

Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Policy Changes

April 2025

Please be advised that recording meetings, by any means, including the use of any A.I. applications, without prior permission is strictly prohibited.

Agenda

1. Win of the Month – Rehousing Totals
2. Overview EA Policy Changes in April / Family Journey
3. Intake and Eligibility Changes
4. Length of Stay Changes
5. Shelter Safety & Security Changes
6. Next Steps
7. Q&A

Win of the Month – Rehousing Totals (Bridge Shelter)

Rehousing / Exit numbers in the Bridge Shelter track have month over month been the highest the EA Program has ever seen.

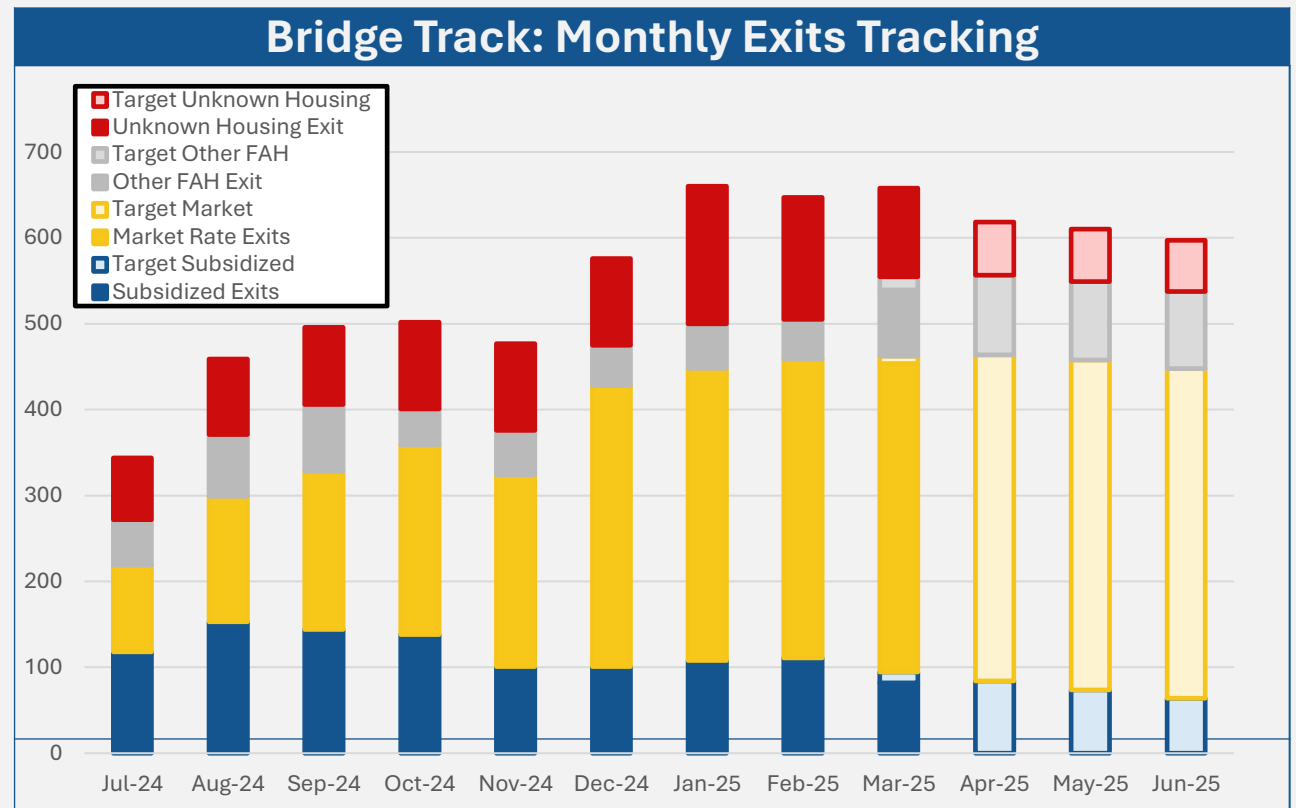
January 2025: **551**

February 2025: **633**

March 2025: **661**

Thank you for all you are doing to support families to exit to stable housing!

