



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

# Emergency Assistance (EA) Commission

Meeting 3

September 16, 2024

CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT: FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES





## Agenda

**[5 min] Introduction, Review & Approval of Last Meeting Notes, Preview of Upcoming Sessions**

**[25 min] Presentations on Requested Topics:**

- Work Authorization & Employment
- TRC Model and Metrics

**[60 min] Deep Dive Discussion on Long-Term System Planning Options and Next Steps for the Commission**



# Upcoming Topics

## EA Commission Questions & Topics to Address

- How do we make the EA program more **efficient and sustainable**?
- Where are families exiting to, and how do we better provide **exit opportunities**?
- How do we move EA towards **fiscal & operational sustainability**?
- How are we developing **regional strategies** to address homelessness?
- How can we best match **service delivery** to the needs of different populations?
- How are we facilitating **work authorization** for new arrival families and connecting them with employment opportunities?
- How can we ensure we integrate learnings from this crisis into a **future EA plan** for scaling the system up/down?

Month	Session Topic
August	Temporary Respite Center (TRC) Model Updates on Diversion & Exits
September	TRC Model Updates Work authorization & employment
October	Provider regional model
November	Wrap Up & Next Steps



# Work Authorization and Employment

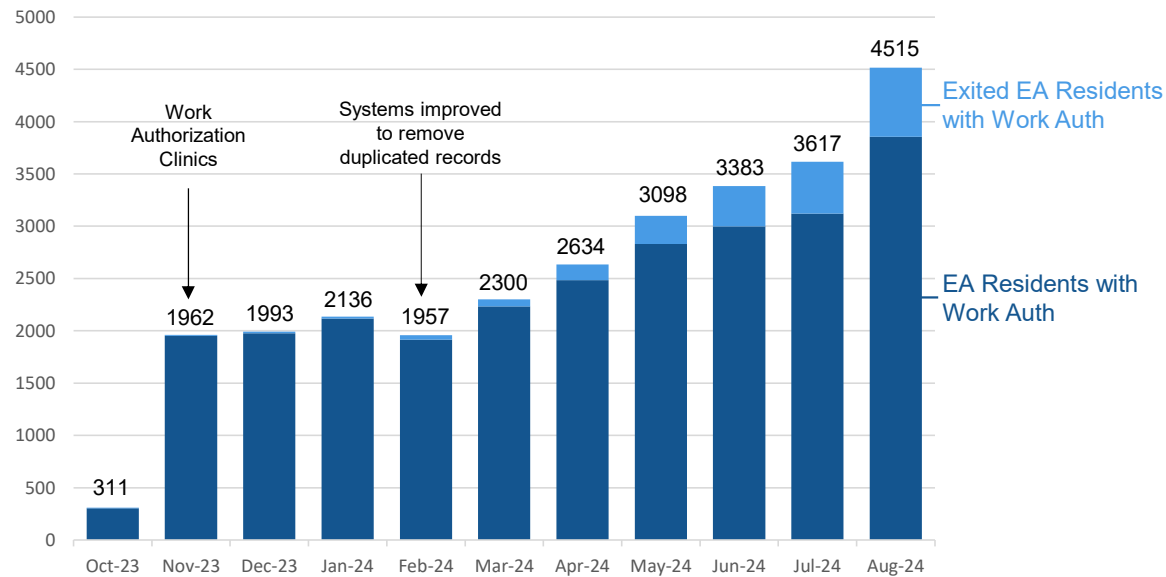


# Work Authorization: What we see in the data

*We are approaching 3,900 work authorization approvals for new arrival families in Massachusetts*

## Work Authorization in EA Family Shelter

EA residents and recently exited EA residents reporting that they have a work permit by month, excluding US Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents



## Ongoing Work

- Continuing to host Lawyer for a Day program at Family Welcome Centers
- Through existing legal services contracts, addressing lapsing work authorizations through expanded TPS provisions for Haitians in the US

