prospectively according to TAFDC reg - 106 CMR 704.290
  - Have assets of less than \$5,000;\*
  - Verify Massachusetts residency;
  - Have a child under 18 with an eligible immigration status;
  - Meet eligibility criteria for homelessness; and
  - Not be barred by their cause of homelessness, past behavior, or previous receipt of benefits
  - Not be barred by CORI.

\*<https://www.mass.gov/doc/housing-stabilization-notice-2022-02-asset-calculation-for-emergency-assistance-eligibility/download>

# Immigration Status

*760 CMR 67.02(7), 106 CMR 703.430, and  
Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL)*

Immigration eligibility changed in April 2025:

- The person with the eligible status must now be the child.
- If child is 18 or over, all household members must also have an eligible status.
- EOHLC can waive this requirement.

106 CMR 703.440 (EAEDC noncitizen eligibility) defines PRUCOL.

- Haitians who were paroled into the US maintain EA eligibility as Cuban/Haitian entrants even if their parole ends.

# Step 2: Housing Need

*760 CMR 67.06(1)*

- Eligible families may qualify for EA if their housing need is caused by:
  - Risk of domestic violence or already having fled domestic violence;
  - Fire, flood, or natural disaster;
  - No fault eviction or condemnation; or
  - Substantial health and safety risk.
- To qualify, eligible families cannot have “feasible alternative housing.”
- Under a 2015 memo between DCF and EOHLC (DHCD), families can reunify with their children in shelter.
  - Requires DCF to start the process.

# No Fault Eviction

*760 CMR 67.06(1)(a)3, 760 CMR 67.06(1)(3)(2), 760 CMR 67.06(1)(f)3-5*

- Requires court process to be considered an eviction.
- No fault/no cause eviction and non-renewal of lease includes when families are evicted due to:
  - Foreclosure or condemnation through no fault of the household;
  - Conduct by someone over whom current household members had no control;
  - Nonpayment of rent caused by:
    - A documented medical condition or disability in a market-rate apartment;
    - Loss of income source within last 12 months through no fault of the family, including change in household composition.
- There must be a firm “date of homelessness” within 48 hours.

No-fault evictions qualify households as Priority 3 on the “Contact List” (formerly waitlist)

# Health and Safety Risk

*760 CMR 67.06(1)(a)4, 760 CMR 67.06(1)(f)6.a-d, 760 CMR 67.06(1)(f)7-8,  
Budget Line Item 7004-0101 of FY26*

- Housing situations presenting a health or safety risk include when:
  - (1) The family is not the primary leaseholder, **and**
  - (2) Children are exposed to harmful mental health issues, bad housing conditions, criminal activity, physical violence, or ongoing substance abuse.
- Households may also qualify for EA if they would be eligible “but for having spent one night” in a place not meant for human habitation (PNMHH).
  - PNMHH includes cars, emergency rooms, parks, police stations, church basements, the streets, the hallways of buildings, and other such locations.
  - **Language in the state budget since FY20 no longer requires families to prove they stayed in a PNMHH.**
- Families may also be eligible if they are in an irregular housing situation (couch surfing) or being discharged from a time-limited, non-EA shelter, such as a community room placement.

# Health and Safety Risk Assessment

*760 CMR 67.06(1)(e)4, HSN 2016-03*

- Families in this category must have a risk assessment by Department of Children and Families (DCF) to determine EA eligibility.
  - These are not 51As filed for abuse and neglect.
  - These are not DCF investigators.
  - These DCF workers only do health and safety assessments.
  - The family should not have to have an address to have a health and safety assessment completed.

Priority 2 includes “families DCF has determined to be at the highest risk of harm if they remain unhoused or in their current housing situation”.

# Shelter Ineligibility: Disqualifying Reasons

760 CMR 67.06(2)(a)-(h)

- Families are not eligible if they became homeless:
  - For the purpose of becoming EA eligible.
  - For the purpose of getting a housing subsidy.
  - Because they were evicted from their most recent permanent housing due to:
    - Nonpayment from subsidized housing within the last three years or
    - Criminal activity or destruction of property.
    - Exception: If the person who caused the eviction is no longer in the household the family may still be eligible. If the cause was criminal activity, the applicant must have been unaware of it, unless the criminal activity was caused by a DV abuser.
  - Because they abandoned subsidized housing without good cause.
  - Because they failed to cooperate with a non-EA shelter or other housing assistance program.
  - Because they refused a placement at a Young Parents Program (YPP) or were asked to leave three YPPs for behavior-related issues.

*Good cause criteria: 106 CMR 701.380.*



# Intervening Housing

*HSN 2012-05*

- Disqualifying reasons for homelessness relate to a family's most recent permanent housing.
- If family had “intervening housing” after disqualifying reason, they may be eligible.
- Staying in someone else's subsidized housing without being added to the lease is never intervening housing.
  - But landlord-approved tenancies or subtenancies are intervening housing.
  - Best to have paid rent for at least one month (better if longer).

# Bars to Shelter: Previously Lived in EA

*760 CMR 67.06(1)(d)1-4, HSN 2013-03 and 2013-03a*

**Families that appear eligible can still be barred from EA shelter or HomeBASE due to previous receipt of EA benefits.**

## 12-Month Rule for EA

- If the family received EA within the last 12 months they are ineligible for shelter
  - But a family may still receive shelter if any of the following exceptions apply:
    - Left EA shelter with HomeBASE and were not terminated for cause from HomeBASE.
    - Exited shelter with a Temporary Emergency Shelter Interruption (TESI) that has not expired
    - Only benefit was rapid track shelter after arriving in the Commonwealth.
    - Left for safe permanent housing, but later found out the housing was never safe or permanent
- This rule does not apply if the family reaches their 6 month length of stay, and exits on time - these families can re-apply right away

EOHLC is currently barring families for a year if they successfully completed HomeBASE. If families are barred from shelter for 12 months due to running out of HomeBASE or after their HomeBASE ends, contact legal services.

# Bars to Shelter: CORI Results

*760 CMR 67.02(14-15); CORI Policy 4/11/25*

## Overview.

Prior to January 2025, there was no criminal records bar to EA shelter. As of March 26, 2025, new regulations at 760 CMR 67.02(14)-(15) now permit EOHLC to bar or terminate families based on certain criminal records. This means that **families that appear eligible can still be barred from EA shelter or HomeBASE due to a criminal record and/or pending charges.**

- Retroactive application of these regulations and ADA application currently being litigated.
- As of March 26, 2025, families otherwise eligible for EA shelter will be barred if they:
  - Fail to sign a CORI record search authorization form;
  - Fail to disclose all criminal convictions not sealed and all pending charges;
  - Have certain crimes or pending charges on their CORI.
- Families currently in EA shelter will be terminated from EA shelter if they:
  - Have certain crimes or pending charges on their record;
  - Get charged with a new crime that is a bar to EA shelter.
- EOHLC not allowed to ask about or use sealed records or juvenile records to bar people.

# Bars to Shelter: CORI Results (cont.)

*760 CMR 67.02(14-15); CORI Policy 4/11/25*

## **Records that result in an absolute Bar from EA or HomeBASE:**

- Any individual 18 or older is ineligible if convicted of or has a pending charge for:
  - First or second degree murder or voluntary manslaughter;
  - Felonies involving child porn, sex offences, human trafficking, failure to register as a sex offender, rape, or assault;
  - Arson or kidnapping;
  - Felonies or misdemeanors involving firearms within previous 6 years;
  - Felony drug trafficking within the previous 3 years.
- No opportunity to show mitigating factors or lack of risk.
- For most of these offences no limit on look back period.
- Entire family will be denied unless adult with CORI result leaves family.
- For single-parent families where single parent has the CORI record, entire family will be denied.

# Bars to Shelter: CORI Results (cont.)

*760 CMR 67.02(14-15); CORI Policy 4/11/25*

## **Records that can result in a bar to EA or HomeBASE, if the individual is unable to show mitigating evidence:**

- Any individual 18 or older is ineligible if convicted of or has a pending charge for:
  - Involuntary manslaughter;
  - Felonies involving spousal or elder abuse;
  - Felony assault & battery with dangerous weapon causing serious bodily injury;
  - Felonies involving violence against children;
  - Armed or unarmed robbery or felony burglary or breaking and entering.
- Only eligible if can prove mitigating circumstances, otherwise entire family will be denied unless adult with CORI result leaves family.

## **Acceptable forms of mitigating circumstances evidence:**

- A written assessment that the individual “does not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to others in EA Family Shelter,” must be written by:
  - Mental health professional; criminal justice official; medical professional; DCF caseworker; licensed social worker; teacher; or employer.
- Or if the charge was continued without a finding (CWOF).

