

MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Adequately Fund and Protect Key Support Programs for Low-Income Families and Individuals

Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program (EAEDC - Line Item 4408-1000):

Final FY'10 Appropriation: \$83.4 million

Governor's FY11 Request: \$88.8 million

MCH's FY'11 Request: Fund at a minimum of \$88.8 million to cover projected caseload increases and ensure that all who need and qualify for help can receive assistance.

- ◆ EAEDC is the state's income support program of last resort. It provides monthly cash assistance to more than 20,000 elders and persons with a disability.
- ◆ To be eligible for EAEDC benefits, people must be destitute --- having less than \$303 in monthly income and less than \$250 in assets.
- ◆ The income and assets of a spouse or parent (in the same household) count fully in determining eligibility.
- ◆ **Funding:**
 - ✓ The Governor's FY'11 budget request is \$5.4 million above the FY'10 appropriation reflecting an estimated increase in the average EAEDC caseload over the course of the next year.
 - ✓ As the economy worsens more elders and disabled individuals qualify for assistance as family members or spouses lose their employment and are suddenly without income to support them.
 - ✓ Additional funding is needed in this account to ensure that all who qualify for assistance can continue to receive this basic income support.
 - ✓ For many, their EAEDC grant is the only thing preventing them from becoming homeless and ending up in shelter.
- ◆ **Language: Include 60-Day Advance Notice Provision**
 - ✓ The Governor's budget omits protective, legislative oversight language included in the final FY'10 budget requiring the Administration to give 60-days advance notice to the Legislature before implementing eligibility or benefit restrictions.
 - ✓ This advance notice provision provides time for the Legislature to act to prevent or modify proposed cuts in benefits or eligibility rules.

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC - Line Item 4403-2000):

Final FY'10 Appropriation: \$316.1 million

Governor's FY11 Request: \$319.1 million

MCH's FY'11 Request: Fund at a minimum of \$319.1 million to cover projected caseload increases.

- ◆ **Funding:**
 - ✓ The TAFDC caseload has been increasing because of the recession. In December 2009, it was at its highest level in the past five years – 50,822 cases.
 - ✓ The Governor's budget funds the program at \$319.1 million, \$3 million above the FY'10 appropriation, to take into account a continued increase in the caseload.

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- ✓ The Governor's projected average caseload in FY'11 of 50,850 cases only allows for a slight increase in the number of parents and children needing assistance over the next year and half and may not cover all those families who may need this support.
- ✓ TAFDC benefits have already lost more than 40% of their value to inflation since 1988. Any benefit cut would jeopardize the ability of fragile families to stay housed and meet minimum subsistence needs.
- ◆ **Language: Include 60-Day Advance Notice Provision**
 - ✓ Like EAEDC, the Governor eliminated protective language contained in the final FY'10 budget requiring the Administration to give 60-days advance notice to the Legislature before implementing eligibility or benefit cuts in the TAFDC program.
 - ✓ This advance notice provision gives the Legislature time to act to prevent or modify proposed cuts in benefits or eligibility. This language was critical this year in allowing the Legislature time to work with the Governor to prevent deep cuts in TAFDC benefits for approximately 9000 families with a disabled parent.

Restore Access to Early Education and Care Resources for Children Experiencing Homelessness (Line Item 3000-4060):

Final FY'10 Appropriation: \$262 million

Governor's FY11 Request: The Governor transferred two other childcare accounts into this line item and funded the three programs at \$451 million.

MCH's FY'11 Request: Level fund the account at \$262 million and include language in this line item to restore immediate access to childcare vouchers to homeless children living in shelters.

- ◆ **Language:**
 - ✓ We recommend that the following language be inserted into this line item: "provided further, that a homeless child shall have immediate access to early education and care funded through this item, or from item 3000-4050 if eligible under that item."
 - ✓ Last year, the Department of Early Education and Care eliminated automatic/immediate access to childcare vouchers for families living in homeless shelters, which has resulted in a steep decline in the number of homeless children accessing early education and care.
 - ✓ More than 1,500 young children living in emergency shelter are not enrolled in early education and care.
 - ✓ This situation is harming homeless children, and it is also making it more difficult for homeless families to move towards self-sufficiency and sustainable housing.
 - ✓ This language will restore the successful policy of giving homeless children living in shelters immediate access to childcare vouchers implemented in collaboration with the Department of Transitional Assistance.

The Coalition thanks the staff of Massachusetts Law Reform Institute and Horizons for Homeless Children for their help in developing the TAFDC and Early Care and Education sections (respectively) of this fact sheet.