EA Exits Dashboard Last Updated: 4/1/2025





01

EA CHANGES OVERVIEW

High Level Summary of FY25 Supplemental Budget Implementation

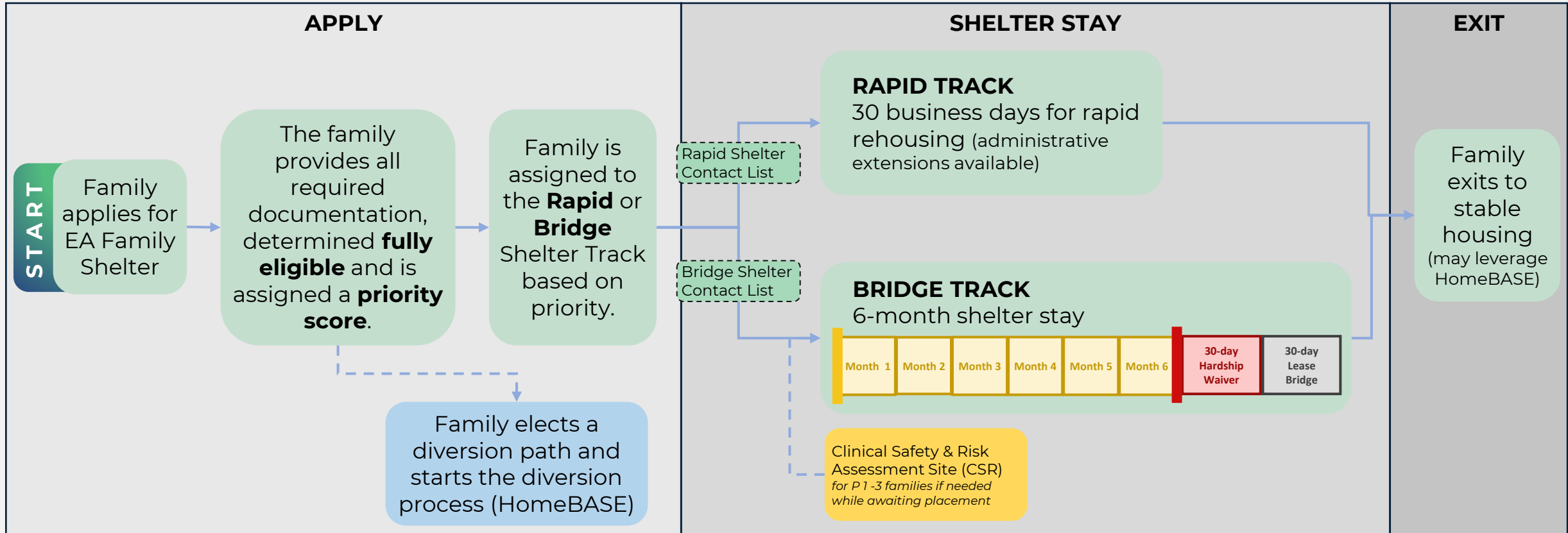
The FY25 supplemental budget, signed on February 28, 2025, appropriated \$425M to sustain the Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter program through June 2025.

Implementing these changes builds on progress we have made to **continue transforming the EA Program to serve more families, improve safety, and help families rapidly rehouse**. We are thoughtfully implementing these new required policies to align with both the recommendations put forth in the EA Commission report (Nov. 2024) and with our mission to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring with operationally and fiscally sustainable programs.

