



## 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: \$150m<sup>1</sup>, 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: \$154m<sup>2</sup>, 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.

### **Homelessness Support Services (Safe Havens Program) (5046-2000)**

- **\$27.6 million** (FY23 budget \$24.6m; Governor's budget \$24.6m) This \$3 million increase would create 6 new Safe Havens programs statewide, including in western Massachusetts, providing urgently needed supported shelter to the most vulnerable chronically homeless individuals in our region.

### **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.

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

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

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

- **\$26 million** (FY23: \$13.7m<sup>3</sup>, 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.

### **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.

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