# Bars to Shelter: CORI Results (cont.)

*760 CMR 67.02(14-15); CORI Policy 4/11/25*

## **Procedure for submitting mitigating circumstances evidence:**

- Should be submitted within 5 business days of CORI result, extensions possible.
- Documentation or requests for extensions must be submitted by email to:
  - [EOHLC-EADocReview@mass.gov](mailto:EOHLC-EADocReview@mass.gov)
- EOHLC will review documentation and notify if no further action will be taken.

## **Convictions that do not result in a bar to EA Shelter:**

- Other criminal convictions within the previous 10 years or a pending charge which are other than those listed as bars to shelter, may be considered by EOHLC in placement or “oversight” decisions.

# CORI Authorization Form p. 1 & 2



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &  
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

Maura T. Healey, Governor ♦ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor ♦ Edward M. Augustus Jr., Secretary

**CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD INFORMATION  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

**What is Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)?**

Under the law, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) may receive CORI of families applying for the Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Program. M.G.L. c. 6, § 172. Each family member over the age of 18 must complete a separate CORI Acknowledgement Form.

A CORI is a person's criminal record. Criminal records are managed by the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS). By permitting us to access your CORI, you agree to allow EOHLC to see your Massachusetts criminal record history.

For permission, we need to collect some more information about you and review your identification. We accept identification issued by the government, such as the United States or any state government. 803 CMR 2.11(5). This may include:

- a valid state driver's license or identification card with a photograph issued by any federal, state, or territorial government of the United States;
- passport issued by the United States or other foreign governments;
- military identification issued by the United States government; or
- or permanent residency card issued by the United States government.

There may be other ways to show identity if you do not have one of these documents. Please contact EOHLC at (866) 584-0653 if you need help completing this form or have more questions.

**Authorization**

My family applied for the EA Family Shelter Program. I understand that EOHLC is requesting my CORI from DCJIS. I permit EOHLC to submit a CORI check to DCJIS. My permission is valid for one year from the date of my signature, or until my exit from the EA Family Shelter Program, whichever occurs first. I understand that I may withdraw my permission at any time. I may do this by giving written notice to EOHLC that I withdraw my permission.

By signing below, I give my consent to the CORI check for up to one year from the date of my signature, or until my exit from the EA Family Shelter Program, whichever occurs first. I also acknowledge that the information on Page 2 of this form is true and accurate.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please note, EOHLC cannot accept this CORI Acknowledgement Form unless it is either:**

- 1) **Signed in the presence of an EOHLC employee or person authorized by EOHLC who has verified the applicant's identity through acceptable identification; OR**
- 2) **Signed in the presence of a notary public. A notary public is some who has the authority to witness signature on different types of documents. You may find a notary public through this website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-notary-public>. The notary public must have verified identity and then mailed or delivered it to an EOHLC Field Office.**

**YOUR INFORMATION**

(An asterisk (\*) means the field is a required)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ \*First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_ Suffix \_\_\_\_\_ \*Last

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (or other name(s) by which you have been known) \_\_\_\_\_ \*Maiden

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Head of Household on your EA Family Shelter Program Application (if different than your own)

\_\_\_\_\_  
EA Family Shelter Program Case Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Place of Birth

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ ft. \_\_\_\_\_ in. Eye Color: \_\_\_\_\_

**Current and Former Addresses:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Number & Name \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Number & Name \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# CORI Authorization Form p. 3

**IDENTITY VERIFICATION SECTION**  
**TO BE COMPLETED BY EOHLC EMPLOYEE OR PERSONS AUTHORIZED BY EOHLC**

If this form is submitted by hand at an EOHLC Field Office or by persons authorized by EOHLC, Section A must be completed. Otherwise, Section B must be completed.

**SECTION A: VERIFICATION BY**  
**EOHLC EMPLOYEE OR PERSONS AUTHORIZED BY EOHLC**

I hereby certify that I verified the identity of the above-referenced subject by reviewing the following form(s) of government-issued identification:

- ☐ Passport ☐ State-issued driver's license ☐ Military identification ☐ State-issued identification card  
☐ Permanent Residency Card issued by the United States government

VERIFIED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Verifying EOHLC Employee or Designee (Please Print) Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Verifying EOHLC Employee or Designee Date

*If a subject does not have an acceptable government-issued identification, his or her identity shall be verified by other forms of documentation as determined by DCJIS. 803 CMR 2.09(2).*

**SECTION B: VERIFICATION BY NOTARY PUBLIC**

On this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, before me, the undersigned notary public, personally appeared \_\_\_\_\_ (name of document signer), and proved to me through satisfactory evidence of identification, which was the following:

- ☐ Passport ☐ State-issued driver's license ☐ Military identification ☐ State-issued identification card  
☐ Permanent Residency Card issued by the United States government

to be the person whose name is signed on the preceding or attached document, and acknowledged to me that (he) (she) signed it voluntarily for its stated purpose.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public Date Notary Commission Expires On

*If a subject does not have an acceptable government-issued identification, his or her identity shall be verified by other forms of documentation as determined by DCJIS. 803 CMR 2.09(2).*



# Sample Adverse CORI Notice



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &  
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Maura T. Healey, Governor ♦ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor ♦ Edward M. Augustus Jr., Secretary

**Notice Concerning Your Criminal Offender Record Information**

Dear

You are receiving this notice as the head of household for a family in the Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Program. The Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) is the state agency that maintains Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) (this is your criminal record in Massachusetts). After receiving the CORI Acknowledgement Form you signed, we received and reviewed your CORI result from the DCJIS. After review, we have determined that you have a criminal conviction or pending criminal charge on your CORI that makes you ineligible for shelter. 760 CMR 67.02(12)-(16). Your CORI shows you have been convicted or charged with the following crime(s) or their equivalent(s):

First or Second Degree Murder  
Voluntary Manslaughter  
Felony involving child pornography, sex offenses, human trafficking, or failure to register by a sex offender  
Felony involving rape or sexual assault  
Arson  
Kidnapping  
Felony or misdemeanor involving firearms within the previous six years  
Felony drug trafficking within the previous three years

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), which oversees the EA Family Shelter Program, is **terminating you from the EA Family Shelter Program effective**

If you do not agree with anything in your CORI or believe it is not accurate, **you must contact the DCJIS** or the court where the conviction occurred. EOHLC cannot help you correct your CORI or discuss the accuracy of your CORI.

The following documents are attached to this letter:

1. A copy of the *EOHLC Criminal Offender Record Information Policy for the Emergency Assistance Family Shelter Program*;
2. A copy of your CORI record; and
3. Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record from the DCJIS.

If you have any questions or need help understanding this document, please contact your EA Family Shelter Program provider.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blair Brown", followed by a horizontal line.

Blair Brown  
Assistant Undersecretary, Division of Housing Stabilization

# Applying for EA Shelter


- Online at <https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov>
  - Username will be your email address
  - Same username and password if you previously applied for RAFT
  - Families will need an email address to apply online
- Families can call the EOHLC intake line: **866-584-0653**
- Families also can apply in person at one of 10 local offices.
  - Office locations for in-person EA intake: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-emergency-family-shelter-ea>
  - Note that some offices are open each weekday while other offices have more limited schedules.
  - EOHLC should take applications in person, but you may have to be forceful that they help you or your client apply because they will encourage you to do it online.

# EA Shelter Online Application

[HOME \(/S/\)](#) [PROGRAM OVERVIEW \(HTTPS://WWW.MASS.GOV/INFO-DETAILS/MASSACHUSETTS-HOUSING-ASSISTANCE-PROGRAM-OVERVIEW\)](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-housing-assistance-program-overview)

Guest Language  
Powered by Google Translate (https://translate.google.com)

An official website of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
[Here's how you know](#)



**CASE STATUS(/S/CASESEARCH/)**

**UPLOAD DOCS(/S/ANONYMOUSUPLOAD/)**

**APPLY NOW(/S/LOGIN/)**

**LANDLORD PORTAL(/S/LOGIN/)**

**Your Emergency Housing Portal for  
RAFT, EA Family Shelter, and  
HomeBASE**

**Start or Continue an Application**

Tenants, homeowners, landlords, advocates, and Emergency Assistance applicants or providers can create an account or log in here.

**GET STARTED (/S/LOGIN/)**

**Case Status or Upload Docs**

Applicants can see their case status or upload additional documents here.