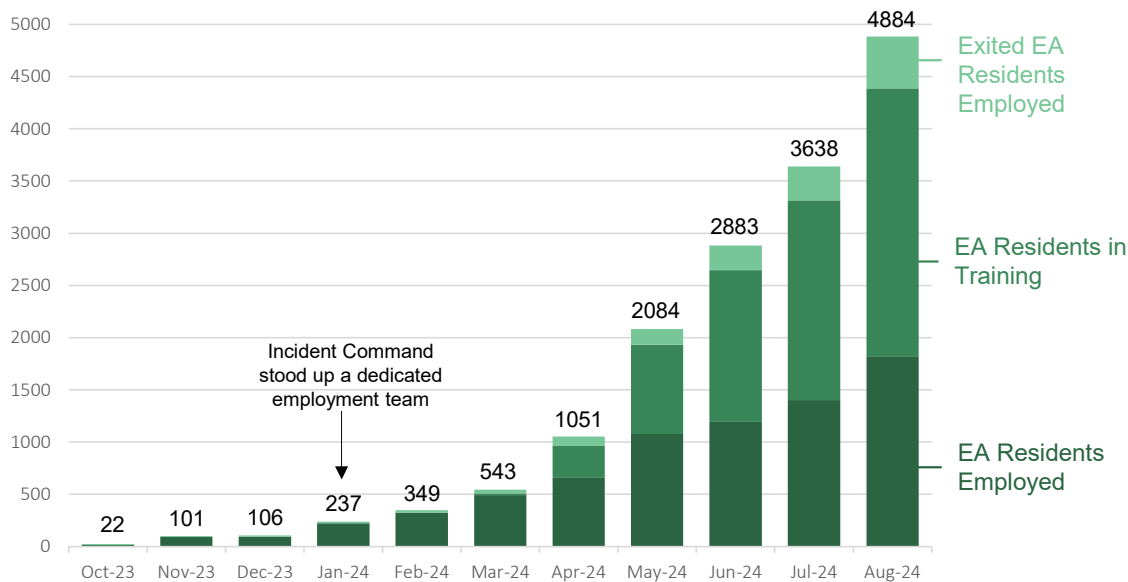


# Employment : What we see in the data

*We are working with employers and partners to provide employment and training opportunities.*

## Employment and Training in EA Family Shelter

EA residents and recently exited EA residents reporting that they are employed or in job training by month, including US Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents



## Ongoing Work

- Developed infrastructure to capture job placement data on regular basis
- Scaling capacity for EA residents, e.g., expanding MassHire efforts
- Procuring trainings directed specifically towards EA resident career development
  - Contextualized - ESOL training programs
  - Sector-focused trainings to expand career opportunities (i.e. advanced manufacturing, health and human services, and hospitality)



