



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE • BOSTON, MA 02133
(617) 725-4000

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

ANNOUNCEMENT

Housing and Emergency Shelter Reform

~ Getting the right resources to the right people at the right time ~

SYSTEMS CHANGE

- The Patrick-Murray administration is undertaking a comprehensive set of initiatives to reform our emergency shelter and housing delivery systems to advance our goal to end homelessness in our Commonwealth. These initiatives that we are announcing today include:
 - Incorporating the family and individual emergency housing programs into the Commonwealth's housing delivery system by integrating the Department of Transitional Assistance's (DTA) individual and family emergency shelter programs into the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).
 - Re-engineering the emergency housing response delivery system by 1) re-invigorating prevention strategies, 2) ensuring rapid re-housing by identifying sustainable housing placement for families and individuals 3) implementing an immediate and comprehensive uniform assessment tool, and 4) offering case management and housing sustainability services upon placement.
- The effort will carry out the recommendations of the Commission to End Homelessness. The Commission prioritized the implementation of a "Housing First" approach, which places an immediate and primary focus on helping individuals and families to quickly access and sustain permanent housing. Housing, paired with appropriate supports, will reduce reliance on long-term shelter stays, even for those considered chronically homeless or for people with multiple needs.
- Over the last year, both Secretariats of Health and Human Services and Housing and Economic Development (through DTA and DHCD respectively) have been working together intensively and collaboratively to respond to the housing crisis precipitated by the worsening economy. This restructuring is a result of what we have learned and now believe is the most effective and cost efficient course of action to ensure a more streamlined and compassionate response to the issue of homelessness.
- Restructuring of the housing delivery system is targeted to formally occur on July 1, 2009, however, in preparation for this transition, other key strategies are already being implemented:

- The DTA re-procurement of the Emergency Assistance (EA) temporary shelter system for families with emphasis on rapid re-housing and housing stabilization is set to be effective February 1, 2009.
- DTA and the ICHH are now finalizing a streamlined assessment tool and comprehensive case management system that will enable front line staff to more effectively and efficiently address the housing needs of clients.
- The Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) is investing \$8 million in the development of eight regional housing service networks charged with demonstrating innovative approaches to delivering housing services at the local level. Lessons learned through the regional networks regarding the most innovative and cost efficient methods for delivering housing first services will continue to inform systems change needs.
- The ongoing work of the ICHH Working Groups who will make formal recommendations to the ICHH in the first quarter and begin to more actively engage with the new regional network system on new program and service delivery models.
- MassHousing's \$7 million investment in the ICHH over 4 years will provide rental subsidies combined with employment assistance and an asset building supports. This joint venture of DTA and DHCD, the Moving to Economic Opportunity Pilot, is intended to demonstrate the efficacy of supporting families' efforts to move from public assistance to financial independence.
- A new partnership with private management companies who are making units available for families that are in emergency shelter.
- The Interagency Housing Solutions Team Command Center was launched in November 2008. The Command Center, staffed primarily by DTA and DHCD employees, works with housing search and shelter providers, local housing authorities, regional nonprofits and private management companies to ensure that placements are being made as quickly as possible. Lessons learned through the work of the Interagency Housing Solutions Team will inform our ongoing efforts to enhance the new service delivery model.

GOALS

- Achieving the administration's goal of eliminating homelessness in the Commonwealth requires dramatic changes in the way housing services are delivered. As a result of the proposed restructuring, residents of the Commonwealth, whether they are facing housing challenges or not, can expect:
 - More seamless access to housing services;
 - More effective use of state resources;
 - Better coordination and integration of services across systems and programs;
 - More timely and appropriate service responses at the local level;
 - A supportive housing production agenda consistent with demonstrated need.