**CASE STATUS (/S/CASESEARCH/)**


**DOC UPLOAD (/S/ANONYMOUSUPLOAD/)**

**Guest Landlord Information**

Landlords can learn about and apply as a guest landlord here.

**GET STARTED (/S/ANONYMOUSGUESTHOME/)**

An official website of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
[Here's how you know](#)

 | [Apply Housing Help MA \(/\)](#)

## Login

\* indicates required field

\*Username


\*Password

☐ I'm not a robot reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

**LOG IN**

[Forgot your password?](https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov/s/login/ForgotPassw)  
(https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov/s/login/ForgotPassw)

[Register as new user](https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov/s/user-registration)  
(https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov/s/user-registration)



Welcome to the  
Massachusetts Housing  
Help Hub.

# EA Shelter Online Application (cont.)

Massachusetts Executive Office  
of Housing and Livable Communities  
DIVISION OF HOUSING STABILIZATION

## Applicant's Statement for EA Emergency Family Shelter ENGLISH



### Massachusetts EA Emergency Family Shelter

This application is available in English  
Esta solicitud está disponible en español.  
Applikasyon sa a disponib an kreyòl ayisyen

Este formulário está disponível em  
português  
Es kandidatura sta disponivel na kriolu di  
Kabu Verdi.

This application is the first step to access EA Family Shelter and other benefits. Only eligible families that have no safe place to stay can get these benefits. We will ask you questions about the people you will bring with you to shelter. We call them your "family members" in this application.

This application will take 20-30 minutes.

The application will ask you for:

- Details about your housing over the last 90 days.
- The names, dates of birth, and social security numbers, if any, of everyone who you are applying for. You don't have to include a social security number if they don't have one.
- Information about your family's needs
- Your family's income
- Your family's assets

You will also have to give us documents to some of the things you tell us about your family. The application will be processed faster if you include all these documents:

- Proof of Identity for the Adults in the Family
- Proof of Immigration Status (if needed)
- Proof of Family Relationship
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Income and Assets
- Proof of Reason for Homelessness

We may also request other documents. **Please note that completing this application does not mean you are approved for shelter.**

Today's Date (Month/Day/Year)

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Massachusetts Executive Office  
of Housing and Livable Communities  
DIVISION OF HOUSING STABILIZATION

## Applicant's Statement for EA Emergency Family Shelter



### Help with your Application



**This is an important document. Before you start, please know we are here to make sure you can fully understand and complete it.**

Is there a person helping you with this application? This could be a family friend or an advocate. We can contact this person.

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, please give us the name, email address, phone number, and your relation to this person (family member, advocate, or friend)

--

Do you need help from us with filling out this application?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you need help to gather and give us documents for your application?

☐ Yes ☐ No

### Basic Questions

Not counting yourself, how many people are you applying for?

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How many are under 21 years old?

--	--

Are you or a family member pregnant?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you applying for shelter so that DCF can return your children to you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you or a family member live in Massachusetts?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, did you come to this state only to get shelter?

☐ Yes ☐ No

By law, shelter stays are limited in time. If you are found eligible for shelter benefits, do you plan to stay in this state when you leave shelter?

- ☐ My household plans to stay in MA  
☐ My household does not plan to stay in MA

(You will be asked for family member information later in this application.)

# Applying for EA Shelter (cont.)

- In order to be placed into EA shelter, the families must provide all required verifications, including:
  - Photo IDs for adults, birth certificates for all children, verification of pregnancy, proof of MA residency, completed CORI authorization form and results of CORI search
  - Also proof of: eligible immigration status, income, assets, reason for homelessness (DV documentation, eviction paperwork, and/or letters from places family has stayed)
- Presumptive placement (placement into shelter prior to submission of all verifications) no longer exists as a right.
  - Lack of presumptive placement means many eligible families will experience delays in entering shelter while they find documents or wait for CORI results.
- Families should not refuse placement, even if far away - they can be terminated from shelter and barred for 12 months
- Families can bring two bags of belongings per person

# Applying for EA Shelter (cont.)

- After an online application is submitted, families should receive an email with an ID number for the application.
  - If there are problems, advocates can email the regional managers with the family's signed release form and the ID number to explain why you believe they are eligible.
  - Documents can be uploaded at Housing Help Hub, they can also be emailed.
- If there is a disability-related placement need, try to obtain medical documents before they apply.
- Families have only 30 days from their date of application to provide EOHLC with all requested verifications.
  - Many families are being denied shelter because their application "timed out."
  - EOHLC does not offer a right to appeal applications denied because they timed out.

# Presumptive Placement Overview

- Families that appear eligible for EA shelter and have no safe to stay were previously give **presumptive placement**, or access shelter and time to provide verifications. This right was limited by a supplemental budget passed in February 2025, and subsequent changes to regulations made in April 2025.
- Regulation 760 CMR 67.06(1)(c) now permits presumptive placement for families with Priority 1 status, plus
  - Families with “[o]ther exigent circumstances warranting a discretionary waiver under guidance as may be issued by the Department”
  - Families newly arrived to Massachusetts for the first time in the previous 90 days
- Presumptive placements are at the Lowell Clinical Safety Risk Assessment site.
- Families must still pass a CORI check before being presumptively placed.

# Advocacy Tips

- Who should I email if someone is having trouble applying?
  - Field Operations Deputy Directors  
Ezequiel Lopes: [Ezequiel.Lopes@mass.gov](mailto:Ezequiel.Lopes@mass.gov)  
Bonnie Caldwell: [Bonnie.Caldwell@mass.gov](mailto:Bonnie.Caldwell@mass.gov)
  - Constituent Services Ombudsperson  
Darnelle Joseph-Lacoste: [Darnelle.Joseph@mass.gov](mailto:Darnelle.Joseph@mass.gov)
- For school attendance questions, contact the school's McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison
  - Regional and Local Listings:  
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/mv/>



# Advocacy Tips (cont.)

- **EOHLC can waive some barriers to shelter “for a good reason.” 760 CMR 67.11**
  - Waiver request must be made in writing to the Director of the Division of Housing Stabilization.
  - EOHLC takes the position that having a child under 21 in the household are fundamental program requirements and cannot be waived.
  - EOHLC has sometimes asserted that the income limit is not waivable - it is worth trying, particularly with disability income or income that is very close to the income limit.

# Advocacy Tips (cont.)

- EOHLC is no longer required to place families within 20 miles of the family's Home Community.
  - They are supposed to make “best efforts” to place families within 20 miles their home community.
  - If medical need, job, or school affect placement, email the homeless coordinator or upload those documents to Housing Help Hub.
    - Online application asks what schools kids go to.
    - Online application also gives families the opportunity to ask for a reasonable accommodation and upload documents, including for a placement near medical providers.
- If you cannot access your job or school, can try reaching out to [eohlcplacementteam@mass.gov](mailto:eohlcplacementteam@mass.gov).

# Shelter Responsibilities

*760 CMR 67.06(4)(b)2.h*

- Adult family members are expected to do 30 hours per week of self-sufficiency activities.
- This includes participating in:
  - Jobs, education and training programs, housing search, substance use disorder programs
- Activities can be reduced for adults who have a disability or a good cause reason for not being able to meet the 30-hour requirement.
- Housing search counts for the work requirement under TAFDC

Families must “comply with case management and rehousing efforts” to be re-evaluated for every 60 days. Families can be terminated for noncompliance.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ea-guidance-on-nine-month-length-of-stay/download>

# Test Your Knowledge: Case Study

A father and his son call you looking for help with EA shelter. They entered the U.S. in 2021, and dad has applied for asylum. They have been renting a small one-bedroom apartment, but the building was sold last year and the new owner wants to renovate and raise the rent. They went through the no fault eviction process and now have an agreement that says they will leave on Saturday.

Dad had been earning \$2,275/month at Dunkin' Donuts, but his store recently announced they are closing and this is his last week of work. **Is this family eligible for EA? What else would you ask? What would you advise?**

- **Does the advice change if he only has a notice to quit?**

# **BREAK**

Please put your questions in the chat and we will answer them after the break.

# Shelter Tracks and Placements

## Bridge Shelter Track

- Traditional EA shelter:
  - Congregate
  - Co-share
  - Scattered site
- 6 month time limit

## Rapid Shelter Track

- Placement in a Temporary Respite Center (TRC)
- Locations only in Cambridge, Lowell, Fitchburg, and Leominster
- 30 business day time limit

## Clinical and Safety Risk (CSR) Assessment Site

- Located only in Lowell
- All presumptive placements
- All families undergoing clinical safety risk assessment

# Rapid Shelter Track

In Cambridge, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Lowell.

