



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

April 19, 2018

Take Action: Please Cosponsor and Actively Support Key Homelessness, Housing, and Benefits Amendments to the House FY'19 Budget

We were very pleased to see so many of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless' priorities reflected in the House Committee on Ways and Means (HWM) fiscal year 2019 budget proposal.

As an updated to our previous communications, we ask for your active support for several key budget amendments that would further strengthen the House budget. Thank you in advance!

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. Please 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.) Please 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. Please 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)

Please cosponsor and actively support the Mass ID amendment.

Please see our House budget amendment page for additional details and fact sheets:
<http://www.mahomeless.org/advocacy/item/fy-19-house-budget-amendments>

Thank you so much for helping to lay the groundwork for the positive budget recommendations and your ongoing work to improve the budget even more to address and end homelessness!

For more information, please contact Kelly Turley at the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless: kelly@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570x17.