



## MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

April 13, 2018

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 fiscal year 2019 budget proposal.

We ask for your support for several key budget amendments that would further strengthen the House budget.

### Key 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 will be filing a RAFT amendment 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 sign on by contacting Akriti Bhambi in Rep. Decker's office by early afternoon today: [akriti.bhambi@mahouse.gov](mailto:akriti.bhambi@mahouse.gov).

- 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 will be filing two Emergency Assistance amendments: one 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 another 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 sign on to both amendments by contacting Akriti Bhambi in Rep. Decker's office by early afternoon today: [akriti.bhambi@mahouse.gov](mailto:akriti.bhambi@mahouse.gov).

- 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 will be filing two youth homelessness amendments: one to increase the funding for youth housing and services to \$4 million in line item 4000-0007 and a second 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 sign on to both amendments by contacting Cinda Danh in Rep. O'Day's office by 3 p.m. today: [cinda.danh@mahouse.gov](mailto:cinda.danh@mahouse.gov).

**We also are very pleased to note that HWM included language and \$1.4 million in funding to eliminate the homelessness penalty imposed on Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children program (EAEDC) participants.** We will keep working to ensure that this language is in the final FY'19 budget. If so, it would mean that participants experiencing homelessness would receive the full monthly EAEDC grant of \$303.70/month, instead of only \$92.80/month.

Please see our HWM budget page for additional details and fact sheets:  
[www.mahomeless.org/advocacy/item/fy-19-house-ways-and-means-budget](http://www.mahomeless.org/advocacy/item/fy-19-house-ways-and-means-budget)

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 [kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org) or 781-595-7570x17.**