- Originally overflow for EA-eligible families waiting for shelter placement.
  - Lowell site has private rooms with own bathroom, the others are not private.
- Serve food, but residents have no access to kitchens.

Expected to engage in housing search or self-sufficiency activities.

- Families can be asked to leave “immediately” for breaking the law on-site, threatening health and safety, sexual harassment, violent behavior, child abuse or neglect, or for bringing weapons on site.

Thirty business day length of stay limit.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/what-is-the-rapid-shelter-track-emergency-assistance-ea-family-shelter>

# Bridge Shelter Track

Traditional shelter placement in congregate, co-share, or scattered site unit

Required to participate in Re-Housing activities while in shelter.

Six-month length of stay limit.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/what-is-the-bridge-shelter-track-emergency-assistance-e-a-family-shelter>



# Placement Process Overview

After a family applies and is found to be eligible for EA, EOHLC will do a **Clinical and Safety Risk Screening** to establish **priority** level. Priority level identifies the order for the contact list and track for shelter placement.

Meets Priority 1, 2, or 3

Bridge Shelter Track placement  
or  
Bridge Shelter Track contact list  
or  
**Clinical and Safety Risk  
Assessment site** while waiting for  
shelter placement (P1)  
  
Can use HomeBASE diversion

Meets Priority 4

Rapid Shelter Track placement  
or  
Rapid Shelter Track contact list  
  
Can use HomeBASE diversion

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/whats-next-after-becoming-ea-eligible-the-contact-list-and-more#what-determines-the-order-of-the-contact-list?>

# Clinical and Safety Risk Assessment

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ea-guidance-on-contact-list-and-prioritization-procedures/download>

Once found eligible for EA, families fill out a screening tool.

- If self-screening tool indicates there is a health or risk concern, they get a CSR assessment.

In-person CSR assessments are only done in Lowell.

- Families can be placed at a CSR site up to 48 hours prior to an assessment if there is delay.
- Families can do a virtual CSR assessment with a “Rapid Response Team of nurses” over the phone.
- Families can fill out a release and ask their medical provider to write a summary of health risks.

**Families found eligible for Priority 1-3 and those eligible for presumptive placement can be placed immediately at CSR site in Lowell.**

# Contact List - Priority 1

Meeting any of these will qualify a family as Priority 1.

- Families DTA decided are at imminent risk of harm due to DV;
- Family member aged 0-3 months;
- Family member with high-risk pregnancy verified by DPH;
- Family member with an intellectual or developmental disability verified by DPH;
- Family member who receives SSDI or SSI;
- Family member with a documented disability verified by DTA;
- Families rendered homeless by fire, flood or other disasters, as verified by the Red Cross, MEMA, or fire or police department;
- Family member who is a veteran (and not receiving veterans services).

# Contact List - Priority 2

Meeting any of these will qualify a family as Priority 2.

- Families that DCF has determined to be at the highest risk of harm if they are unhoused or remain in their current housing situation as part of the Health and Safety Assessment;
- Families referred by DCF for shelter for reunification;
- Family member aged 3-9 months;
- Family member with primary caregiver aged 70+;
- Family member that meets one or more of the following:
  - 3rd trimester pregnancy
  - Immunocompromised conditions
  - 3 or more chronic conditions
  - Medication requiring refrigeration
  - Medical device

# Contact List - Priority 3

Meeting any of these will qualify a family as Priority 3.

- Families evicted from their most recent housing due to:
  - Foreclosure; Condemnation; Documented conduct by a guest or former household member who is not part of the household seeking emergency shelter; or “other circumstances through no fault of the family.”
- Nonpayment of rent from most recent housing caused by:
  - A documented medical condition or disability; or
  - Documented loss of income w/in the last 12 months due to someone leaving the household or a no fault loss of income source.
- Families with a veteran household member not otherwise covered by Priority 1.
- Families exiting a DCF Young Parent Living Program based on age limits.

# Contact List - Priority 4

Priority 4 means a family has none of the conditions or situations that would make them eligible for Priorities 1, 2, or 3.

- Priority 4 families have proven that they are eligible for shelter and have nowhere else to go.

Priority 4 families are offered Rapid Shelter Track, which is limited to 30 business days.

# Contact List

## EOHLC has issued Guidance on Contact List and Prioritization Procedures:

- Formerly referred to as the wait list, eligible families will be placed on the Contact List when EOHLC determines they have reached capacity.
- The first guidance was issued October 31, 2023.
  - Guidance has been updated since then, EOHLC posts each most recent guidance at:
    - <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ea-guidance-on-contact-list-and-prioritization-procedures/download>
- Prioritization is now used to determine placement in Bridge Track or Rapid Track.

*As of September 2025, it is unclear how the Contact List is being used, given the relatively low number of families in shelter.*

# Placement from the Contact List

A family's position on contact list is determined by priority and date of presumptive or full eligibility.

- Families will be contacted by email, phone call and text, using information EOHLC has on file from the application.
  - If this information changes, reach out to your homeless coordinator to update your information.
- Families must contact EOHLC by noon the next day.
  - If family does not respond after three attempts, families can be removed from the list.
  - If a family refuses placement once they can be terminated.



# Sample Placement Notice



Your EA Family Shelter Reservation for Application #:

Dear

You and your household members have been approved for EA Family Shelter benefits. Based on information and documentation you provided to us, we have placed you on the EA Bridge Shelter Track. The temporary EA Family Shelter for you and your family is:

Meryls Safe Haven, Inc.-1 Schussler Road (Name of Shelter)

1 Schussler Road Worcester MA 01609 US (Address of Shelter)

(Telephone Number of Shelter)

(Unit Number/Room Number)

**You must arrive at the shelter before 5:00 PM on 2/18/2025.**

**If you do not accept this placement or do not arrive at the shelter on the date shown above, your EA Family Shelter benefits may be terminated.**

**If you have trouble reading or understanding this notice, please feel free to call us at 1 (866) 584-0653. We can help explain it to you. If you would like to see information or documentation supporting the decision, please contact your Homeless Coordinator, listed below.**

# **New 6-Month “Length of Stay (LOS)” Time Limit to EA Shelter**

# 6-Month LOS Time Limit

- In February 2025, the Legislature shortened the time limit to 6 months for families' length of stay (LOS) in EA shelter.
  - Families placed after April 11, 2025, receive a 180-day notice when they are first placed in shelter.
    - Families placed prior to April 11 will receive a 180-day notice at some point.
  - 2 types of 30 day Waivers to the LOS Limit
    - Hardship Waiver
    - Lease Bridge Waiver
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ea-guidance-on-six-month-length-of-stay/download>

# 30-Day Hardship Waiver

- 30-day Hardship Waiver of the length of stay limit
- Families must show one of the following:
  - Family member under 6 by family's LOS Limit exit date;
  - Veteran family member not enrolled in veterans services;
  - Family member with a documented high-risk pregnancy;
  - Family member with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability (IDD), is a recipient of disability benefits (SSI/SSDI), or has a disability verified by DTA;
  - Documented risk of imminent harm due to domestic violence concerns.
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/los-hardship-application-eng-final/download>

# 30-Day Hardship Waiver

## How to Apply for the Hardship Waiver:

- Request is supposed to be made 30-60 days prior to exit date; families should receive an email.
  - Can ask later, but need to show good cause.
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/los-hardship-application-eng-final/download>
- Upload request to <https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov/s/hardshipcasesearch>
  - Requires an ETO number, but that number is not on the email they send families.
  - Shelter or field office should have ETO number.

# 30-Day Lease Bridge

Extension of LOS when a family in shelter has imminent housing.

To qualify, family must provide documentation of imminent placement in housing and must provide one of the following:

- A lease signed by tenant and landlord with a lease start date within 30 days, or;
- For a family moving into an apartment funded by a project-based voucher or state or federal public housing, documentation from the property manager/owner that shows family is approved to move in within 30 days.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ea-guidance-on-six-month-length-of-stay/download>

# Length of Stay and 12-Month Rule

Families that leave on or before their length of stay limit can reapply immediately.

- Can start online applications prior to exit.
- Still subject to eligibility rules and priorities, two track system.
  - Income levels may have gone up in shelter.
  - Assets saved pursuant to rehousing plans do not count for the asset limit.
    - 760 CMR 67.02(6)(b)
    - Get proof of rehousing plan savings prior to exit

# **Length of Stay and 12-Month Rule (cont.)**

Families that overstay the length of stay will be barred from shelter by the 12-month rule.

- Shelters must use court process, cannot just lock them out.
- We have seen shelters successfully using requests for emergency orders to get the families out as licensees.



