

FY2017 Budget Priorities and Current Funding: Ending Family Homelessness (November 2016)



Address the Need for Housing

MASSACHUSETTS RENTAL VOUCHER PROGRAM (7004-9024)

MRVP provides housing stability to approximately 7,300 extremely low-income households in Massachusetts.

FY17 Recommendation	FY17 Current Funding
Restore funding to MRVP at \$120M to provide for approximately 1,500 new vouchers.	Funded at \$88.5M (including the \$3.6 M added through the Sept. 2016 supplemental budget)
Improve MRVP's effectiveness and reduce the amount of time it takes for voucher holders to obtain housing by increasing the rent cap and mandating timely distribution	Language not adopted

Protect the Safety Net of Shelter

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (EA) SHELTER (7004-0101)

The state's EA family shelter system provides shelter, housing search and stabilization to approximately 4,000 families, including 3,400 children, ages 0-5 years. Under current law, families are required to sleep in places unfit for human habitation *before* they can access shelter.

FY17 Recommendation: Adequate funding	FY17 Current Funding
Fund EA at \$191M , allowing for 12-month contracts with shelter providers and reduce the likelihood of requiring supplemental funding for motel use during the fiscal year;	Funded at \$155,533,948 , shelters granted month contracts; supplemental funding is expected
Protect children by inserting language that would allow access to EA for families who are otherwise eligible and at imminent risk of staying in a place not meant for human habitation;	Language not adopted
Require the state to improve its data collection by inserting language that would require the Department of Housing and Community Development to report the reasons families are denied access to shelter, as well as basic demographics, income the and ages of impacted children	Language not adopted
Maintain Playspace & technical assistance language	Language for both programs adopted

Prevention/Diversion/Rapid Re-housing

HOMEBASE (7004-0108)

HomeBASE provides one of the few pathways out of shelter and a useful tool to assist certain families in entirely avoiding having to enter shelter at all. HomeBASE provides up to \$8,000 of financial support per household, over a 12 month period, to assist in securing alternative housing to shelter. Currently HomeBASE is limited to families residing in or as a diversion tool to state's Emergency Assistance program (7004-0101).

FY17 Recommendation	FY17 Current Funding
Fund HomeBASE at \$39.2M;	\$31,943,664
Allow families to renew HomeBASE;	Language not adopted

De-link HomeBASE and RAFT; and	Language not adopted
Expand HomeBASE access to families residing in domestic violence shelters and residential treatment & sober living programs.	Language adopted and limited to a \$300,000 and giving DHCD referral rights to units vacated by a HomeBASE assisted placement

Provide Basic Supports

TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN (TAFDC 4403-2000)

TAFDC provides limited cash benefits to qualifying, extremely low-income families with children and to pregnant women. TAFDC includes monthly cash payments, a yearly clothing allowance and payments for child care if the adult in the family is working or in an approved education and training program.

FY17 Recommendation	FY17 Current Funding
Include language that would provide immediate access to child care vouchers for families experiencing homelessness and residing in shelter by reinstating the state's 2007 policy ensuring this access;	Language not adopted
Reject the Governor's proposed \$39.5M cut in TAFDC and support language confirming the longstanding rule that Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits are <u>not</u> deemed countable toward the calculation of TAFDC benefits.	Confirming language adopted