Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

Resources for Families Staying in the Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Program or on the Waitlist

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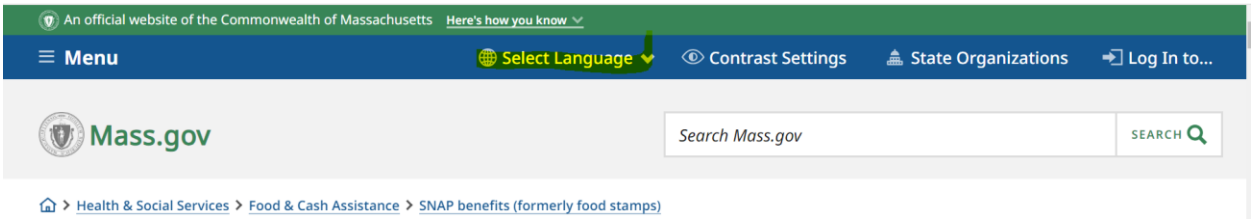
Language Accessibility for Mass.gov Resources

You can translate any Mass.gov resource (resources on the State's website) that is shared in this packet. Once you are on the Mass.gov webpage, go to the blue bar at the top of the page. Inside the blue bar, click 'Select Language' (highlighted in yellow below). A list will open up with languages to choose from. This translation tool is powered by Google Translate.



9-Month Time Limit

Overview: What is the Length of Stay policy?

The Massachusetts Legislature has passed a new law that sets a 9-month limit on families' time in the Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter program. Under the new law, families will have 9 months to transition out of EA shelter and into stable housing.

When does the policy come into effect?

- The 9-month limit will be implemented over time and will not affect all families immediately.
- Initial written notices (see details below) will go out in July 2024. When families receive a termination notice, it will be at least 90 days before their shelter benefit expires.
- Your family's 9 months is counted from the date you were placed in Emergency Assistance Family Shelter.

What kinds of official notices will families receive?

We will begin to send notices in early July 2024. At that time, families who have been in shelter for more than 9 months will receive one of the three following notices:

1. "Ineligible for First 90-day Extension" - This is a notice of termination indicating that your family is not eligible for an extension and will need to leave shelter within 90 days.
2. "Eligible for First 90-day Extension" - This is a notice explaining that your family received a 90-day extension and can stay in shelter for additional time, but you still have a termination date to leave shelter (which will be included in the notice).
3. "Administrative Extension" - This is a notice explaining that your family has been in shelter for more than 9 months but has not yet been selected for termination. This notice is because the policy is being implemented over time and families will be selected in small groups each month.

Timing: How will my family know when we need to leave shelter?

- Families will receive notice 90 days before they need to exit EA shelter due to the 9-month time limit.
- Families will be emailed notices and given a paper copy by their providers.
- Families who have an email address on file will also receive email reminder notices at 40, 20 and 10 days prior to their termination date. Please make sure your provider has an up-to-date email address for you.

Extensions: Can my family stay longer than 9 months?

Families may have the option to extend shelter for up to two 90-day periods or 'extensions' if you meet certain criteria (see below) specified in the law. This means there is a maximum of 180-days where a family's time in shelter can be extended. In some limited cases, there is a possibility of a Hardship Waiver after the two 90-day extensions have been given.

What do families have to do to get an extension?

- Families do not have to apply for extensions themselves.
- Before issuing your family with a termination notice, EOHLC (Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities) will review your family's most recent 60-day Rehousing Assessment (RHA) to see if you are eligible for an extension. The RHA is a form that you complete with your Case Manager or Housing Search Worker in your Re-Housing meetings. The RHA has been updated to include all possible extension criteria.
- Extensions will be determined using your most recent 60-day Re-Housing Assessment (RHA). First extension decisions will be provided in the initial 90-day notice to families.

What are the criteria for extension?

