

# *MCH Bill & Budget Priorities*

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# ***MCH's 2023-2024 Lead Bill Priorities Include:***

- Ease access to standard Massachusetts ID cards for people experiencing homelessness by eliminating the \$25 fee and allowing alternative ways to verify Massachusetts residency without requiring a permanent address
- Permanently establish and improve the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) homelessness prevention program
- Omnibus bill to ease access to the Emergency Assistance program (EA) and to create an ombudsperson unit to assist families applying for and participating in EA and HomeBASE
- Establish a bill of rights for people experiencing homelessness
- Permanently establish and improve the HomeBASE family rehousing program
- Improve the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children program (EAEDC)

# *MCH's FY25 Budget Priorities Include:*

- Uphold the right to shelter and adequately fund emergency shelter and service programs for children and families experiencing homelessness and support key provisions in the Emergency Assistance program line item (EA, Line Item 7004-0101 and the related administrative account, Line Item 7004-0099)
- Increase funding for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition Program (RAFT, Line Item 7004-9316) and expand access to upstream homelessness prevention resources.
- Establish a bridge subsidy program for older adults facing housing instability while awaiting longer-term housing supports (New Line Item 9110-XXXX).
- Address the needs of unaccompanied youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness by increasing funding to \$15 million for housing/wraparound support services under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) youth and young adult homelessness program (Line Item 4000-0007).
- Increase funding and provide easy renewals for families participating in the HomeBASE Program (a.k.a. Massachusetts Short-Term Housing Transition Program, Line Item 7004-0108).
- Increase funding for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP, Line Item 7004-9024).
- Adequately fund and protect key support programs for low-income families and individuals, such as the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program (EAEDC, Line Item 4408-1000).
- Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP, Line Item 7004-9030): Increase funding to \$30 million in FY25 to provide additional housing subsidies to individuals under the age of sixty who are living with disabilities.

# ***Improving Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program (EAEDC)***

## **EAEDC serves:**

- Extremely low-income adults 65 years of age and older who are in the process of applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Adults experiencing a mental or physical disability that inhibits their ability to work for at least 60 days
- Participants in the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's programs
- Certain caretakers of children who are not eligible to receive Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) program benefits or caretakers of adults with severe disabilities
- Lawfully present immigrants who are residents of Massachusetts

House Bill 205 and Senate Bill 371, An Act relative to assisting elders and people with disabilities in the Commonwealth would:

- Codify the removal of the homelessness penalty for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Increase EAEDC grants (the typical monthly grant currently is \$401/month)
- Create an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) for EAEDC program participants

**Bill Status:** The Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities attached House Bill 205 to Senate Bill 371, which was reported out favorably in February 2024. On March 18, 2024, Senate Bill 371 was referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

# ***FY25 Budget Advocacy***

Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program (EAEDC, Line Item 4408-1000):

- Increase monthly payments by 20% in FY25, building on the FY21–FY23 monthly grant increases
- Maintain FY24 budget language to provide full grants to program participants while they are experiencing homelessness, instead of imposing the pre-FY21 homelessness penalty
- Maintain the requirement that the Administration give the Legislature 75-days advance notice before reducing benefits or imposing new limits on program eligibility.
- We also request an Outside Section that would increase grants by 20% each year until they reach half of the federal poverty level.

**Budget Status:** In the House, Rep. Decker filed a budget amendment that would provide 10% grant increases for TAFDC and EAEDC participants starting in October 2024 and provide additional funding in the accounts to pay for the grant increases. This amendment was rejected. We will continue advocacy on the Senate side as they release their budget and Senators file amendments.

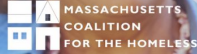
# ***Establish a bridge subsidy program for older adults facing housing instability while awaiting longer-term housing supports (New Line Item 9110-XXXX).***

- Provide \$60 million in the FY25 state budget to create bridge subsidies for up to 6,000 older adults, aged 60 years and older, facing housing instability to allow them to remain in place while they await approval for long-term subsidized housing, through programs such as state-funded public housing, the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8).
- Low-income older adults participating in the bridge subsidy program would pay 30% of their income towards rent, with the bridge subsidy making up the difference in the total rent, up to 110% of the fair market rent. The program would be administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) in collaboration with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC).

# ***FY25 Budget Advocacy***

- The Coalition worked with Rep. Erica Uytterhoeven to file an amendment, in request of 10 million to establish a bridge subsidy program for older adults. This amendment was rejected. We will continue advocacy on the Senate side as they release their budget and Senators file amendments.
- If an amendment is filed, it would be great for folks to reach out to their Senators to co-sponsor the amendment!
- In the next legislative session, the Coalition hopes to work with legislators to file a bill to coincide with the budget campaign.





