



FY2016 Legislative Budget Priorities Addressing Homelessness

Prevention/Diversion/Rapid Re-housing -

HomeBASE (a.k.a. Massachusetts Short-Term Housing Transition Program) (Line Item 7004-0108)

HomeBASE provides one of the few pathways out of or to avoid entirely entering the shelter system for homeless families. It provides up to \$6,000 of financial assistance per household to assist in securing alternative housing to shelter.

Recommendation:

- Fund HomeBASE at \$30 million and allow families to access up to \$8,000 in household assistance to help families avoid entering shelter or to move out rapidly from shelter.

FY2015 funding:	\$26 million
FY2016 Governor's budget recommendation:	\$26.2 million
FY2016 CMHA budget recommendation:	\$30 million

Residential Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT) (Line Item: 7004-9316)

RAFT is a statewide homeless prevention program providing flexible funding to at-risk families with very low incomes. It assist families in obtaining or maintaining housing by providing first/last month's rent, security deposits, rental arrears or utility payments. RAFT often runs out before the end of the fiscal year, just as the number of families accessing shelter increases.

Recommendation:

- Preserve language that dedicates funds to families that are most at-risk of becoming homeless.

FY2015 funding:	\$11 million
FY2016 Governor's budget recommendation:	\$11 million
FY2016 CMHA budget recommendation:	\$14.5 million

Protect the Shelter Safety Net -

Emergency Assistance Family Shelter and Services (EA) (Line item: 7004-0101)

EA provides shelter, housing search and stabilization services to eligible families experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts, one of the nation's most expensive states in which to live. Currently, there are more than 4,800 families residing in the state's family shelter system, of whom more than 1,400 are currently housed in motel rooms across the state.

Recommendation:

- Expand the successful Diversion Pilot program to all EA offices.
- Replace categorical eligibility with assessment, referral and support, and minimizing safety and trauma risks for children and families.

FY2015 funding:	\$140.3 million (supplemental budget pending)
FY2016 Governor's budget recommendation:	\$154.9 million
FY2016 CMHA budget recommendation:	\$185.3 million

Increase Affordable Housing Options-

Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) (Line Item: 7004-9024)

Since 2013, MRVP has housed more than 2,000 otherwise homeless families, allowing children to thrive, students to achieve in school and parents to succeed in work and education. The state has also developed more than 300 units of supportive housing and has preserved approximately 1,000 units of its affordable housing stock that would have been lost due to the lack of ongoing federal supports.

Recommendation:

- Restore funding of \$100 million to the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program to preserve the more than 6,600 vouchers currently in use and to allow DHCD to continue on its path of developing more units.

<i>FY2015 funding:</i>	<i>\$64.2 million</i>
<i>FY2016 Governor's budget recommendation:</i>	<i>\$75.4 million</i>
<i>FY2016 CMHAbudget recommendation:</i>	<i>\$100 million</i>