

Protect Children Experiencing Homelessness: Demand that Massachusetts Provide Emergency Shelter to Families with No Other Safe Place to Sleep!

Please Act NOW – As the State Finalizes New Regulations This Week!



The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has adopted “emergency” regulations barring most families with children from Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter unless they first sleep in a place “not meant for human habitation.”

These regulations are set to be finalized this Friday, November 23rd. Please call the Governor and legislative leadership now to push for increased protections for vulnerable families.

Families are being left with no safe place to stay as a result of this restrictive policy. Across Massachusetts, families are sleeping in cars, vans, parks, outdoor porches, and other unsafe places. Others are turning up in emergency rooms in unprecedented numbers, burdening our already overwhelmed health care system.

The Administration says most of these families don’t need shelter from the Emergency Assistance program because “someone else” will take them in. But many families have used up all their options for staying with others. And other families are being taken in by people who do them harm.

Everyone supports the state’s new investments in housing programs like the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) and the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) homelessness prevention program. But those investments are not sufficient to protect the families with children being denied emergency shelter who have no safe place to sleep *tonight*.

This Thanksgiving Week, Please Ask the Governor and the Legislature to Act Now on Behalf of Families Experiencing Homelessness!

Please make three quick calls this week that could make a world of difference to families and children without a safe place to sleep!

- Call Governor Patrick (1-888-870-7770) and ask that he require DHCD to amend the regulations to provide shelter to families with children at “imminent risk of staying in a place not meant for human habitation.”**
- Call Senate President Therese Murray (617-722-1500) and House Speaker Robert DeLeo (617-722-2500) to ask them to amend the EA Line Item 7004-0101 to ensure that Emergency Assistance shelter be provided to such families!**

For more information or to report back on your outreach, please contact the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless 781-595-7570 (Kelly Turley x17 kelly@mahomeless.org) or the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute 617-357-0700 (Ruth Bourquin x333 rbourquin@mlri.org).