

Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Requests

The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness seeks to prevent and end homelessness through a Housing First approach that centers racial equity. Towards that end, its Fiscal Year 2024 state budget priorities include the following:

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) (7004-9316):

- **\$250 million** (FY23: \$150m¹, Governor's budget: \$162.6m) to address the continuing housing instability crisis as evictions and homelessness rise in western Massachusetts.
- **Remove the notice to quit requirement** that DHCD implemented in August 2022, which pushes households deeper into an eviction process before becoming eligible for RAFT.

Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) (7004-9024)

- **\$250 million** (FY23: \$154m², Governor's budget: \$168.2m) to create 6,000 new vouchers, implement Small Area Fair Market Rents, and allow vouchers to cover security deposits.

Public Housing

- **Public Housing Operating Subsidies (7004-9005): \$184 million** (FY23: \$92m, Governor's budget: \$92m) to ensure housing stability for the current and future public housing residents at the nearly 43,000 deeply affordable homes provided by local housing authorities.
- **Public Housing Reform (7004-9007): \$7.7 million** (FY23: \$1m, Governor's budget \$2.2m) to fund administrative reforms and support the well-being of residents.

Homeless Individuals Assistance (7004-0102)

- **\$120 million** (FY23: \$110m, Governor's budget: \$110.7m) to meet emergency shelter needs and ensure equitable funding to the western Massachusetts region.

Home and Healthy for Good (Permanent Supportive Housing) (7004-0104)

- **\$8.39 million** (FY23: \$6.39m, Governor's budget: \$4.16m) to fund a vital resource for Permanent Supportive Housing in western Massachusetts.

Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) (7004-9030)

- **\$26 million** (FY23: \$13.7m³, Governor's budget: \$14.1m) to create 250 new vouchers and allow project-based vouchers to create more deeply affordable and accessible homes for people with disabilities.

Older Adult Homelessness (NEW)

- **\$10 million in FY24 to create bridge subsidies for up to 1,000 older adults facing housing instability** — a challenge notably on the rise in the western four counties — that will allow them to remain in place while they await approval for a long-term subsidy.

¹ Roughly \$60 million in unspent RAFT funds from FY22 carried over into FY23 brings total FY23 RAFT funding to approx. \$210 million.

² Includes language to carryover unspent funds from FY22 bringing total FY23 funding for MRVP to an estimated \$175 million.

³ Includes language to carryover unspent funds from FY22 bringing total FY23 funding for AHVP to an estimated \$19.2 million

Emergency Assistance (EA) for Children and Families (7004-0101)

- **\$325 million** (FY23: \$219.4m, Governor's budget: \$324m) to serve the increasing number of children and parents, including newly arrived immigrant families, facing homelessness.
- **Increase the income eligibility limit from 115% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) to 200% FPG** for EA applicants and increase the limit for families already in EA shelter from 200% to 285% FPG.

HomeBASE Program (7004-0108)

- **\$60 million** (FY23: \$59m, Governor's budget: \$42m) to continue payments to households currently enrolled in HomeBASE that need an extension and to enroll new households in the program.
- **Continue FY23 language that allows eligible families to receive at least 2 years of HomeBASE benefits.**
- **Increase HomeBASE payments from \$20,000 over 2 years to \$30,000 over 2 years, plus \$15,000 for each additional year**, with additional flexibility for DHCD to address the needs of larger families.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Services (40000-0007)

- **\$12 million** (FY23: \$9.5m, Governor's budget: \$10.5m) to create greater housing stability for youth and young adults ages 18–24 years who are without homes.

Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs) (7004-3036)

- **\$10.8 million** (FY23: \$9.7m, Governor's budget: \$8.7m) in order for HCECs to continue to provide the vital gateway to housing stability and opportunity across the region.

Tenancy Preservation Program (7004-3045)

- **\$2 million** (FY23: \$1.8m, Governor's budget: 2m) to preserve tenancies for households with disabilities who are facing eviction.

Access to Counsel Program (NEW)

- **\$7 million to establish an access to counsel program** for low-income tenants facing eviction. Right now in Massachusetts, 86% of landlords have legal representation in housing court, as compared to 11.5% of tenants. Access to counsel will create greater housing stability, address the racial inequity in homelessness, and save money.

Regional Transit Advancement (1595-6370)

- **\$150 million** (FY23: \$96.5m, Governor's budget: 102.8m) to meet the regional transit needs in an equitable manner, and to provide the support necessary to address the housing instability that results from deep gaps in the public transportation system.

The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness Earmark (7004-0107)

- **\$100,000** to continue the coordination and collaboration necessary to accomplish the Network's mission to prevent and end homelessness across the four western counties with a Housing First approach that centers racial equity.