# Reconsideration of the LOS Limit

- Under the new 6-month LOS time limit, families can request reconsideration:
  - If they are denied for a Lease Bridge
  - If they are denied for a Hardship Waiver
- Reconsideration for the Lease Bridge will be granted if the request provides additional information and supporting documents showing:
  - the family met at least one of the criteria at the time of their original application OR
  - Family's circumstances changed and they now meet the criteria..
- Requests for Hardship Waiver reconsideration will be considered if they are received within 7 days of the family's Hardship Waiver denial.
  - Must show either family met one of the criteria at the time of their original request OR
  - Family's circumstances changed and they now meet the criteria.
- Decisions for requests for reconsideration will be sent by email to the family and also to the shelter.
  - According to EOHLC guidance updated April 11, 2025, should also receive a physical notice at their shelter address.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ea-guidance-on-six-month-length-of-stay-0/download>

Questions?

**Lunch break**

# **Noncompliances, Terminations, and Appeals**

# Noncompliance

760 CMR 67.06(5)

A family member can be deemed non compliant if they:

- Engaged in (non-criminal) conduct that threatens the safety of EA residents, visitors, or staff.
- Failed to cooperate in rehousing efforts.
  - Includes failure to follow the rehousing plan and also failure to meet with housing stabilization worker.
- Violated a shelter program rule.
  - Some rules violations should not be the basis of a noncompliance if the violation is *de minimis* or excused by good cause.
  - Important to read the full rules, not just the summary.
- Failed to attend a scheduled family interview without good cause
  - examples: death in the family; personal injury or illness; sudden and serious emergency

# Noncompliance (cont.)

*760 CMR 67.06(5)(e), 760 CMR 67.09(2)(a)2.a.*

- EOHLC will consider a noncompliance for not following rules or not participating in activities to be rescinded if the family has no further violations in the following six months.
  - Still in the regulation but probably moot due to current durational limit.
- If a family faces termination based on a third noncompliance, they can contest the prior noncompliances in their termination hearing if they didn't appeal them before.

# Uniform Shelter Program Rules - USR

- The Bridge Track Uniform Shelter Program Rules apply to families in Bridge Shelter Track shelters.
- Copies of USR are to be kept in shelter management offices.
  - USRs are available in English, Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish.
- Copy of USPR given to families when they are approved for EA. Families are asked to sign that they have read and agreed to the rules.
  - This now happens at the point of application if applying online. There is a link to the USPRs.
  - Families should be given the rules in their primary language if it is one of the languages above.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/bridge-shelter-track-rules-emergency-assistance-ea-family-shelter>

Rules for Rapid Track shelter:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rapid-shelter-track-rules-emergency-assistance-ea-family-shelter>

# USR: Access to Units

- Shelter staff may check placements for cleanliness and health or safety hazards:
  - With at least 24-hours' written notice, *or*
  - According to a regular inspection schedule.
- Immediate access allowed by shelter staff for:
  - Emergencies (health and facility-related)
  - Inspections by code-enforcement agencies
  - When shelter staff have (1) a reasonable, articulable – or specific – suspicion of: criminal behavior; smoking, unauthorized cooking, or unauthorized guests; or behavior that constitutes a disturbance of quiet enjoyment or a threat to health and safety; and (2) the situation cannot be remedied by knocking at the door and asking to talk to those inside.
- Shelter staff are not allowed to search personal belongings.
  - Except with reasonable, articulable suspicion of the presence of criminal activity, prohibited substances, or the use of prohibited heating or cooking equipment.
  - Without a written reason for searching belongings, any evidence found cannot be introduced in termination hearings.

# Request for Noncompliance and Family Response

- Families may respond to a Request for Noncompliance or Termination from the shelter before it goes to EOHLC.
  - Families have 3 business days to respond.
  - If you are working with a family who is responding, attach copies of relevant documentation before submitting to EOHLC.
  - The Request and Response will then be sent to EOHLC, which will decide whether or not to issue the Noncompliance or Termination.
  - Email response and/or for more information:  
[ehlcnoncompliance@mass.gov](mailto:ehlcnoncompliance@mass.gov)
- THIS IS NOT THE APPEAL. If EOHLC issues a Noncompliance or Termination, the family also will have to submit an appeal.



# Sample Non Compliance Determination Request



*Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development  
Division of Housing Stabilization*

## **Noncompliance/Termination Determination Request/ Notice of Infraction of Uniform Shelter Rules**

This document is to be completed in regard to an Emergency Assistance (EA) participant placed in a shelter by the shelter, housing assistance provider, or homeless coordinator describing the behavior that occurred which has resulted in the noncompliance/termination determination request and what steps have been taken by the submitter. The person submitting documentation for a noncompliance/termination determination should include this document along with copies of any third-party documentation generated by the incident, such as police reports, landlord/ management offers of housing, drug results, etc.

Please email all documents to Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) Division of Housing Stabilization (DHS) Noncompliance Unit, [DHCDNonComplianceCoordinator@state.ma.us](mailto:DHCDNonComplianceCoordinator@state.ma.us), or fax all documents to the Noncompliance Unit at 617-573-1577.

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Submitted by: (Name of homeless coordinator, individual staff member of shelter or housing assistance provider)

200 - 100

# Sample Notice of Noncompliance

02-28-18 13:52 FROM-



Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development  
Division of Housing Stabilization

1-242 P0014/0019 F-759

## Notice of Noncompliance

Chelsea-TAO-February 21, 2018

Field Office

80 Everett Avenue Chelsea, MA 02150

Address

Name [REDACTED] SSN [REDACTED]

Address, City/Town & ZIP [REDACTED]

FEB 23 2018

This Warning Notice explains how you have not met your responsibilities while in a temporary emergency shelter. You have not met the temporary emergency shelter requirements by:

- ☐ a. not cooperating in developing one or more parts of the re-housing plan. 760 CMR 67.06(5)(a)3.
- ☐ b. not participating in the activities in one or more parts of the re-housing plan without good cause. 760 CMR 67.06(5)(a)3.
- ☒ c. violating one or more reasonable rules adopted by the Department for use in shelters, including hotels. 760 CMR 67.06(5)(a)4.
- ☐ d. being a threat to the health and/or safety of yourself, other shelter guests and/or the staff of the temporary emergency shelter. 760 CMR 67.06(5)(a)5.

As a result of the noncompliance reason that is checked-off above, on or after \_\_\_\_\_, you will be transferred to \_\_\_\_\_ where you will be subject to all the rules of this shelter.

☒ EA Family Member(s) involved in the conduct or omission above: [REDACTED]

Description of Incident(s)/Violation(s) and Date(s)

# Termination of EA Benefits

*760 CMR 67.06(6)*

- Engaged in criminal activity that threatened the safety of other residents, guests, or staff
  - Refused shelter placement, failed to appear at placement, or abandoned shelter without good cause
  - Refused an offer of safe, permanent housing without good cause
  - Feasible alternative housing became available
  - Lost categorical or financial eligibility (income rises to 200% of federal poverty guidelines for more than 4 months)
  - Found in non-compliance for a third time
- Your family has lived in EA shelter for longer than 6 months, your family has not been granted any extensions or hardship waivers, or those extensions have ended.
  - You have not cooperated with case management.

# Termination: Abandonment

*760 CMR 67.06(6)(a)5 and 106 CMR 701.380*

- Families can also be terminated from shelter if the whole family was absent without permission for at least two consecutive nights.
- Absences can be excused by EOHLC for good cause, including:
  - medical emergency
  - family crisis
  - transportation issues
  - emergency situation or “other compelling circumstance” that is beyond the control of the family.
- Families should stay in contact with the shelter the entire time they are out (in writing is best) and should bring written proof of the emergency.

# Temporary Emergency Shelter Interruption (TESI)

- If a family plans to be absent for more than four nights in a month, they should request a TESI.
- TESIs are available for the following reasons:
  - Death in the family
  - Other-area employment
  - Medical treatment for an EA family member or extended family member
  - Legal complications
  - Re-housing likely in 30 days
  - Loss of custody of eligible children.

TESI replacements are not in and of themselves a priority category for the contact list.

It is important families communicate regularly with the shelter and EOHLC in writing about their need to be replaced into shelter.

# Termination: CORI Results

*760 CMR 67.06(6)(a)1*

- Families can also be terminated from shelter if an adult over 18 is charged with certain offences while in shelter or, individual with the pending charge could leave the family.
- Same list of “serious crimes” as discussed previously are mandatory termination from EA shelter.
- Same list of other crimes as discussed previously allow individual to present “mitigating evidence” and lack of risk.
- Unclear how this would come up in practice, but termination on this basis is stated in the regulations.
- Family has right to appeal this basis of termination and receive aid-pending.

