



## MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

### **Everyone Needs ID: Take Action to Provide Identification to Youth and Adults Experiencing Homelessness**

**Please cosponsor and actively support House Bill 3750 and Senate Bill 2399, An Act to provide identification to youth and adults experiencing homelessness**

**Sponsored by Representative Jim O'Day, Representative Sean Garballey, and Senator Robyn Kennedy**

**House Bill 3750 and Senate Bill 2399, An Act to provide identification to youth and adults experiencing homelessness, would:**

- Establish a fee waiver process for youth and adults experiencing homelessness seeking standard Mass IDs
- Create a process for individuals experiencing homelessness to apply for standard Mass IDs if they cannot meet the existing criteria by allowing ID applicants who are experiencing homelessness to submit residency documentation from providers of homelessness and/or youth services and state agencies under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)

**Importance of this legislation:** Obtaining a state identification card is a critical first step for youth and adults experiencing homelessness to accomplish typical life tasks and access opportunities. ID is required for a broad range of life activities, such as:

- Applying for housing and employment
- Enrolling in education programs
- Getting a library card
- Picking up mail or packages from the post office
- Opening financial accounts
- Entering certain government buildings
- Accessing essential services
- Interacting with law enforcement

In the most recent Massachusetts Youth Count, conducted in the spring of 2024 and released in January 2025, the Massachusetts Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission further explored barriers that unaccompanied young people under the age of 25 faced in accessing needed resources and services. Preliminary data revealed that not having a Massachusetts ID was a top barrier in accessing the services they needed.<sup>1</sup> The 2022 Youth Count survey dove deeper into the experiences of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness without IDs and key documents and found that 22% of young people reported facing barriers to accessing cash assistance, 22% seeking nutritional assistance, 19% seeking health care, 17% seeking employment, 16% seeking long-term housing, and 16% seeking shelter or transitional housing.<sup>2</sup>

With the implementation of the REAL ID Act across the country, more states have recognized the need for an alternative identification card accessible to people experiencing homelessness. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia already offer free or reduced fee IDs for people experiencing homelessness, and 6 states offer free or reduced fee IDs specifically for youth experiencing homelessness.<sup>3</sup> It is time for Massachusetts to step up and join those states, especially at a time when the Commonwealth's severe housing crisis complicates achieving housing stability for people experiencing homelessness.

**Legislative sponsors/cosponsors of the Everyone Needs ID bill:** As of April 11<sup>th</sup>, the bill has been sponsored or cosponsored by Representatives O'Day (**sponsor**), Garballey (**sponsor**), Arena-DeRosa, Barber, Blais, Decker, Domb,

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission. (2025). Massachusetts Youth Count 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/yc24report>. Most recently accessed March 18, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission. (2023). Massachusetts Youth Count 2022. <https://tinyurl.com/yc22report>. Most recently accessed March 13, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> SchoolHouse Connection. State Laws on Vital Records. <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/state-laws-on-vital-records>. Most recently accessed March 14, 2025.

DuBois, Gómez, Kushmerek, Montañó, Owens, Sabadosa, Sena, Vitolo, Whipps, and Worrell, and Senators R. Kennedy (**sponsor**), DiDomenico, Keenan, Lovely, O'Connor, and Tarr.

**96 statewide organizational endorsers of the Everyone Needs ID bill:** As of April 11<sup>th</sup>, the bill has been endorsed by Abby's House, Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT), Allston Brighton Health Collaborative, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Massachusetts, Boston Alliance of LGBTQ+ Youth (BAGLY), Boston Community Chaplain Ministry, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP), Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Share Network, Brazilian Women's Group, Breaktime, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Catholic Charities Worcester County, Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Children's League of Massachusetts, Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton Development Organization, Inc. (CAN-DO), Citizens for Juvenile Justice, City of Boston, Human Services Cabinet, Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc., Community Service Network, Inc, Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, Coordinated Response Team with the Mayor's Office, City of Boston, Disability Law Center, Dismas House, Duffy Health Center, Faith Leaders for Housing Justice, Fall River Comprehensive Treatment Center, Family Health Center of Worcester, Family Promise North Shore Boston, Father Bill's & MainSpring, Fenway Health, First Church Shelter, Franklin County DIAL SELF Inc., Friends of Boston's Homeless, Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), Grow Food Northampton, Hearthway, Inc., Housing Families, Inc., Housing Greenfield, Justice 4 Housing, Justice Center of Southeast MA, JVS Boston, Lazarus House Inc., League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, Legal Key Legal Key Partnership for Health and Justice, LEO, Inc., Mass Senior Action Council, Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth, Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance (MHSA), Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Massachusetts Peace Action, Matthew Aronson Consulting, Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens, City of Boston, My Life My Choice, Northeast Justice Center, On the Rise, One Family, Opportunity Communities, LLC., Out Now, Park Avenue Congregational Church, Plymouth Task Force to End Homelessness, Poor People's United Fund, Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts, Program RISE/JRI Health, Progressive Massachusetts, REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, Roca, Inc., Rosie's Place, Safe Passage, School on Wheels of MA, SeniorCare Inc., Shelter Music Boston, Solidarity Lowell, Somerville Community Corporation, Southeast Center for Independent Living, Springfield Youth Against Homelessness, St. Clare of Assisi, Stop Bullying Coalition, Sweet Scents, Temple Sinai of Sharon, MA, The Center for Teen Empowerment, The Haven Project, Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network, United South End Settlements, United Way of Greater Fall River, Uniting Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton (U-CHAN), Vasquez Mary Kay, Warm Up Boston, Wellspring Multi-Service Centers, Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness, Y2Y Harvard Square, Y2Y Network, and YWCA Cambridge.

**Bill status/history:** The bills were filed in January 2025 and assigned to the Joint Committee on Transportation on February 27, 2025. In the past four legislative sessions (starting in 2017), the Joint Committee on Transportation and Senate Committee on Ways and Means reported out favorably similar versions of the Mass ID access bill. In July 2023, the Senate unanimously passed the bill for the fourth session in a row.

**Please actively support swift passage of the #EveryoneNeedsID Mass ID Access bill to increase access for people experiencing homelessness to standard Mass IDs.**

**For more information, please contact the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless: Julia Garvey, [julia@mahomeless.org](mailto:julia@mahomeless.org), or 781-595-7570 x36 or Kelly Turley, [kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org) or 781-595-7570 x17.**