



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

**Take Action to Improve the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children program (EAEDC):
Please cosponsor and actively support House Bill 205 and Senate Bill 371, An Act relative to assisting
elders and people with disabilities in the Commonwealth**

Sponsored by Representative Jim O'Day and Senator Pat Jehlen

House Bill 205 and Senate Bill 371, An Act relative to assisting elders and people with disabilities in the Commonwealth would:

- **Codify the removal of the homelessness penalty for individuals experiencing homelessness:** Before fiscal year 2019, EAEDC program participants who were experiencing homelessness received a reduced grant of only \$92.80/month. That monthly grant level was significantly lower than the typical grant for individuals who had housing (\$303.70/month, at the time) and clearly was insufficient to allow these participants to meet their basic needs. Through the FY19–FY23 state budgets, the Legislature removed the homelessness penalty. This section of the bills would enshrine that positive change in the statute permanently. By eliminating this grant reduction, EAEDC participants experiencing homelessness (in or out of a shelter) can better maximize their income and may be able to transition into a more stable living arrangement sooner.
- **Increase EAEDC grants:** The typical monthly grant currently is \$401/month.¹ While EAEDC is a vital lifeline for program participants, the benefit levels are extremely low. The bills would match the grant levels provided under the TAFDC program for households of comparable size, so that, for example, one person on EAEDC could receive up to \$553/month (with the rent allowance).
- **Create an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) for EAEDC program participants:** EAEDC grant levels remained stagnant from 1988 until January 2021. Since FY21, the typical monthly grant for a household of one has increased from \$303.70 to \$401. While the grant levels are moving in the right direction, a guaranteed annual COLA would direct DTA to provide increased benefits in response to the wider economic conditions and ensure that participants do not fall behind further economically from year-to-year. If the benefits had been adjusted for inflation each year since 1988, the monthly benefit for a household of one would be approximately \$801 in 2023, instead of \$401.²

Importance of this legislation: EAEDC is a state-funded cash assistance and benefits program providing support to over 27,000 extremely low-income individuals³, administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA).

¹ This is the amount provided to single individuals who are responsible for paying full or partial monthly rent, known as "Living Arrangement A."

² Calculated using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Inflation Calculator: https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

³ According to the Department of Transitional Assistance's May 2023 Facts and Figures report, there were 27,758 individuals (and 27,611 households) participating in the EAEDC program as of April 2023. See <https://www.mass.gov/doc/dta-facts-and-figures-may-7/download>.

EAEDC serves:

- Extremely low-income adults 65 years of age and 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

Legislative sponsors/cosponsors of the EAEDC bill: As of March 27th, the following legislators have sponsored or cosponsored the bills: Representatives O'Day (**sponsor**), Cabral, Cahill, Donahue, Gifford, Higgins, LeBoeuf, Montaña, Murray, Tyler, Vitolo, and Whipps, and Senators Jehlen (**sponsor**), DiDomenico, Eldridge, Lovely, and Rausch.

61 statewide organizational endorsers of the EAEDC bill: As of March 27th, organizations across the Commonwealth have endorsed the EAEDC bills, including Abby's House, Action for Boston Community Development, Inc., Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT), Allston Brighton Health Collaborative, Berkshire Housing, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, Boston Center for Independent Living, Brazilian Women's Group, Catholic Charities Boston, Catholic Charities Worcester County, Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc., Community Action Inc. of Haverhill, Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc., Community Day Center of Waltham, Community Service Network, Inc., Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, Disability Law Center, Dismas House, DotHouse Health, Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc., Eliot CHS Homeless Services, Emmaus, Inc., Family Promise North Shore Boston, First Church Shelter, Friends of Boston's Homeless, Grandmothers' Village Project, Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), Grow Food Northampton, Housing Greenfield, Jewish Family & Children's Service, Justice 4 Housing, JVS Boston, Lazarus House Inc., LEO, Inc., Massachusetts Catholic Conference, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, Massachusetts Councils on Aging, Mass Home Care, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Mass Senior Action Council, MetroWest Legal Services, MLPB, My Brother's Table, North Shore Community Action Programs, Northeast Community Services, Inc. Northeast Justice Center, Opportunity Communities, LLC, Rosie's Place, Safe Passage, SeniorCare Inc., Somerville Community Corporation, Somerville Homeless Coalition, St. Clare of Assisi, St. Francis House, Stavros Center For Independent Living, Inc., Sweet Scent, Temple Sinai of Sharon, Inc., The Center for Teen Empowerment, The Psychological Center, Inc., and Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness.

Bill status: House Bill 205 and Senate Bill 371 were filed in January 2023 and assigned to the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities between February and April 2023. The bills were heard by the Committee on September 12, 2023. The Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities attached House Bill 205 to Senate Bill 371, which was reported out favorably in February 2024. On March 18, 2024, Senate Bill 371 was referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

Please cosponsor and actively support the EAEDC bills, [House Bill 205](#) and [Senate Bill 371](#)!

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