✓ Launched Dec 2024 / Jan. 2025	✓ Launched Mar 7	✓ Launched Mar 14	Launching April 11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced two track system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rapid Shelters ○ Bridge Shelters • Announced and started to close all hotels by Dec. 2025 • Implemented CORI policy to improve shelter safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made intake and eligibility changes to require verification of identity, familial relationship, and criminal background check prior to placement • Introduced new residency and lawful status requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued CORI regulations including exclusions from shelter for household members with certain serious crimes on their record • Lowered system capacity level from 7,500 to 5,800 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require full eligibility before placement (select scenarios for temporary verification waivers) • Provide 6mo LOS notices at intake and update LOS hardship waiver policy • Implement changes for excess income and mandatory transfer • Update Bridge Shelter Uniform Shelter Rules based on EDC Report

New Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Journey

Starting on April 11th this is what the family journey will generally look like across the EA System.





02

INTAKE & ELIGIBILITY

Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Eligibility Changes

EOHLC will issue regulation and guidance updates that take effect on April 11th.

Changes to EA eligibility

- Families must be fully eligible to be placed in shelter (eliminate presumptive eligibility). Temporary verification waivers may be provided for certain high risk/need families.
- Families must provide proof of MA residency and intent to remain in the state *(implementation began in March 2025 through attestation form)*
- Families must prove that they have lawful immigration status *(implementation began in March 2025 through attestation form)*
- Families entering shelter must be fully eligible to receive HomeBASE.
- Families cannot have income exceeding 200% FPL for more than 4 months in shelter *(reduced from 6 months to align with new 6-month LOS period)*
- EOHLC will make best efforts to place families within 20-miles of their home community, but it is not required or appealable
- Families will be prioritized based on updated criteria reflected in the Emergency Guidance issued on 4/11/2025

Full Eligibility Required for EA Family Shelter

Starting April 11, families will need to be **fully eligible** to be placed into Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter (Rapid or Bridge Track) with temporary (up to 30 days) case-specific waivers. This means families will need to verify (e.g., provide documents):



Proof of ID for all family members



Proof of Familial Relationship to all children in the household



Consent to a criminal background check (CORI) with no convictions or pending charges for serious crimes leading to ineligibility



Proof of MA Residency for all family members over 18 years of age



Lawful Status for all family members, or at least one child under 18 in household with lawful status



Qualifying reason for homelessness



Lack of feasible alternative housing



Income and assets



All families on the EA Contact List as of April 11 must be fully eligible to be placed into shelter



Temporary verification waivers may be available for families meeting certain criteria

Lawful Status & MA Residency Requirement Updates

In March 2025, we implemented new requirements for Lawful Status & Residency.



New Lawful Status Requirement

- Each member of the family must have a lawful immigration status, or at least one child under 18 in the household with a lawful immigration status.
- EOHLC will work with families to collect immigration status documents for all individuals.



New MA Residency Requirement

- Each member of the family must be a resident of Massachusetts who intends to remain in Massachusetts permanently or indefinitely.
- The family must provide documents for all household members over 18 to prove this.

Temporary Verification Waivers

In specific cases, waivers may be granted to allow families to enter shelter before they are determined to be fully eligible. These waivers will only be granted to families with a Priority 1 status on a case-by-case basis.



Waiver Standards

To receive a waiver, families must at a minimum:

- Verify identity and familial relationship
- Consent to a criminal background check (CORI) check
- Return criminal background check (CORI) results with no convictions or pending charges for serious crimes leading to ineligibility
- Attest that they meet all other eligibility requirements as part of the application



*Families with a temporary verification waiver will receive up to **30 days** to produce documentation or they will be denied.*

EA Priority Criteria Updates and Waivers

EA priority criteria has been updated as shown in the table below.

Priority Score	Updated Criteria as of April 11, 2025
<p>P1</p> <p><i>*Only P1 families are eligible for a waiver</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imminent risk of domestic violence • Family member aged 0-3 months • Family member with high-risk pregnancy • Family homeless due to fire, flood, other disasters in MA • Family member who has an intellectual or developmental disability [previously P2] • Family member who is receiving SSDI or SSI [new] • Family member who has a disability as verified by DTA [new] • At least one family member who is a veteran and not accessing veteran services [previously P3]
<p>P2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCF assessment identified imminent risk of harm [previously P1] • Family member with immunocompromised condition [previously P1] • Family member with medical device [previously P1] • DCF reunification and placement protocol [previously P1] • Family member aged more than 3 months up to 9 months • Family member in 3rd-trimester of pregnancy • Family member with three or more chronic conditions • Family member with medications requiring refrigeration • Family with primary caregiver aged 70 years or more
<p>P3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-fault eviction • Family exiting DCF Young Parent Living Program • Family with a veteran not otherwise captured in P1 definition of veteran
<p>P4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family does not meet criteria above



03

BRIDGE SHELTER LENGTH OF STAY

Our Guiding Principles

What did we learn from LOS 1.0?

