



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

For Immediate Release May 19, 2016

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Single Adults Falling Through the Cracks of Homelessness Prevention into Housing Instability

LYNN, MA: There are thousands of low-income people across the Commonwealth who are living day after day in an infinite loop of housing instability. Being one step away from homelessness is a reality now more than ever for both Individuals and families alike—sadly without adequate homelessness prevention resources available.

In state fiscal year 2015, the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program (RAFT) successfully helped stabilize over 3,700 low-income families with dependent children who were in immediate need of homelessness prevention assistance. The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless and 60 other statewide organizations have prioritized expanding access to RAFT to allow ***households without minor children also to become eligible, to increase funding to serve new populations, and to try to ensure that RAFT is a year-round program for households.***

Joe, is a retired 67-year-old man with a monthly pension. Joe and his wife were getting by but then his wife was diagnosed with untreatable cancer. After a short battle, Joe's wife passed. Joe's two sons did not deal with the loss well. Within two months of Joe's wife passing, his oldest son overdosed and died and his younger son, overwhelmed with the family's double tragedy, committed suicide. The loss of his family sent Joe into spiral that left him with enormous medical bills that led to him losing his home. Joe spent months on the streets looking for help and was told he did not qualify because he did not have any dependent children. Joe was put on a waiting list for senior housing and was told it would be 2 to 6 years before a unit would be available. Joe has remained without stable housing, in and out of shelters, hotels, hospitals, and sleeping behind local businesses throughout this past winter.

"I believe that RAFT is an essential prevention resources for individuals like Joe, who have been forgotten by the current system," said Pamela Edwards, a Community Organizer at the Massachusetts Senior Action Council.



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The expansion of RAFT could help assist individuals like Joe and others without minor children, such as elders, adults with disabilities, and unaccompanied youth who are falling victim to crises and between the cracks of homelessness prevention resources in Massachusetts.

"Since fiscal year 2005, RAFT has been a critical homelessness prevention resource for families with children. The time is now to expand access to this highly effective prevention program to unaccompanied youth, elders, people with disabilities, and all household types. By doing so, we can promote housing stability and reduce needless suffering across the Commonwealth," said Kelly Turley, the Coalition's Director of Legislative Advocacy.

The Coalition urges you to ask your state legislators to take action to prevent homelessness by supporting an \$18.5 million investment in RAFT (line item 7004-9316) and by expanding the eligibility criteria to all household types. By expanding RAFT, we can help thousands of our neighbors avoid the loss of a home and lift people out of the shelter cycle.

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