EOHLC will use the following criteria, as defined in the law, to assess families' eligibility for up to 2 extensions of 90 days each. This information will be gathered in the family's 60-Day Re-Housing Assessment:

- A family member is employed, or participating in job training programs, including any authorized or approved training program as defined in the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's guidance;
- A family member is qualified as a veteran and is not enrolled in services specifically targeted to support veterans;
- The family has an imminent housing placement, within the next month;
- The family is seeking to avoid educational interruptions for a child or children enrolled in public schools;
- A family member is pregnant or has given birth in the last 3 months;
- A family member has been diagnosed with a disability or documented medical condition;
- A family member is a single parent, stepparent, legal guardian or caretaker caring for a disabled child or family member;
- A family member is a single parent, stepparent, legal guardian or caretaker with insufficient child or dependent care necessary to obtain or continue employment;
- The family is at imminent risk of harm due to domestic violence.

Are families required to submit documents for their extensions?

- EOHLC may request supporting documents to verify a family's eligibility for an extension.
- If you are asked to submit documents, we will provide you with instructions.

How does the first 90-day extension work?

- First extension decisions will be provided in the initial 90-day notice to families. Families who receive their first extension will be eligible for a second extension if they continue to meet one or more extension criteria (see above).
- Extensions will be determined using families' most recent 60-day Rehousing Assessment. You must have an up-to-date 60-day Rehousing Assessment requirement to receive an extension.

- If a family does not receive a first extension, they have 14 days to work with their case manager to update their Rehousing Assessment. EOHLC (Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities) will review Rehousing Assessments again after this period and notify all families of EOHLC's final extension decision.

How can families get a second extension?

- Families must have a Rehousing Assessment updated in the last 60 days. If they meet at least one of the extension criteria screened for in the Rehousing Assessment, they will be granted a second extension.

Hardship Waivers: Can families get more than the two 90-day extensions?

- Families can apply for a Hardship Waiver after they receive two extensions.
- Hardship waivers must be submitted at least 30 days before the date the family is required to exit shelter.
- If a family receives a hardship waiver, they will remain eligible for shelter for up to an additional 120 days.

Who can get a Hardship Waiver?

Families that meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Family member aged 0-3 months
2. Family member with immunocompromised condition
3. Family member with high-risk pregnancy
4. Family member with medical device (tracheostomy only)
5. Risk of imminent harm due to child protection or domestic violence concerns.

Appeals: How do I appeal an extension denial or hardship waiver denial?

- Families can appeal the termination of their shelter benefits. Families can appeal when there are no more options available to extend their shelter stay. You could appeal a termination if EOHLC (Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities) denies you an extension or a hardship waiver.
- Appeal requests must be received within 21 calendar days of the date of the termination notice.
- Appeals can be submitted by email, mail, or fax. Families should submit both the termination notice and the appeal form using the instructions on the form. Providers will support families in submitting these documents and supply the appropriate email address, mailing address, and fax number.

What should I do to get ready to leave shelter?

We understand that moving from shelter to housing takes a lot of work. You should keep working with your case manager to prepare to leave shelter and move into stable housing.

If you have found housing – by yourself or with others - and need help to pay expenses, the HomeBASE program could help. HomeBASE provides up to $30,000 over 2 years, with the possibility of another $15,000 over a 3rd year. If you would like to learn more, speak to your Case Manager or Housing Search Specialist or visit www.mass.gov/HomeBASE

Can families reapply to EA Family Shelter after they have exited due to the 9-month time limit?

- Families who have reached their time limit will be allowed to re-apply for the EA program, subject to Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter the waitlist and prioritization process, if they exited shelter prior to their termination date. **(More information: www.mass.gov/ApplyForEA)**

- Families who have not vacated their unit by their termination date will be subject to a 12-month re-entry bar.

Where can I get more information?

- The policy webpage will be regularly updated, so please visit on an ongoing basis for additional information: **www.mass.gov/EAShelterLOS**
- If you need help understanding the policy talk to your Shelter Provider staff.
- If you need emotional or mental health support at this time, you can call **'Call2Talk' at 508-532-2255.** Call2Talk offers confidential and compassionate emotional and mental health support. It operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Translation is available.

Job Search and Job Training Programs

If you are looking for jobs or job training programs in your area, there are local organizations that can help.

Approved and Authorized Training Programs

If you already live in an Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter, enrolling in an "Approved" or "Authorized" Training Program can help you get a 90-day extension to your time in shelter.