- 1 Clarity and Simplicity Are Important**
Families, providers, advocates, and HLC benefit from a clear and simple policy that we can easily understand and communicate.
- 2 Avoid Bunching Exits**
Concentrations of exits are hard to manage for both providers and HLC staff, due to the workload associated with each exit.
- 3 Exit Timelines Vary**
We begin to see some families exit very soon after notice, but others will need the full 6 months to plan for exit. Providers have told us that the notice creates urgency for families.
- 4 Processes Take Time to Embed**
We have all learned a 180-day notice to exit cadence, but it took time to get there.



How does this inform LOS 2.0?

- Set clear timelines and avoid complex processes
- Avoid inconsistent or overlapping policies



- Distribute exit dates over time to avoid large peaks



- Give notices earlier, with a longer period for families to plan for exit



- Stick to routines once they are set and make big changes at the same time

Current State vs. Future State for Bridge Shelter Length of Stay

Following the passage of the supplemental budget, a 6-month length of stay in shelter is now law. We are beginning implementation of the law in April.

	Current State		Future State
Notification Timeline	Families receive a LOS notice at 9 months, or later.	→	Families receive their LOS Exit Date as part of their Placement Letter.
Days to Exit after Notice	Every family who receives a LOS notice has 6 months (180 days) to exit (+ hardship waiver and lease bridge)	=	Every family who receives a LOS notice will still have 6 months (180 days) to exit (+ hardship waiver and lease bridge)
Hardship Waiver	120 days for eligible families who apply with narrow criteria, families can be granted multiple hardship waivers (Hardship waivers are rare, less than 5% of families)	→	30 days for eligible families who apply, with broad criteria, families only get one (1) hardship waiver (New law specifies hardship waiver criteria that applies to ~80% of families)
Lease Bridge	Lease Bridge – 14 business days for eligible families	→	Lease Bridge – 30 calendar days for eligible families

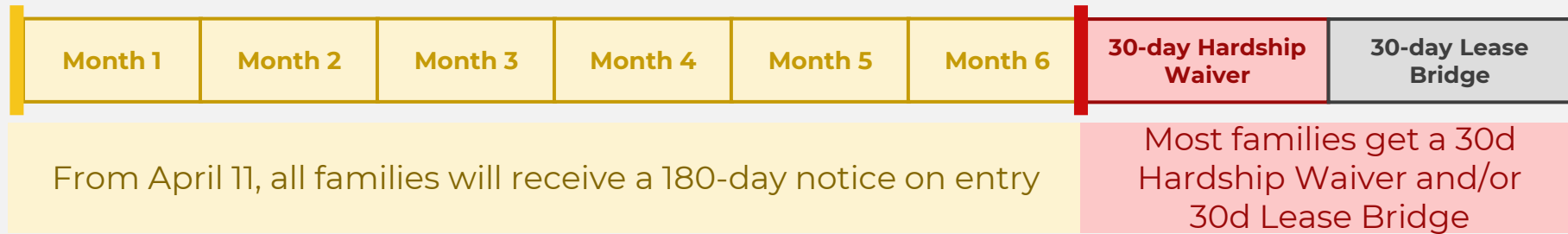


What does this mean for rehousing? We expect higher exit numbers and more HomeBASE applications. There will be a continued focus on rehousing in shelter from entry.