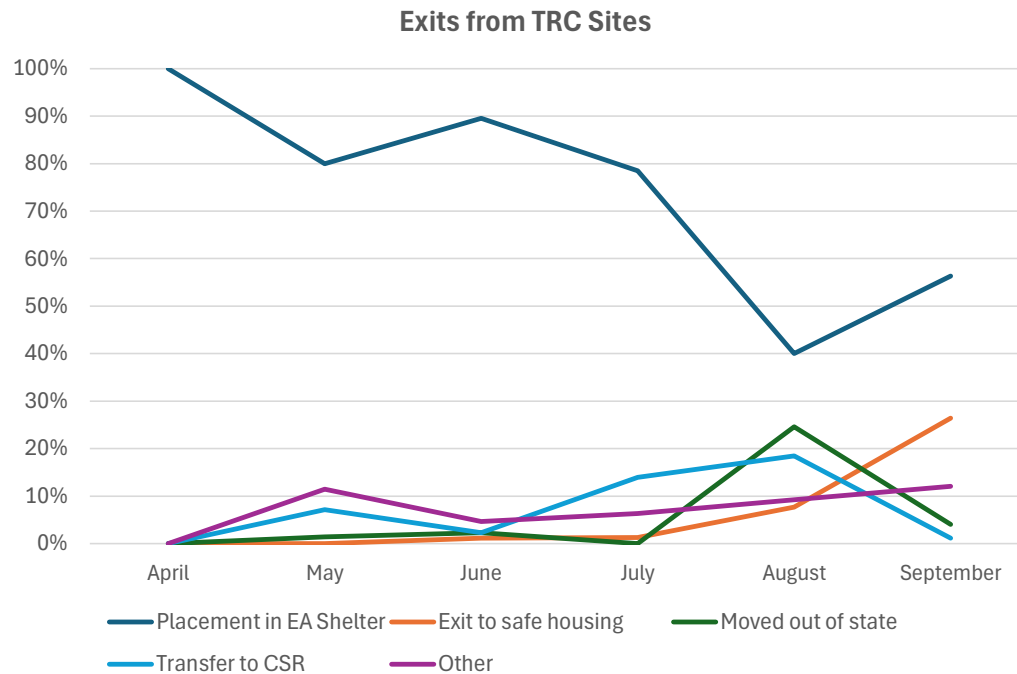
# TRC Model and Metrics



Data as of 9/10 5PM

## Implementation Metrics Since 8/1: Temporary Respite Centers

*Since transitioning the overflow sites to the Temporary Respite Center model, we have seen a substantial increase in diversions to safe housing options from the shelter system*



### Preliminary Takeaways from August 1st Policy Shift:

- Given capacity constraints, reducing the number of families staying in places not meant for human habitation (hospitals, airport, train stations) requires **focus on diverting families from EA and to safe housing**.
- **Intensive case management and reducing barriers to benefits for diverting from shelter** key to supporting families in rapidly finding safe housing options and reducing strain on shelter system.
- **Timebound expectations** on shelter stays creates better alignment across providers and families on diversion goals from shelter.

Data as of 9/12; September data includes projections based on current case management work with families





# Long-Term System Planning



## Guiding Principles for the EA Shelter System

*Last session, we discussed the key principles we want to work towards for the EA shelter system.*

### **Rare**

- How do we ensure all stakeholders, including families, share expectations for shelter being rare and for emergency situations?
- How do we improve homelessness prevention and shelter diversion tools so families can avoid entering shelter?

### **Brief**

- How do we meet the needs of different family populations?
- How do we provide intensive case management to support families in rapidly rehousing?
- Should we maintain a Length of Stay policy for the EA program after the crisis?

### **Non-Recurring**

- How do we support families on a path to stable housing as they leave shelter?



## Who is using the EA Family Shelter System?

*How do we align the key principles of EA shelter – rare, brief, and non-recurring – with the different needs of the families that use the system?*

Examples of families with different needs in the EA family shelter system include:

### Family 1:

**New arrival family where both parents have work authorization**

*Needs shorter term emergency housing and assistance to find a job, longer-term housing, language support post-exit*

### Family 2:

**Family that has been evicted from Massachusetts housing due to sudden loss of employment**

*Needs assisting in remediating eviction history, increasing income, and stabilization assistance*

### Family 3:

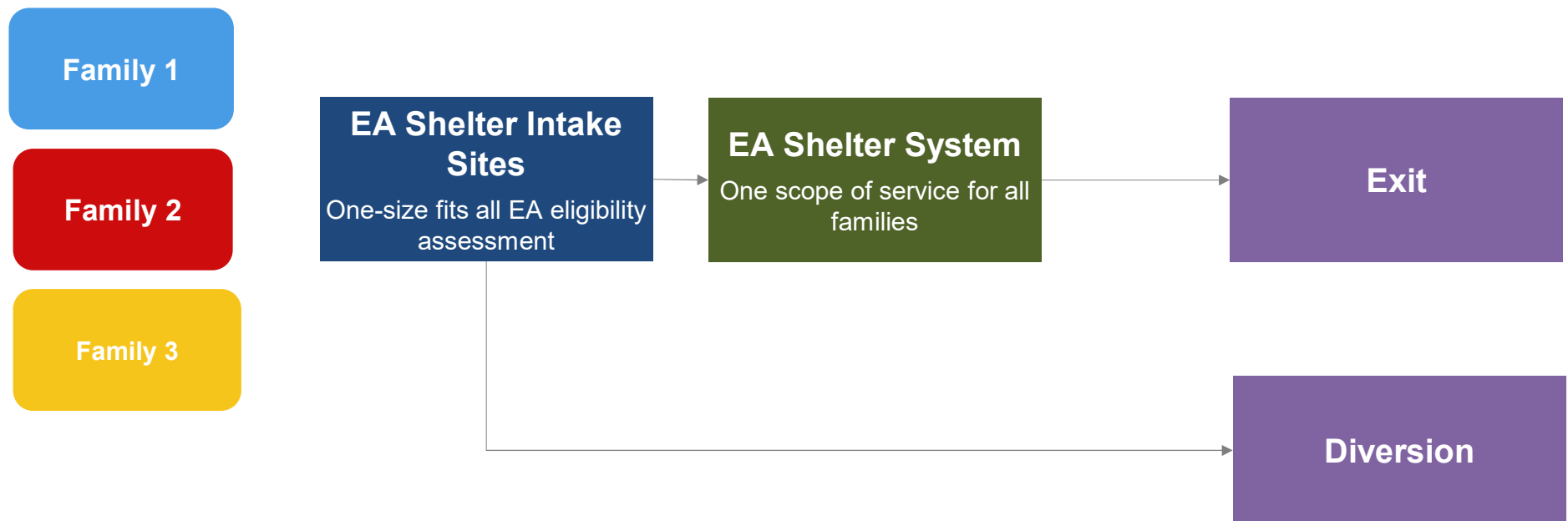
**A family (new arrival or MA resident) that has a child with multiple chronic conditions and disability requiring high levels of medical and educational care**

