



FY2016 Legislative Budget Priority: Emergency Assistance

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

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

Emergency Assistance Family Shelter and Services (EA) is a program through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to provide families and children and pregnant women who are experiencing homelessness with critical emergency shelter and stabilization services. Massachusetts has experienced a dramatic increase in homelessness in the past few years due to unemployment, the foreclosure crisis, increased poverty, program cuts and as a result of the increasing gap between rent and wages and the lack of affordable housing. The number of families in need of shelter and lacking feasible housing remain at record numbers. As of March 17, there are nearly 3,300 families in shelter across the state.

Our Request:

Increase funding to \$185.3 million in order fully fund EA through the entire fiscal year and to 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. More than half of the families who apply for shelter are denied access.

In Worcester County:

The Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance runs several shelters and scattered site shelters in the City of Worcester. The Village is an apartment based shelter program, Ives Street is a congregate shelter and The Main Street is a Scattered Site location. In FY 2014, 213 families were moved to housing. Of those, 134 were moved into permanent housing situations. All of our shelter programs embrace a strength-based approach to working with families to achieve financial independence and residential stability.