Updates to the Hardship Waiver Criteria

EOHLC is changing the Hardship Waiver process. The supplemental budget requires Hardship Waiver criteria include families with:

- Children under 6
- Imminent risk of DV*
- High risk pregnancy*
- Documented disability*
- Veterans not accessing veterans' services*
- Imminent placement in housing (Lease Bridge)
- Families may receive **one 30-day Hardship Waiver** that they must apply for in month 5 of their shelter stay
- Families with a signed lease, or promissory note if moving to a PBV unit or public housing, may **also** qualify for **one 30-day Lease Bridge** on top of the Hardship Waiver
- Families denied a hardship waiver or lease bridge will have an opportunity to **request reconsideration** if they provide additional information to HLC within 7 calendar days of denial.
- If families need to **re-apply for shelter** after reaching their LoS, providers should fill out [this form](#) and send to the emails on the form to expedite the process.



*aligned with p1 criteria at intake

How the 6-Month Length of Stay Will Apply

All families in Bridge shelter will be subject to 6-month LOS starting in April.

Families in Shelter on or before April 10th



Families in shelter **who already have a length of stay notice** will retain their existing exit date. Current length of stay notices provide 6 months (180 days) to exit.



Families in shelter **without an exit date** will receive a LOS notice over the next few months (before 9 months). They will have 6 months (180 days) from their notice to exit.



Families will be subject to the **new hardship waiver process**

Families Entering Shelter After April 10th (April 11th on)



Families will **receive their LOS Exit Date in their placement letter**. Families will be provided 6 months (180 days) to exit.



Families will be subject to the **new hardship waiver process**



04

SAFETY

Criminal Background Checks Regulations

Since the beginning of 2025, we have taken several actions on criminal background checks

January 2025 – CORI checks were conducted for all adults 18 years of age or older in shelter and all applying family members 18 years of age or older.

March 2025 – CORI regulations were issued.

- 1.** Adults applying for EA cannot be placed prior to their criminal background check (CORI) being completed.
- 2.** Families will be denied EA benefits if they:
 - Do not consent to a criminal background check (CORI)
 - Fail to disclose past criminal convictions or pending criminal charges
 - Have been convicted of, or have pending charges, for certain serious crimes
 - Have been convicted of, or have pending charges, in the last three years for certain serious crimes without a determination of mitigating circumstances.

NEW

April 2025 – Families may disclose criminal convictions or pending charges in any jurisdiction, including outside of the United States. They will be asked for the date of the crime or pending charge and the nature of the conviction.

Shelter Safety and Security Changes for Bridge Shelter

The following changes are being implemented in April as a result of the Shelter Safety and Security Report from the Ed Davis Company (EDC) that was released in March. We will continue to work with the EDC team and EA Providers to develop and implement new and more uniform guidance for onsite shelter security measures over the coming months.



Uniform Shelter Rule Updates

- Possession or storage of weapons of any kind is prohibited on shelter property (as it has always been) and will result in termination.
- This will no longer be a non-compliance offense.



Warrants Process Update

- EOHLC will continue to run a warrant check on participants in EA shelter and on the contact list.
- Participants will have 5 business days, instead of 30 days, to clear their outstanding warrant.

What is next?

- **Today (April 7th @ 3:30):** EA Provider All Staff Monthly Meeting (Overview of policy changes at this regularly scheduled meeting with the all staff of providers)
- **April 9th @ 1:00:** EA Provider All Staff: Deep Dive on Length of Stay and Policy Changes
- **April 14th @ 3:30:** EA Provider Executive Leads Monthly Meeting
- **Week of April 14 (and beyond):** Additional office hours and briefings as needed (to be scheduled)
- **Open Office Hours:**
 - April 10th @ 10:30: Inspections
 - April 17th @ 2:00: HomeBASE
 - April 24th @ 10:00: ADA
 - April 30th @ 10:00: Noncompliance



Open Q & A



05

APPENDIX

Sources of Change

The changes in EA policy are coming from three sources.

FY26 EA Policy Changes

On November 22, 2024, the Administration announced systemwide changes that lay out a path to fiscal and operational sustainability aligned with the EA Commission report.