# Sample Notice of Termination



Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development  
Division of Housing Stabilization, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300, Boston, MA 02114

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## NOTICE OF TERMINATION FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (EA)

Date: [REDACTED]

Field Office: Central

Name: [REDACTED]

SSN (last four (4) digits): [REDACTED]

Address, City and Zip: Family failed to notify DHCD of a forwarding address contrary to EA requirements.

NFL 9-T mailed to last known mailing address: [REDACTED]

Contact Phone:

Your EA Temporary Emergency Shelter is **terminated** effective 7/6/2018 (10 days from the date of this notice) for the reasons checked below. Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Rejecting one offer of safe, permanent housing without good cause. 760 CMR 67.06(6)(a)2.
- ☒ **Failure to appear at placement or refusal of placement without good cause. 760 CMR 67.06(6)(a) 4.**
- ☐ Abandonment of a shelter placement without good cause. 760 CMR 67.06 (6)(a)5.
- ☐ Feasible alternative housing became available. 760 CMR 67.06(6)(a)6.
- ☐ Household is no longer categorically or financially eligible. 760 CMR 67.06 (6)(a)7.
- ☐ An adult member of the household committed fraud on the EA program. 760 CMR 67.06(6)(a)8.
- ☐ You failed to comply with your savings obligations during the six month extension period. 760 CMR 67.02(5)e.

# Appeals

*760 CMR 67.09*

- A Notice of Noncompliance or Termination must be appealed within 21 days.
- A Notice of Termination must be appealed within 10 days for the family to stay in shelter during the appeal process.
  - This is called “aid pending appeal.”
- Families can also appeal denials of shelter
- Send appeal to:
  - Email address: [EOHLCeahearings@mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCeahearings@mass.gov)
  - Fax number: 617-573-1515
- Appeal hearings currently are only held remotely. Families can request an in-person appeal hearing; denial may lead to an appealable issue in a 30A.



# Appeal Hearings: How to Prepare

- Families have a right to see EOHLC's evidence against them prior to the hearing.
  - Email [EOHLCeaHearings@mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCeaHearings@mass.gov) and ask to be connected to the current hearing specialists for the department.
  - Email the hearing specialist and ask them to send any evidence they plan to present and information about witnesses they plan to call.
  - Can request that the meeting be on Teams rather than over the phone.
- Closely read the Notice being appealed to find the regulation or rule cited.
  - EOHLC must prove the allegation in the notice.
  - Many of the rules and regulations contain “good cause” or *de minimis* exceptions.

# Appeal Hearings: What to Expect

- The Hearing Officer will begin by explaining what will happen and swearing in witnesses.
- EOHLC should provide interpreters for families with limited English proficiency.
- Hearing officers should tell appellants about the availability of an ADA accommodation if there is a disability involved.
- A “Department Representative” presents EOHLC’s case.
  - Department witnesses often were not present at alleged incident. Their testimony is admissible but may not be reliable.
- Family can ask questions and examine evidence.

\*Note: Hearsay is allowed, but families should object to EOHLC raising hearsay within hearsay.

# Appeal Hearings: What to Expect (cont.)

- After Department Representative presents case, family testifies and can present evidence.
  - Because hearings are remote, typically the parties email in evidence after the hearing takes place. This may be a due process violation.
- Hearing Officer may ask questions of witnesses, Department Representative, or family.
- Family can ask that the record be left open if they would like to submit more evidence.
- Decisions usually take time – between 30 and 90 days.
  - Under 23B, s. 30, denial decisions should be final 45 days from appeal.
- Adverse decisions can be appealed to the Superior Court through the 30A process.

# Advocacy Tips for Hearings

- Ask the Department Representative in advance about their evidence and who will be testifying.
  - If you have trouble finding who the representative will be, contact [EOHLCeahearings@mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCeahearings@mass.gov)
- If there is no dispute about whether an incident happened but the behavior was disability-related, submit an ADA request either before and/or during the hearing.
  - Should include medical documentation.
  - Can be emailed to [EOHLCeaADA@mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCeaADA@mass.gov)

# Advocacy Tips for Hearings (cont.)

- Read the regulation, the rule, and any relevant housing stabilization notices (HSNs).
  - It is not uncommon for EOHLC to “overreach” and behavior that should be a noncompliance is framed as a termination.
- If the family has limited English proficiency (LEP), check to make sure notices were provided in their language.
  - EOHLC must prove the family knew the rule they were violating.

**QUESTIONS?**

# **Access for Families with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

- Families with limited English proficiency are entitled to language access services at:
  - EOHLC Main Office
  - Field offices
  - Hearings Division
  - All shelters
- At intake, each family should be asked in which language they prefer to communicate.

# LEP: Oral Interpretation Services

## Oral Interpretation:

- Available for important EA communications and documents that have not been translated into the family's language.
- EOHLC provides free oral interpretation in its offices and by calling **(617) 573-1106 and pressing the number for language.**  
**(Spanish, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole & Haitian Creole)**
- Telephone interpretation service available in all shelters.
- Friends and family cannot be asked to interpret.
- EOHLC and shelter staff may interpret if they are fluent in the family's language.





# LEP: Written Translation

- Vital documents - including applications and Uniform Shelter Program Rules - have been translated into various languages.
  - Spanish
  - Haitian Creole
  - Portuguese
  - Cape Verdean Creole
  - Arabic
- Only the standardized portions of documents are translated – not narrative portions.
- Families have the right to have any untranslated portions of documents orally read to them in their primary language.

# LEP: EOHLC Language Access Coordinator and Complaint Procedure

- After the settlement, DHCD appointed a Language Access Coordinator and created a language access complaint procedure.
- Families may contact the Coordinator with language access issues or to file a formal complaint.
- For language assistance applying for EA:  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/free-language-assistance>
- Language access complaint form:  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/emergency-assistance-ea-family-shelter-resources-and-data>
- Language Assistance information:  
<https://www.mass.gov/lists/language-assistance?auHash=KCl312A-Nc7ydBNd7YA6xEPYbuujV4Mk8NVluXWav4U>

# Language Access and Changes in the Law

- On March 1, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14224, designating English as the official language of the United States.
- **Title VI is still law** - agencies receiving federal funds are still obligated to provide meaningful access to services.
- Whether or not there is a meaningful enforcement mechanism is an open question, because federal agencies are not really processing complaints.
- In Massachusetts, Governor Healey signed Executive Order 615, requiring state agencies to develop language access plan.

***If you have problems with language access, please contact Language Access Attorney Iris Coloma-Gaines at Mass. Law Reform Institute ([icoloma-gaines@mlri.org](mailto:icoloma-gaines@mlri.org))***

# **Introduction to HomeBASE**

# What Is HomeBASE?

*760 CMR 65.00*

- Families eligible for EA also generally are eligible for HomeBASE assistance, which provides up to \$30,000 over 24 months for housing costs to divert families from entering shelter or to help families exit shelter.
  - FY24, FY 25, and FY 26 budgets, there is also the possibility of receiving a third year of HomeBASE assistance of up to an additional \$15,000.
  - Beginning July 1, 2025, EOHLC paused all new applications and approvals for year 3 of HomeBASE.
- HomeBASE funds can be used for housing stabilization.
  - First month's rent, last month's rent, and/or security deposit
  - Furniture
  - Utility arrears
  - Ongoing help with rental payments in private housing
  - Incentive payments to landlords - These come out of the limited HomeBASE funding, but the FY26 HomeBASE administrative plan providers are encouraged to use Strategic Housing Initiative (SRI) funds.

# HomeBASE

- Families must receive approval for HomeBASE prior to moving into the HomeBASE unit or they will be considered to no longer have a housing crisis.
  - Will receive an email with the breakdown of HomeBASE payments.
- Each family using HomeBASE is matched with a Housing Stabilization worker.
  - Supposed to enter into a “Participation Agreement”
- **NOT considered a housing subsidy program.**
  - Families retain any existing homelessness priorities for state-funded subsidized housing programs while in HomeBASE.
    - See Public Housing Notice 2019-12  
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/2019-12-clarifications-of-the-regulatory-definition-of-homeless-applicant/download>
  - May not be true for federally funded programs, depends on the housing authority.

