



Housing First
for Hampden, Hampshire,
Franklin and Berkshire Counties

Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness FY25 Senate Budget Amendment Co-Sponsorship Requests

Amendment #435 (Sen. Mark) - Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness to fund the Network's fiscal agent, United Way of Pioneer Valley, \$50,000 to support housing stability and homelessness prevention programs

Amendment #240 (Sen. Gomez) – Improvements to the RAFT Homelessness Prevention Program to allow eligible households to access up to \$10,000 in RAFT funds in a 12-month period, up from the current cap of \$7,000; move RAFT benefits upstream by prohibiting EOHLC from imposing a notice to quit requirement on households seeking assistance with back rent; require direct-to-tenant payments in cases where the landlord is not cooperative with the application and documentation process; and direct EOHLC to provide forward rent payments for eligible households if the award would not exceed the 12-month benefit cap.

Amendment #284 (Sen. Edwards) - Housing Consumer Education Centers to restore funding to FY24 levels (\$10.474m), up from the \$8.97 funded in the Senate Ways and Means budget, in order to allow the HCECs to continue to serve the significant demand for housing assistance that still persists.

Amendment #218 (Sen. Lovely) – Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) to codify MRVP into state statute; ensure that any unspent funds from one fiscal year would be carried into the next fiscal year; enshrine the ability to use Small Area Fair Market Rents in determining payment standards; require inspections of units before the initial assistance payments are made and at least every two years after that; and require data collection and reporting.

Amendments #241 (Sen. Gomez,), #603 (Sen. Payano), and #337 (Sen. Eldridge) to Improve Emergency Assistance for Children and Families. These amendments would expand tracking and reporting language to include data on families placed on the EA waiting list; require EOHLC to make every effort to place families approved for EA immediately in traditional shelters, hotels/motels, or overflow spaces; create an ombudsperson unit within EOHLC, with language similar to that which was enacted with the FY22 budget; clarify that EOHLC should not consider shelter benefits received prior to June 1, 2024 in calculating participants' eligibility for ongoing EA shelter benefits; and officially remove the EA asset limit.

Amendment #323 (Sen. Jehlen) - Improvements to HomeBASE to allow families to renew HomeBASE benefits beyond 3 years if needed and provide upstream access to benefits to prevent the loss of existing housing and to promote housing stability.

Amendment #458 (Sen. Gomez) - Cliff Effect Pilot Project to fund this pilot program for \$100,000 in order to effectively demonstrate how it is possible to remove the penalty of losing crucial benefits while gaining income through employment.

Amendment #892 (Sen. R. Kennedy) - Identification for youth and adults experiencing homelessness to add \$75,000 to the Massachusetts Transportation Trust Fund to provide no-cost Mass IDs to youth and adults experiencing homelessness. It would build on legislation unanimously passed by the Senate in July 2023.

Amendment #578 (Senator DeDomenico) - Lift Kids Out of Poverty by raising TAFDC and EAEDC cash assistance grants 10% in October 2024, 6 months earlier than these increases would take effect under the Senate Ways and Means Committee Proposal.