



April 23, 2018

Greetings!

Today is the first day of Massachusetts Youth Count 2018! We are proud to be a key partner of the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth to plan and oversee the fifth annual Youth Count. This year's Youth Count will run for three weeks, ending on Sunday, May 13th. **If you are an unaccompanied youth/young adult under 25 and are experiencing housing instability-- or you work with young people without housing-- please check out our [Youth Count 2018 page](#).** The survey can be taken online: [English](#) and [Spanish](#); or in print form: [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Portuguese](#) (with additional translations coming soon). Results from the survey will strengthen our advocacy efforts to expand housing and services for unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

Today also is the first day of the House budget debate. We are at the State House now, engaging with Representatives and pushing for [key amendments](#) on youth homelessness, Emergency Assistance (EA), and the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) homelessness prevention program. [Our list of amendment cosponsors and longer list of important amendments we are tracking](#) can be accessed here (see both tabs).

As housing, human services, and social services amendments have yet to be taken up, there's still time for a final call or email to your State Representative. Please ask them to actively support the key homelessness amendments by signing on as a cosponsor and speaking up in support of the amendments in Room 348 during the caucuses. Find out your Representative's name and contact information via www.wheredoivotema.com. See below and our [House budget amendment page](#) for additional details and fact sheets.

Please also join us at the State House or on social media this week (links below). The debate is scheduled to end on/before Thursday.

Thank you so much for all of your advocacy and endurance!

With gratitude,

Kelly Turley

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Massachusetts Youth Count 2018 starts today!
Learn more + participate at tinyurl.com/mayouthcount2018
#MAYouthCount





It's not too late to take action with us! Please ask your State Representative to cosponsor and actively support key homelessness, housing, and benefits amendments to the House FY'19 budget.

www.mahomeless.org/advocacy

Key Amendments

- The House Ways and Means budget would provide \$1 million for housing and services for unaccompanied youth and young adults under the age of 25 who are experiencing homelessness out on their own (line item 4000-0007). This would be an increase over the \$675,000 FY'18 funding level, but less than the amount needed to provide adequate statewide resources.

Representative Jim O'Day has filed two youth homelessness amendments: [Amendment #1173](#) to increase the funding for youth housing and services to \$4 million in line item 4000-0007 and [Amendment #1177](#) to include specific language in the Executive Office of Health and Human Services line item to provide \$150,000 for the work of the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth in line item 4000-0300. [Our fact sheet is here](#). Please ask your Representative to cosponsor and actively support the youth homelessness amendments.

- The House Ways and Means budget would retain harmful, current eligibility language that allows the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to deny Emergency Assistance (EA, line item 7004-0101) shelter access to families that have not yet stayed in places not meant for human habitation.

Representative Marjorie Decker has filed two Emergency Assistance amendments: [Amendment #1301](#) to create a \$300,000 pilot to allow otherwise eligible families to access EA before having to prove that they have stayed in places not meant for human habitation and [Amendment #1308](#) to ensure that DHCD does not further restrict families' rights to apply for EA in person by maintaining in-person application sites (in addition to telephonic options.) [Our fact sheet is here.](#) **Please ask your Representative to cosponsor and actively support the EA amendments.**

- The HWM budget would increase funding for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program (RAFT, line item 7004-9316) from \$15 million to \$17 million, but it does not include the expanded definition of family so that unaccompanied youth, elders, and people with disabilities also can access RAFT homelessness prevention resources.

Representative Marjorie Decker filed a RAFT amendment, [Amendment #1328](#), to restore the expanded definition of family, increase overall funding to \$18.5 million, and make sure that at least \$3 million will be made available to households without children under 21. [Our fact sheet is here.](#) **Please ask your Representative to cosponsor and actively support the RAFT amendment.**

- Currently, the Coalition is working with Representative Kay Khan and Senate President Harriette Chandler to move forward legislation to ease access to Massachusetts IDs for people experiencing homelessness (House Bill 2737/Senate Bill 1906). Both bills are pending in their respective Committee on Ways and Means.

Representative Khan has filed an amendment, [Amendment #802](#), to incorporate the bill language into the FY'19 budget. This amendment would:

- Establish a fee waiver process for youth and adults experiencing homelessness
- Create a process for individuals experiencing homelessness to apply for IDs if they cannot meet the existing criteria, such as alternative proof of Massachusetts residency that does not require a permanent address (looking to documents already accepted by other Massachusetts state agencies)

[Our fact sheet is here.](#) **Please ask your Representative to cosponsor and actively support the Mass ID amendment.**

SO THAT EVERYONE HAS A PLACE TO CALL

HOME



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