*Needs longer-term housing stability and access to intensive health services*



## What are family journeys through the EA Family Shelter System?

*Just over a year ago, all three families would have followed a similar path through the EA shelter system and would have accessed the system on a first-come, first-serve basis.*



*This system lacked prioritization, particularly for families with imminent health and safety needs, and had fewer supports for families attempting to exit shelter.*

# Throughout the last year, we have developed new approaches to support families



*The below range of levers has been used to update the system and provide different pathways for families with diverse sets of needs.*



**Needs-Based Assessment** – assessing family need (based on health and safety), assigning prioritizations between 1 and 4 based on this assessment, and providing access to different levels of care based on prioritization determination.



**Service Delivery Model** – placing families on tracks to different levels of service based on assessed needs.



**Length of Stay Policy** – 9-month time limit with the ability to request extensions.



**Tools Model** – reforming and increasing resources towards diversion and exit tools to reduce time in shelter.

# How do we make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring for families with differing strengths and needs?



*Shifts in policy and service models work towards achieving goals of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring for families and reduce strain on the EA system*

	Family 1 (New arrival)	Family 2 (Family w/ eviction)	Family 3 (medically complex family)
<b>Key Challenges</b>	Traditional EA front door and service delivery model lacked services for stabilizing new arrivals	Rapid stabilization through prevention and diversion key, but shelter may still be necessary for mitigating impact of income shocks and eviction	Long-term rental assistance paired with wraparound services may be required for ongoing stability
<b>Rare</b>	<b>Intervention:</b> Family Welcome Centers with immigrant-specific services	<b>Intervention:</b> Access to RAFT, eviction prevention and diversion supports	<b>Intervention:</b> Clinical and Safety Risk Assessment sites
<b>Brief</b>	<b>Intervention:</b> Intensive case management & diversion in Temporary Respite Centers	<b>Intervention:</b> Case management, employment & rehousing, and length of stay	<b>Intervention:</b> More extensive EA case management + health-related services
<b>Non-recurring</b>	<b>Intervention:</b> Diversion services, HomeBASE, and stabilization	<b>Intervention:</b> HomeBASE, stabilization, employment services	<b>Goal Intervention:</b> Stable housing option such as permanent supportive housing



# Long-term system planning

*How do we further ensure this system meets our family needs while meeting EA system principles and acting within our fiscal and operational constraints?*

## *EA Principles*

Rare

Brief

Non-Recurring

## *System Levers*



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# Engaging External Partners





## External Partner Engagement

*The commission has received input and requests for engagement with external partners.*

### **We plan to conduct a series of listening sessions with external partners between now and December**

- Listening sessions will be with key external partners:
  - Providers
  - Community based organizations and advocates
  - Municipalities
- These sessions will focus on the challenges these groups have dealt with in serving EA families and the surrounding communities and their recommendations for improving the system.
- Additional information to follow and commission members and staff are encouraged to join.