HomeBASE Administrative Plan: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy26-homebase-admin-plan-712025/download>

# How Does HomeBASE Work?

- As funding for “shelter diversion,” to help families pay for housing instead of entering shelter or
- To help a family exit shelter.
- If family is moving into subsidized housing, they can use HomeBASE for furniture and other “startup” costs, but not as an ongoing subsidy.
  - True even if the subsidy is “prorated” due to immigration status and therefore not really affordable.
- Families use HomeBASE to rent apartments from private landlords.
  - Can be a “host homeowner” - with an occupancy agreement can cover up to 50% of utilities and mortgage costs.
  - Host renters - with approval from landlord, can cover up to 50% of the rental cost.
  - Co-share - two EA families can use their HomeBASE to rent one unit together.
- The HomeBASE agency pays their share directly to the landlord each month.

# HomeBASE Diversion and Shelter Placement

Families found eligible for Emergency Assistance are offered HomeBASE diversion services.

- Families on the contact list are HomeBASE eligible, but are not assigned a HomeBASE diversion worker.
- Families who opt for HomeBASE diversion are **not placed on the contact list** and will not be offered shelter.
  - Families can ask to be placed on the contact list or offered shelter if their situation worsens. They should be given a contact list date of when they were found fully eligible.
  - Families have 120 days from the date of eligibility to use their HomeBASE benefits.



# Payment to Hold an Apartment

To secure a unit, a HomeBASE administering agency can make a payment to hold a unit.

- Families are encouraged to use Strategic Rehousing Initiative (SRI) funds instead of HomeBASE, but can be paid for with HomeBASE.
- Must have a pre-lease agreement that the landlord will enter into a written lease.
- If this family does not move in, landlord has a commitment to rent to another HomeBASE family.

# Benefit Distribution Plan

Details what the HomeBASE money will pay for, usually comes in email form.

- Appealable within 14 days of receipt.
- RAAs schedule a hearing within 15 days.

No income limit to HomeBASE, but calculated to a third of your income until it runs out.

- Increases of income to be reported within 10 days.
- Decreases can be reported for interim reallocation.

# Obligations of HomeBASE Participants

*760 CMR 65.03(6)*

- Families are required to enter into a Participation Agreement and a Stabilization plan.
  - Similar to required activities for families in EA shelter, but the requirements for savings and 30 hours per week of self-sufficiency work do not apply.
  - Families are required to address financial responsibility, job training, employment, and educational needs.

# What Happens When HomeBASE Ends?

- Under line item 7004-0108, HomeBASE funds can be provided for more than 24 months.
  - As of July 1, 2025, EOHLC has also said no families will be receiving a 3rd year of HomeBASE.

760 CMR 65.03(3)(a) says families cannot receive HomeBASE again less than 12 months following the date of their last HomeBASE payment.

- Important to watch out for this issue - EOHLC is now incorrectly applying the 12-month bar to EA shelter for families who completed a HomeBASE term
  - No automatic return to shelter if HomeBASE ends, **but** families also do not face a bar to reentering shelter unless they are terminated for cause. 760 CMR 67.06(1)(d)1.e.
- A nonpayment eviction after HomeBASE ends does not fall under the category of an “Excused Fault Eviction” for EA eligibility.
    - HomeBASE is not considered income for purposes of an excused fault eviction.
  - 12-Month Rule for HomeBASE
    - Only if family was terminated for cause.

**The 12-month rule can be waived pursuant to 760 CMR 67.11. Waiver requests go to the Director of the Division of Housing Stabilization. They can also go to the Director or Co-Directors of Field Operations.**

# What Happens If HomeBASE Money Runs Out?

“If the family is at risk of homelessness while still receiving HomeBASE stabilization services. . . .”

- Can use other types of homelessness prevention funding.
- Can reapply for EA “provided they meet the standard EA eligibility criteria and are not barred due to termination.”
  - This is complicated, likely requires an eviction, which also puts the family at risk of termination.
  - Important to show efforts to pay rent portion and to show communication with HomeBASE workers.

## What if the Landlord Does Not Renew the Lease?

If a landlord does not renew the lease for Year 2 or 3, the HomeBASE worker should help find a new unit.

- Remaining HomeBASE funds can be used at the new unit.
- If a new unit cannot be found “through no fault of the family” and the household reapplies for EA, “the lack of lease renewal and inability to secure housing may be considered grounds for homelessness risk.”

# “For Cause” HomeBASE Terminations

- Rejecting safe, permanent housing without good cause.
- “Substantially and materially” violating stabilization plan, lease, or participation agreement 2 or more times without good cause.
  - Includes failure to attend a meeting without good cause, but only if there was at least two days written advance notice of the meeting.
  - Includes nonpayment of rent or utilities.

# **“For Cause” HomeBASE Terminations (cont.)**

- One instance of:
  - engaging in drug or criminal activity
  - threatening health/safety of staff, landlord, co-share family
  - evicted for nonpayment or other cause without good cause
  - vacating a unit without proper procedure
  - commits fraud
  - destroys property
  - illegally sublets
  - allows unauthorized residents longer than 12 days or the lease allows
  - possesses firearms in the unit



# Categorical Ineligibility for HomeBASE

*760 CMR 65.05(1)(r); FY26 budget line item 7004-0108*

- Families become categorically ineligible if they:
  - No longer having a child under 21 in the household.
    - Birthdays, loss of custody, or removal of children by the Department of Children and Families may cause termination for categorical reasons.
  - EOHLC has said that CORI–related bars to EA shelter also apply to HomeBASE eligibility.
- The FY26 budget continues to allow families participating in HomeBASE to increase their income without becoming ineligible for HomeBASE.
  - This allows families to maximize their incomes without fear of the cliff effect.
  - Will need to be income eligible if re-entering shelter.

# Appealing a HomeBASE Termination

*760 CMR 65.07*

- A family that receives a Notice of Termination must make a written request for an appeal hearing to the administering agency within seven days after the notice has been given to applicant.
  - Any notice mailed is deemed received three days after mailing.
- Agency will then schedule a hearing within 15 days.

# Appeal Hearing Procedure

*760 CMR 65.07(4)*

- Hearing officers are appointed by the HomeBASE administering agency.
- Hearings are informal; relevant information can be put into evidence through testimony or written material.
- Hearings should be recorded, as required by EOHLC.
- Written decision issued within 14 days.
- That decision appealable to EOHLC within 7 days of receiving the appeal decision.

# **Break**

Please put any questions about  
HomeBASE in the chat.

# **Other Housing Resources**

# Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)

- Short-term rental and/or utility assistance to low-income families and individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness
  - RAFT currently is funded at \$250.4 million: \$207.5 million from the FY26 General Appropriations Act and \$42.9 million from an FY25 supplemental budget signed into law in August 2025.
- RAFT can be used for:
  - Moving costs, including 1<sup>st</sup> month's rent, last month's rent, and security deposit
  - Rent and utility arrears
  - Other needs that promote housing stability, such as transportation costs and vehicle repair
  - Mortgage arrears
- Since July 1, 2023, households now only can receive up to \$7,000 in a 12-month period (down from \$10,000/year) and households cannot use RAFT to pay for forward rent.
- Since August 1, 2022, households must provide a notice to quit (NTQ) if applying for back rent.
- Must show that RAFT will resolve the current housing crisis (but are not required to demonstrate future housing sustainability)

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-raft-emergency-help-for-housing-costs>

# Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP)

- Homelessness prevention program that operates collaboratively with the Housing Court Department, as a neutral party to the landlord and tenant.
- TPP works with individuals and families with disabilities, behavioral health disorders, and complex health needs, facing eviction because of behavior related to the disability or condition, by:
  - Assessing reason for the eviction
  - Identifying services that are needed
  - Developing treatment plan
  - Monitoring case
  - If necessary, facilitate referral to other agencies to prevent homelessness.
- TPP is administered by five regionally designated non-profit organizations, in consultation with the Housing Court Department.
- Referrals can be made at any time by anyone. Landlords and providers can make upstream referrals, prior to a Notice to Quit.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/tenancy-preservation-program>

# **Legislative and Systemic Advocacy Opportunities**



# Legislative Campaigns: State Budget

- The Legislature sets many of the expectations and parameters of the EA and HomeBASE programs through the state budget process.
  - EA line item: 7004-0101
  - HomeBASE line item: 7004-0108
- For state fiscal year 2026 (FY26, the current fiscal year), we worked to maintain key line item language, reverse restrictions, and make improvements to the programs. The Legislature included:
  - Language to ensure that families do not have to first stay in places not meant for human habitation before accessing EA
  - Language to generally provide up to \$30,000 in HomeBASE benefits to families over a 24-month period, plus additional flexibility so that families can access additional funds beyond \$30,000 and more time beyond 24 months (although EOHLC has paused Year 3 renewals for now)
  - Extensive data collection requirements for the programs
  - Read more about FY26 budget advocacy and outcomes here: <https://tinyurl.com/mchfy26>
- We will be kicking off the FY27 campaigns in late fall/early winter.