The FY26 policy changes were summarized across four key categories:

- Risk/Needs-Based Shelter Model
- Right-Sized Portfolio Strategy
- New, Targeted Exit and Diversion Strategies
- Additional Safety and Background Check Protocols

FY25 Supp Changes

On February 28, 2025, the Administration signed an Emergency Assistance supplemental budget that included policy changes aimed at improving safety and fiscal sustainability of the EA Family Shelter System.

Changes could be grouped into five categories:

- CORIs / Criminal Convictions
- Residency and Lawful Status Documentation
- Eligibility
- Length of Stay

EDC Shelter Safety Report

The Administration contracted former Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis's firm, the Ed Davis Company (EDC), to conduct an in-depth assessment of the security and safety conditions across the EA shelter system. On February 28, 2025 the Shelter Safety and Security Report was released with in-depth recommendations for how to improve the security and safety of EA Shelter families and staff.

High Level Summary of FY25 Supplemental Budget

The FY25 supplemental budget, signed on Friday, February 28, 2025, appropriates **\$425M** enabling EOHLC to sustain the Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter program through June 2025. It includes a number of policy changes aimed at improving safety and fiscal sustainability of the EA Family Shelter System. Many of the policy changes are largely in line with the Administration's proposal from January 2025.

The EA system will be capped at 4,000 families in 2026 which is in line with current hotel closure plans.

Most of the changes cover the following 5 categories:

1. Criminal Background Checks
2. Residency and Lawful Status Documentation
3. Moving from Presumptive to Full Eligibility
4. Updates to Bridge Shelter Length of Stay
5. In-Shelter Changes

Policies will be implemented on a rolling basis.

10 Recommendations of the EA Commission Report

The report of the Special Commission on Emergency Housing Assistance Programs frames recommendations around the following principles for the EA system:

Family homelessness should be rare, brief, and non-recurring

The EA system should not be one-size-fits-all

The EA system should be operationally and fiscally sustainable

Report Recommendations

1. Ensure the EA Shelter System is Fiscally Sustainable
2. Ensure the EA Shelter System is Operationally Sustainable
3. Emphasize Prevention, Diversion, and Exit Tools
4. Limit Reliance on Hotels and Motels as EA Shelter
5. Maintain Policies that Set Clear Expectations and Outcomes
6. Move Toward a Needs-Based Model, Away from a One-Size-Fits-All Approach
7. Continue and Improve Regional EA Shelter System Management
8. Strengthen Affordable Housing Access Across Massachusetts
9. Improve Data Collection, Collaboration, and Analysis
10. Convene and Consult with Experts and Stakeholders

Prioritization Criteria and Shelter Placement

Priority Score	Criteria	Shelter Track	Requirement for Placement
P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imminent risk of domestic violence Family member aged 0-3 months Family member with high-risk pregnancy Family member who has an intellectual or developmental disability [moved from P2 criteria] Family member who is receiving SSDI or SSI [new] Family member who has a disability as verified by DTA [new] At least one family member who is a veteran and not accessing veteran services [moved from P3 criteria] Family homeless due to fire, flood, other disasters in MA 	Bridge Track (can include Clinical Safety & Risk (CSR) stay, if needed, while awaiting placement)	Full Eligibility or 30d Waiver <i>(families have 30 days to provide documents or they will be denied)</i>
P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCF assessment identified imminent risk of harm [moved from P1 criteria] Family member with immunocompromised condition [moved from P1 criteria] Family member with medical device [moved from P1 criteria] DCF reunification and placement protocol [moved from P1 criteria] Family member aged more than 3 months up to 9 months Family member in 3rd-trimester of pregnancy Family member with three or more chronic conditions Family member with medications requiring refrigeration Family with primary caregiver aged 70 years or more 	Bridge Track (can include CSR stay, if needed, while awaiting placement)	Full Eligibility
P3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No-fault eviction Family exiting DCF Young Parent Living Program Family with a veteran not otherwise captured in P1 definition of veteran 	Bridge Track (can include CSR stay, if needed, while awaiting placement)	Full Eligibility
P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family does not meet criteria above 	Rapid Track	Full Eligibility

Other Intake & Eligibility Changes

Families entering shelter after April 11 must meet full eligibility criteria to receive HomeBASE.