# PREVENT OLDER ADULTS FROM EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:

SUPPORT THE ADOPTION OF AN UPSTREAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION INITIATIVE FOR LOW-INCOME OLDER ADULT RENTERS

The number of retirement-age households facing cost burdens has reached an all-time high<sup>1</sup>, and homelessness among older adults is expected to nearly triple by 2030.<sup>2</sup>



In Massachusetts, older adults make up 39% of extremely low income renter households.<sup>3</sup>



Older adults living alone in Massachusetts are more likely to face economic insecurity than older adults living alone in any other state.<sup>4</sup>



The cost of living for older adult couples who rent is the highest in Massachusetts (\$51,276, which is 124% of the national average).<sup>4</sup>

## The Problem

## The Solution

- Provide \$60 million in the FY25 state budget to create bridge subsidies for up to 6,000 older adults, aged 60 years and older, facing housing instability to allow them to remain in place while they await approval for long-term subsidized housing, through programs such as state-funded public housing, the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8).
- Low-income older adults participating in the bridge subsidy program would pay 30% of their income towards rent, with the bridge subsidy making up the difference in the total rent, up to 110% of the fair market rent. The program would be administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) in collaboration with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC).

1 Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University. (2019). Housing America's older adults 2019. Harvard University. [https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard\\_JCHS\\_Housing\\_Americas\\_Older\\_Adults\\_2019.pdf](https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_Housing_Americas_Older_Adults_2019.pdf)

2 Byrne, T., Culhane, D., Doran, K., Johns, E., Kuhn, R., Metraux, S., & Schretzman, M. (2019). The emerging crisis of aged homelessness. Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy. UPenn. <https://aisp.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Emerging-Crisis-of-Aged-Homelessness.pdf>

3 National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2021). Housing needs by state - Massachusetts. <https://www.nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/massachusetts>

4 Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, UMass Boston. (2023). Living below the line: Economic insecurity and older Americans, insecurity in the States, 2022. <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10658&context=demographyofaging>

## Organizational Endorsers

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|---|--|---|
| 2Life Communities                             | Eliot Community Human Services                         | Massachusetts Councils on Aging           |
| Abby's House                                  | Emmaus, Inc.   | Massachusetts Law Reform Institute        |
| Age Strong Commission                         | Essex County Community Organization                    | Massachusetts Military Support Foundation |
| AgeSpan                                       | Friendly House   | Metro Housing   Boston                    |
| Aging Services of North Central Massachusetts | Friends of Boston's Homeless                           | Minuteman Senior Services                 |
| Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT)           | Friends of Indian Senior Citizens Organization (FISCO) | MLPB                                      |
| Attleboro Housing Authority                   | Grandmothers' Village Project                          | My Brother's Table                        |
| Bellingham Council on Aging                   | Greater Lowell Health Alliance                         | Mystic Valley Elder Services, Inc.        |
| Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority   | Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)                    | NeighborWorks Housing Solutions           |
| Berkshire Housing                             | Grow Food Northampton                                  | Neighbor to Neighbor                      |
| Beverly Bootstraps                            | Harwich Ecumenical Council for the Homeless, Inc.      | New American Association of Massachusetts |
| Boston Healthcare for the Homeless            | Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard                        | North Shore Community Action Programs     |
| Boston Tenant Coalition                       | Hearth, Inc.   | Northeast Community Services, Inc.        |
| Brazilian Women's Group                       | HomeStart, Inc.  | Old Colony Elder Services                 |
| Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee      | Homeless Prevention Council                            | Opportunity Communities                   |
| Cape Cod Council of Churches                  | Hopedale Council on Aging                              | Our Neighbors' Table                      |
| Caritas Communities                           | Housing Assistance Corporation, Cape Cod               | Project Home Again                        |
| Catholic Charities Worcester County           | Housing Greenfield                                     | Rachel's Table                            |
| Center for Active Living, Plymouth            | Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford            | RCAP Solutions, Inc.                      |
| Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance        | Island Housing Trust                                   | Rosie's Place                             |
| Central West Justice Center                   | Jewish Family and Children's Services                  | Safe Passage                              |
| City of Chelsea Council on Aging              | Justice 4 Housing                                      | SeniorCare, Inc.                          |
| Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.   | La Colaborativa  | Sewa Home Care                            |
| Community Service Network, Inc.               | Lawrence CommunityWorks, Inc.                          | Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services       |
| Community Teamwork, Inc.                      | Lazarus House, Inc.                                    | Somerville Community Corporation          |
| Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries           | LEO, Inc.  | Somerville Office of Housing Stability    |
| Disability Law Center                         | LifePath, Inc.   | South Shore Elder Services                |
| Dismas House                                  | Lower Cape Outreach Council                            | Southeast Asian Coalition of Central MA   |
| DotHouse Health                               | Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development      | St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Community    |
| Elder Services of Berkshire County            | Lynn United for Change                                 | Temple Sinai of Sharon, MA                |
| Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands    | Mass Home Care & Members                               | Uxbridge Council on Aging/Senior Center   |
| Elder Services of Worcester Area              | Mass Senior Action Council                             | Western MA Network to End Homelessness    |
|   | Massachusetts Catholic Conference                      | Wilmington Housing Authority              |
|   | Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless               | Worcester Area Mission Society            |
|   |  | Worcester Community Action Council        |

To get involved or to support this initiative, please contact Julia Garvey, Community Organizer and Legislative Advocate at 781-595-7570 x36 or julia.garvey@mahomeless.org.

To learn more please also go to [www.mahomeless.org/advocacy](http://www.mahomeless.org/advocacy).

ANY  
Questions?