



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

November 14, 2013

Please Ask Your State Legislators to Take Swift Action to Ensure that Families Experiencing Homelessness Do Not Have to Stay Out in the Cold

Ask Them to Support Continued Funding for DHCD's Seven-Day Temporary Emergency Accommodations Program!

Quick Links

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[SDTEA fact sheet](#)

[SDTEA and EA FY'14 policy updates](#)

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Welfare Reform Bill Update

Thank you for all of your outreach last week to improve the House version of the welfare reform bill! Progress has been made, but both the current House and Senate versions of the bill still contains many troubling provisions.

Please [click here to see a preliminary summary](#) from

Dear friend,

Next Wednesday will mark the end of scheduled formal sessions for the Massachusetts House and Senate for calendar year 2013. **Before the Legislature ends formal sessions, we want them to take action to protect children and families experiencing homelessness by extending the Seven-Day Temporary Emergency Accommodations Program (SDTEA).** [Click here for a SDTEA fact sheet.](#)

SDTEA is a new sub-program under the [Residential Assistance for Families in Transition \(RAFT\) program](#) that was created this fiscal year to address concerns that families who were at imminent risk of staying in places not meant for human habitation were being excluded from the state's Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter and services program. SDTEA was the compromise response, and has been an important resource for extremely low-income families who are not yet/will not be eligible for EA. SDTEA, administered by the RAFT providers and subcontracted entities, provides up to 7 days of shelter, while a family explores other housing options, and if none are identified, the family may re-apply for EA shelter.

Currently, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is able to spend up to \$500,000 from the RAFT line item in fiscal year 2014 on SDTEA. While the fiscal year will run until the end of June, the \$500,000 is expected to be exhausted by early December. We are asking that Legislators take action to ensure that this program does not end, right when the coldest time of the year begins, by allowing DHCD to exceed the \$500,000 cap.

our colleagues at the
Massachusetts Law Reform
Institute.

Please also see this [list of
key House members to
thank for their advocacy
during the bill debate](#),
prepared by our colleagues
at Crittenton Women's
Union.

A joint conference
committee has been named
to work out the differences
between the House and
Senate versions of the bill.
The conferees are
Representatives Dempsey,
Khan, and Ferguson and
Senators Flanagan, Barrett,
and Hedlund.

Please stay tuned for more
details and actions steps.

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We also are asking the Legislature to work with DHCD, advocates, and providers to improve the implementation of the SDTEA program by:

- Working to increase funding for SDTEA when the Legislature returns to formal sessions in January, and continuing to focus on increasing resources for homelessness prevention and permanent affordable housing
- Ensuring that EA-eligible families are served by EA, without having to go through the SDTEA program (including by being "placed presumptively" if a family does not have all of the required verifications at the time of EA application, if the family appears to be eligible)
- Minimizing the time families spend in SDTEA before being connected to RAFT homelessness prevention/rapid rehousing resources or being given a longer term placement in EA, so as to minimize the disruption to families and reduce the costs to the SDTEA program
- Connecting families placed in SDTEA with legal services staff who can advocate for the families throughout the process

Please Contact Your Legislators Today or Tomorrow

Please ask your [State Representative](#) and [State Senator](#) to express their concerns to leadership about the potential end of the RAFT [Seven-Day Temporary Emergency Accommodations Program](#), and their support for the program's continuation while longer term solutions can be worked out and funded. No family should be left out in the cold!

Legislators can be reached through the State House switchboard at 617-722-2000, or you can go [here](#) to search for your State Representative and Senator based on your address.

Please contact me with any questions or to share feedback from your legislators.

Thank you for your swift advocacy! Please stay tuned for additional updates by following the Coalition on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless





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