HomeBASE Program

- Families entering shelter after April 11 must be fully eligible to receive HomeBASE.



Excess Income

- Families in shelter will be ineligible for EA if they exceed 200% of FPL for 4 consecutive months (reduced from 6 consecutive months).



Mandatory Transfer Rule

- EOHLC will make best efforts to place a family within 20-mile of home community, but it is no longer required.

Criminal Background Check Adverse Actions

Some crimes will make a person ineligible for the EA program, and they may be denied shelter. In some situations, the person may be allowed in shelter but restricted in where they are placed.

What crimes* make someone ineligible for shelter?

An adult (18+) is not eligible for EA if they have been convicted or charged with certain crimes in any jurisdiction (including outside of MA). These crimes include:

- First or second degree murder;
- Voluntary manslaughter;
- Felonies involving child pornography, sex offenses, human trafficking, or failure to register by a sex offender;
- Felonies involving rape or sexual assault;
- Arson;
- Kidnapping;
- Felonies or misdemeanors involving firearms within the previous six years; and
- Felony drug trafficking within the previous 3 years.

What crimes* MAY make someone ineligible for shelter?

Certain crimes will make an adult (18+) ineligible for EA, but they have the chance to show mitigating circumstances. If EOHLC determines there were mitigating circumstances or if the conviction or charge is older than 3 years, the crimes listed below will not make them ineligible for shelter:

- Involuntary manslaughter;
- Felonies involving spousal or elder abuse;
- Felony assault and battery with a dangerous weapon causing serious bodily injury;
- Felonies involving violence against children;
- Armed or unarmed robbery; and
- Felony burglary or breaking and entering.



“Mitigating circumstances” explain to EOHLC that there are reasons why the conviction or pending charge should not make a family ineligible for EA shelter. Next slide for details.



Before EOHLC takes action because of a criminal conviction or pending criminal charge, we will provide: A Notice of Adverse Action; A copy of the CORI record; and Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record from the DCJIS.

**Crimes that are similar to the ones listed also make someone ineligible. This includes attempts or conspiracies to commit those crimes.*

Mitigating Circumstances

“Mitigating circumstances” explain to EOHLC that there are reasons why the conviction or pending charge should not make a family ineligible for EA shelter.

What are mitigating circumstances?

EOHLC will only consider whether there are mitigating circumstances if the individual submits documents for EOHLC to review. The following types of documents can be submitted for review:

1. a document from a qualified mental health professional saying that the person does not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to others in the EA Family Shelter Program;
2. a document from a criminal justice official, including a probation or parole officer, saying that the person does not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to others in the EA Family Shelter Program;
3. a document from another qualified individual saying that the person does not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to others in the EA Family Shelter Program; or
4. a document showing the charge was continued without a finding.



EOHLC will determine if the adult may be placed into shelter once this information is received.

Documentation to Verify Massachusetts Residency



These document types will be added to the EA Apply page on Mass.gov



EOHLC may rely on **one** document/method or **multiple** documents/methods to verify that the family consists of residents of MA who intend to remain in MA permanently or indefinitely. EOHLC must verify at least 1 of these documents for each adult aged 18+ in the family.

