



**Please Support An Act Relative to Assisting Elders and People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth,
House Docket Number 2741:
Improving the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children Program (EAEDC)
Lead Sponsors: Representative Jim O'Day and Senator Patricia Jehlen**

What is EAEDC?

EAEDC is a state-funded cash assistance and benefits program providing support to approximately 22,000 extremely low-income individuals, administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA).

Who is served by EAEDC?

- Extremely low-income adults 65 years of age or 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

How would this bill improve the EAEDC program?

This bill would:

- 1. Increase the EAEDC grant:** The typical monthly grant of \$303.70* has not been increased since 1988. While EAEDC is a vital lifeline for program participants, the benefit levels are very low. We are proposing to match the levels provided under the TAFDC program for households of comparable size, so that, for example, one person on EAEDC could receive up to \$428/month (with rent allowance).
- 2. Remove the shelter reduction/penalty for individuals experiencing homelessness:** EAEDC program participants who are experiencing homelessness receive a reduced grant of only \$92.80 per month. This monthly grant is significantly lower than the current grant for individuals who have housing and clearly is insufficient to allow these participants to meet their basic needs. By eliminating this grant reduction, EAEDC participants experiencing homelessness (in or out of a shelter) will not be further financially disrupted and may be able to transition into a more stable living arrangement sooner.
- 3. Increase the allowable personal asset limit from \$250 to \$2,500:** Letting an individual have more than \$250 in total monthly assets will allow more EAEDC participants to have assets and to move toward housing stability (by being better able to afford ongoing rent, first month's rent, last month's rent, and security deposit payments). The bill language also would exclude the first \$15,000 in a vehicle's value when determining the asset limit (as in the TAFDC program), so that more EAEDC applicants with cars can be approved—which is especially vital in areas with limited or no public transportation.
- 4. Create an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) for EAEDC program participants:** Building in a COLA so that DTA can provide increased benefits in response to the wider economic conditions would ensure that participants do not fall behind further economically from year-to-year.

Which legislators are sponsoring or co-sponsoring this bill?

Senators William Brownsberger, Sal DiDomenico, Jamie Eldridge, Patricia Jehlen, Barbara L'Italien, Jason Lewis, Joan Lovely, Michael Moore, and Marc Pacheco and **Representatives** Brian Ashe, Christine Barber, Ed Coppinger, Majorie Decker, Stephen DiNatale, Daniel Donahue, Gloria Fox, Sean Garballey, Kenneth Gordon, Danielle Gregoire, Patricia Haddad, Jonathan Hecht, Paul Heroux, Louis Kafka, Mary Keefe, Kay Khan, Timothy Madden, John Mahoney, Brian Mannal, Paul McMurtry, Jim O'Day, Denise Provost, Angelo Puppolo, David Rogers, Tom Sannicandro, Theodore Speliotis, Thomas Stanley, Benjamin Swan, Timothy Toomey, Steven Ultrino, RoseLee Vincent, and Chris Walsh

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Which organizations are endorsing this bill?

As of February 20, 2015, the bill has been endorsed by the following organizations from across the Commonwealth:

Abby's House
Action for Boston Community Development
Aging Disabilities Resources Consortia of Southeastern Massachusetts
Arise for Social Justice
Berkeley Retirement Home and Nursing Center
Boston Center for Independent Living
Bristol Elder Services, Inc.
Catholic Charities Agency
Catholic Charities Worcester County
Catholic Charities, Boston
Catholic Social Services of Fall River, Inc.
Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.
Common Cathedral
Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.
Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries
Emmaus, Inc.
First Church Shelter
Greater Lynn Senior Services
Haley House
Lowell Transitional Living Center
Lynn Shelter Association
MARCH Massachusetts Association of Residential Care Homes
Marie Esther Health Center, Inc.
Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)
Massachusetts Catholic Conference
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
MetroBoston Aging Disabilities Resources Consortia
MetroWest Aging Disabilities Resources Consortia
Minuteman Senior Services
My Brother's Table
Mystic Valley Elder Services
Old Colony Elder Services
Our Father's House
Pax Christi – Beverly
Pine Street Inn
Rosie's Place
Samaritan Inn
Samaritans Steps, Inc.
Sisters of St. Anne, Social Concerns Committee, Marlborough, MA
Somebody Cares New England
Somerville Homeless Coalition
Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services
Southern Massachusetts Aging Disabilities Resources Consortia
Springwell, Inc.
St. Francis House
The Psychological Center
Voice of the Poor Committee for Social Justice, Attleboro District of St. Vincent de Paul
Women's Lunch Place

*This is the amount provided to single individuals who are responsible for paying some monthly rent, known as "Living Arrangement A"

For more information, please contact Kelly Turley, Director of Legislative Advocacy, at kelly@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570 x17; Sr. Linda Bessom, SND, Senior Community Organizer, at linda@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570 x18; or Khadeejah Ahmad, Staff Director for Representative O'Day, at khadeejah.ahmad@mahouse.gov or 617-722-2810.

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