# Legislative Campaigns 2025–2026:

## EA Bills

- This session, we are working to push for passage of **An Act improving emergency housing assistance for children and families experiencing homelessness**: House Bill 216, filed by Representative Marjorie Decker, and Senate Bill 136, filed by Senator Adam Gomez.
- **What would these bills do?**
  - Allow families who appear to be imminently at risk of homelessness to gain admission into EA shelter
  - Prohibit the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities from turning families away due to lack of documentation
  - Mandate EOHLC to look in existing state benefits databases to obtain requested documentation instead of delaying applications by requiring families to provide such documentation directly
  - Prohibit EOHLC from setting a time limit on shelter benefits of fewer than 9 months
  - Require EOHLC to provide 90 days' notice to the Legislature, program participants, and the public before altering program benefits or eligibility that would not benefit families
  - Officially establish an independent ombudsperson unit located within EOHLC to mediate between EA and HomeBASE applicants/participants and EOHLC

# Legislative Campaigns 2025–2026: EA Bills (cont.)

- **Status of bills:** The bills were assigned to the [Joint Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities](#) on February 27, 2025. The Senate bill was heard by the committee on May 13, 2025, and then was reported out favorably by the committee and referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means on June 26, 2025. The committee still has not scheduled a hearing for the House version of the bill.
- **Read more about the bills:**
  - House bill text: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/H216>
  - Senate bill text: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/S136>
- Please contact Kelly if your organization is interested in becoming an organizational endorser of the bills and/or you would like to be updated when the House bill is scheduled for a hearing: [kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org)

# Legislative Campaigns 2025–2026:

## HomeBASE Bills

- We are pushing for passage of **An Act promoting housing stability for families by strengthening the HomeBASE program**: House Bill 1469, filed by Representative Christine Barber, and Senate Bill 1011, filed by Senator Liz Miranda.
- **What would these bills do?**
  - Put the HomeBASE program into state statute
  - Direct EOHLC to provide renewals of HomeBASE rental assistance in 12-month increments to families and children who otherwise would be facing a return to homelessness, continue to meet basic eligibility guidelines, and are in good standing in the program
  - Allow families to access HomeBASE upstream to maintain existing housing if they otherwise would be eligible for Emergency Assistance
  - Increase the maximum benefit levels to \$50,000 over the first 24 months of the program and up to \$25,000 in subsequent years for families needing additional time in the program

# Legislative Campaigns 2025–2026: HomeBASE Bills (cont.)

- **Status of the bills:** The bills were filed in January 2025 and assigned to the [Joint Committee on Housing](#) on February 27, 2025. The bills were heard by the committee on July 23, 2025, and still are awaiting action there.
- **Read more about the HomeBASE bills:**
  - Fact sheet: <https://mahomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/HomeBASE-bill-fact-sheet-9-19-23.pdf>
  - House Bill text: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/H1297>
  - Senate Bill text: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/S890>
  - Organizational endorsement form: <https://tinyurl.com/homebase2324>

# Legislative Campaigns 2025–2026:

## RAFT Bills

- We also are pushing for passage of **An Act providing upstream homelessness prevention assistance to families, youth, and adults**: House Bill 1488, filed by Representative Marjorie Decker, and Senate Bill 961, filed by Senator Brendan Crighton.
- **What would these bills do?**
  - Put the RAFT program into state statute
  - Ensure that benefits are available to households earlier in a housing or utility crisis
  - Streamline RAFT access
  - Improve cross-agency collaboration
  - Allow households to access the resources needed to clear arrearages without arbitrary caps on maximum assistance

# Legislative Campaigns 2025–2026: RAFT Bills (cont.)

- **Bill status:** The bills were filed in January 2025 and assigned to the [Joint Committee on Housing](#) on February 27, 2025. The bills were heard by the committee on July 23, 2025, and still are awaiting action there.
- **Read more about the bills:**
  - Fact sheet: [https://www.mahomeless.org/\\_files/ugd/6c63ec\\_dc45fd45cf1d4767b601c29acfd7eb71.pdf](https://www.mahomeless.org/_files/ugd/6c63ec_dc45fd45cf1d4767b601c29acfd7eb71.pdf)
  - House Bill text: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/H1488>
  - Senate Bill text: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/S961>
  - Organizational endorsement form: <https://tinyurl.com/raft2526>

# **Legislative Campaigns 2025–2026: Other Housing and Homelessness Priorities**

- Working with Homes for All Massachusetts, legal services agencies, and other partners, we support key legislative priorities related to housing and homelessness.
- Priority policies:
  - Rent stabilization
  - Tenant Opportunity to Purchase (TOPA)
  - Real estate transfer fee
  - Bill of rights for people experiencing homelessness/ban criminalization of homelessness
  - Access to counsel in evictions
  - Mandatory mediation before foreclosure
  - Food and cash assistance benefits for immigrants



# Rent Stabilization: Legislation and Ballot Campaign

*An Act enabling cities and towns to stabilize rents and protect tenants*  
S.1447 (Sen. Jehlen & Sen. Gomez) / H.2328 (Rep. Dave Rogers & Rep. Montañño)

- These bills would repeal the ban on rent control and enable municipalities to enact local ordinances to stabilize housing costs and prevent no-cause evictions

--- AND ---

Rent stabilization is heading to the 2026 ballot! Join the Keep Massachusetts Home campaign to get involved and help collect signatures.

Visit [www.keepmasshome.com](http://www.keepmasshome.com) and watch the page for updates!

# Legislative Campaigns

- Find out more by going to the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless website and joining our email lists.
  - Bill and budget priorities: <https://www.mahomeless.org/current-bill-and-budget-priorities>
  - MCH email list sign-up: <https://www.mahomeless.org/mailling-list>
  - Google Group to receive emails about upcoming EA actions, go to <https://groups.google.com/u/1/g/ea-actions> and click the "ask to join" box
- The Coalition holds monthly meetings on policy and practice issues, generally the final Friday of each month.
  - Next two meetings: This Friday, September 26th and Friday, October 31st, 10–11:30 a.m.
  - Meetings currently are held via Zoom.
  - For more details on the Housing and Benefits Committee meetings, see <https://mahomeless.org/advocacy-committee-meetings/> or email Julia at [julia.garvey@mahomeless.org](mailto:julia.garvey@mahomeless.org)

# Some Online Resources

## EOHLC Emergency Assistance and HomeBASE information

- Emergency Housing Assistance: Includes links to EA resources and information about the 6-month length of stay policy and shelter tracks: <https://www.mass.gov/emergency-housing-assistance>
- What's next after becoming EA eligible: information about the contact list, and priorities: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/whats-next-after-becoming-ea-eligible-the-contact-list-and-more>
- Emergency Housing Family Resources and Data: Includes statutes, regulations, policy notices, EA data, language assistance information, Shelter Rules and forms, and DCF Memorandum of Understanding: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/emergency-assistance-ea-family-shelter-resources-and-data>
- Find out if you are eligible for EA shelter: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-emergency-family-shelter>
- Apply for emergency shelter: [https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov/s/?language=en\\_US&LanguageCode=en\\_US](https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov/s/?language=en_US&LanguageCode=en_US)
- Housing Stabilization Notices: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/housing-stabilization-notices>
- HomeBASE information: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/homebase>

# Online Resources (cont.)

## Other housing assistance

- Information about RAFT, Residential Assistance for Families in Transition:  
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/residential-assistance-for-families-in-transition-raft-program>
- Town-by-town search for local Regional Administering Agencies (RAAs) and local Area Median Incomes (AMI):  
<https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/raa.aspx>
- MassLegalServices Training Materials page:  
<https://www.masslegalservices.org/content/assisting-families-experiencing-homelessness-emergency-assistance-shelter-and-benefit-s-bbt>

# Questions? Stay in Touch!

- Andrea M. Park: [apark@mlri.org](mailto:apark@mlri.org)
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- Liz Alfred: [ealfred@gbls.org](mailto:ealfred@gbls.org)
- Catherine (Katie) Ady-Bell: [cadybell@cwjustice.org](mailto:cadybell@cwjustice.org)
- Grace Filohoski: [gfilohoski@gbls.org](mailto:gfilohoski@gbls.org)
- Ben Levine: [blevine@mlri.org](mailto:blevine@mlri.org)

Thank you for joining us today!