- Documentation, incl. screenshots, demonstrating **receipt of public benefits** in MA
- **MA driver's permit, driver's license, or ID card***
- **MA Firearms Card License** with photo, signature, residential address, and DOB*
- MA-issued **professional license***
- **Property or excise tax bill** for the current or immediate previous year with Applicant's name and address in MA
- **W-2 forms** or other documents bearing individual's name and address in MA submitted by employer to a gov't agency as consequence of employment
- **Tuition or student loan bill** containing individual's name and address in MA**
- **Jury duty summons** containing individual's name and address in MA**
- **School transcript** for individual containing address in MA**
- **Email, original letter or written statement**, or photograph/ photocopy/ scanned copy of printed and signed letter or written statement, issued by licensed health care worker, on office letterhead or from an office email, stating that individual resides in MA**
- **Credit report** issued by recognized credit reporting agency**, reflecting a MA address
- **Pension or retirement statement** from a prior employer or pension fund stating the individual's name and address in MA**
- Current MA **voter's registration** form, certified by municipal clerk
- **Installment sales contract** (incl. auto loan) with pre-printed address in MA**
- **Lease** or home mortgage document** identifying individual and address in MA
- Valid **homeowner's, renter's, life, auto, or health insurance policy** with pre-printed address in MA** or a bill for such insurance with pre-printed address*** or other documentation of health insurance with pre-printed address***
- **Cancelled personal check** (incl. a voided check) with pre-printed address in MA ***
- **Utility bill, cell phone bill, credit card bill, doctor's bill, or hospital bill** containing individual's name and address in MA***
- **Pay stub** from current employer with name and address in MA pre-printed***
- **Census verification** containing individual's name and address in MA**
- **State or federal income tax returns** for one of past 2 calendar years showing address in MA
- **Notice to quit, summons and complaint, or other eviction case court doc** showing a MA address from which the individual is being or has been evicted (where the move-out date on an agreement for judgment or a notice of levy, whichever is later, is within 12 mos. of application)
- **MassHealth documents** (including screen shots) showing receipt of MassHealth by individual

**Current or expired up to 12 mos. before date of application)*

***Dated not more than 12 mos. before date of application*

****Dated not more than 60 days before date of application*



Citizenship and Immigration Status Document Examples

To prove a family (individual members or at least one child) has eligible Immigration status, HLC will accept the following documents. *This is not a complete list of documents. Families should work with their Homeless Coordinator for a complete list if more options are needed.*

Families must prove the following:

- Family members are US citizens; OR
- Family members are permanent residents (has a green card); OR
- Family members have eligible immigration status; OR
- Meet PRUCOL. You meet PRUCOL when:
 - The U.S. government knows you are in the United States; AND
 - The U.S. government is not trying to make you leave right away.
- If at least one child under 18 in the household has an eligible immigration status, that satisfies the requirement for the family.

Example Documents...

to verify family members are a U.S. Citizen, a family can provide:


- A United States Birth Certificate
- A United States Passport or Passport Card
- U.S. Certificate of Naturalization (N-550)

to verify permanent resident status, a family can provide:

- Green Card/Permanent Resident Card

to verify other immigration statuses, a family can provide:

- Documents verifying refugee status
- Documents verifying asylee status
- Documents verifying pending immigration status
- Documents verifying proof of parole and continuance of lawful status
- Documents issued by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- Documents verifying Deferred Action
- Certain Notices to Appear

 More details about the document types for lawful status will be coming.

Family Welcome Center (FWC) Schedule (as of 10/21/24)

Quincy FWC

1120 Hancock Street

Quincy, 02170

Mon-Fri: 8 am – 7 pm

Sat: CLOSED

Sun: 9 am – 3 pm

State and Federal Holidays:

9 am- 3 pm

Mattapan FWC

1626 Blue Hill Ave.

Mattapan, 02126

Mon-Fri: 7:30 am – 7 pm

Sat: 8 am – 1 pm

Sun: CLOSED

State and Federal Holidays:

8 am – 1 pm

Allston FWC

14 Harvard Ave # 2,

Allston, 02134

Mon-Fri: 8 am – 6 pm

Sat: 9 am – 2 pm

Sun: 9 am – 2 pm

State and Federal holidays:

CLOSED

BWC will also close: 11/29, 12/29,
12/31, 1/1 & 7/3

Fall 2024 – 2025 State and Federal Holidays:

2024: 11/11, 11/28, 12/25

2025: 1/1, 1/20, 2/17, 4/21, 5/26, 6/19, 7/4, 9/1, 10/13, 11/11, 11/27, 12/25