



PREVENT OLDER ADULTS FROM EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:

SUPPORT THE ADOPTION OF AN UPSTREAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION INITIATIVE FOR LOW-INCOME OLDER ADULT RENTERS

THE PROBLEM

Low-income older adults' fixed incomes have not kept pace with rising housing costs seen throughout all regions of the Commonwealth. This has been especially burdensome for this population, resulting in more older adults facing displacement from their homes.

- Homelessness among older adults is expected to nearly triple by 2030. (1)
- Over the next 16 years, households in their 80s will be the fastest-growing age group. (2)
- The number of retirement-age households facing cost burdens has reached an all-time high. (3)
- Older households with very low incomes are expected to climb sharply as the population ages. (4)
- 61.7% of the Commonwealth's residents older than 65 who live alone do not have enough income to cover basic expenses such as housing, food, and health care. It is even more dire for older adults of color: 91% of Latinx, 78% of Asian American, and 72% of African American older adults living alone cannot cover their basic expenses. (5)

THE SOLUTION

- Provide \$10 million in FY24 to create bridge subsidies for up to 1,000 older adults facing housing instability to allow them to remain in place while they await approval for state-funded public housing or a subsidy through the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program. Low-income older adults participating in the bridge subsidy program would pay 30% of their income towards rent, with the bridge subsidy making up the difference in the total rent, up to 110% of the fair market rent. The bridge subsidy program would be administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).
- Embed a housing stability screening tool into the Common Housing Application for Massachusetts Programs (CHAMP) that would be taken at the time an older adult applies for state-funded senior housing through DHCD.
- Provide funding through EOEA to contract with a nonprofit agency (or agencies) that would take on the task of reviewing the housing stability screenings, as well as offer older adults legal aid assistance and access to Housing Advocates to ensure that at-risk older adults receive ongoing housing stabilization assistance until they move into state-funded senior housing or other safe, permanent housing.

To get involved or to support this initiative, please contact Robyn Frost, Executive Director, at 781-595-7570 x12 or robyn@mahomeless.org.
To learn more, please also go to www.mahomeless.org/advocacy.

1 National Low Income Housing Coalition
2, 3, 4 "Housing America's Older Adults" Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University
5 "Living Below the Line, Economic Insecurity and Older Americans", UMass McCormack Graduate School of Public Policy