Approved and Authorized Training Programs are programs that provide skills to help you get a job. MassHire Career Centers (see below) can help you find training programs in your area. Additional training opportunities are being developed in response to this policy.

Examples of some types of programs that might be included are:

- Work-readiness English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Trainings designed for high-demand industries such as:
    - Healthcare
    - Early childhood education
    - Advanced manufacturing
    - Construction
    - Hospitality
    - Other specified industries.

MassHire Career Centers

You can go to a MassHire Career Center for help searching for a job or finding a job training program to suit your career goals.

Visit a MassHire Career Center for:

- Job search assistance;
- Career planning information;
- Workshops on job search techniques including interviewing, networking, and resume writing;
- Data on the current statewide and local job market;
- Resources to help you find the right training opportunities; and
- Tools to help you conduct an effective job search.

To find your local Career Center visit **www.mass.gov/careercenters** or check the list below.

Workforce Board Region	Career Center Location	Address	Website	Phone
Berkshire	Pittsfield	160 North St, 3rd Floor Pittsfield, MA 01201	masshireberkshirecc.com	(413) 499-2220
Boston	Boston	1010 Harrison Avenue Boston, MA 02119	masshirebostoncareerctr.org	(617) 541-1400
	Downtown Boston	75 Federal Street, 3rd Floor Boston, MA 02110	masshiredowntownboston.org	(617) 399-3100
Bristol	Fall River	446 North Main Street Fall River, MA 02720	mass.gov/locations/masshire-fall-river-career-center	(508) 730-5000
Brockton	Brockton	34 School Street Brockton, MA 02301	masshiregbcc.org	(508) 513-3400
Cape & Islands	Hyannis	372 North St. Hyannis, MA 02601	masshire-capeandislands.com	(508) 771-5627
Central	Worcester	554 Main St., Suite #300 Worcester, MA 01608	masshirecentralcc.com	(508) 799-1600
	Southbridge	14 Mechanic St., Suite #330 Southbridge, MA 01550	masshirecentralcc.com	(508) 765-6430
Franklin Hampshire	Greenfield	101 Munson St., Suite 210 Greenfield, MA 01301	masshirefhcareers.org	(413) 774-4361
Greater New Bedford	New Bedford	25 Elm Street New Bedford, MA 02740	masshiregreaternewbedford.com	(508) 979-1504
Greater Lowell	Lowell	107 Merrimack Street Lowell, MA 01852	masshirelowellcc.com	(978) 458-2503
Hampden	Springfield	95 Liberty Street Springfield, MA 01103	masshirespringfield.org	(413) 858-2800
	Holyoke	850 High Street Holyoke, MA 01040	masshireholyoke.org	(413) 532-4900
Merrimack Valley	Lawrence	420 Common St., 2nd Floor Lawrence, MA 01840	masshiremvcc.com	(978) 722-7000
Metro North	Cambridge	186 Alewife Brook Pkwy, Suite 310, Cambridge, MA 02138	masshiremncareers.com	(617) 661-7867
	Chelsea	4 Gerrish Ave Chelsea, MA 02150	masshiremncareers.com	(617) 884-4333
	Woburn	100 Trade Cntr., Suite G100 Woburn, MA 01801	masshiremncareers.com	(781) 932-5500
Metro Southwest	Norwood	128 Carnegie Row, Suite 109 Norwood, MA 02062	masshiremsw.com	(781) 269-5494
	Framingham	39 Grant St. Framingham, MA 01702	masshiremsw.com	(508) 861-7993
North Central	Leominster	100 Erdman Way Leominster, MA 01453	masshirenorthcentralcc.com	(978) 534-1481
North Shore	Salem	70 Washington St., 1st Floor Salem, MA 01970	masshire-nscareers.org	(978) 825-7200
South Shore	Quincy	1515 Hancock St., Suite 101 Quincy, MA 02169	masshiress.com	(617) 745-4000

Immigration Legal Support

The MA Office of Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) is committed to promoting the full participation of refugees and immigrants in our communities. If you need help with issues related to immigration, work permits, or citizenship, there are organizations that can help. For the most recent version of this list **visit** mass.gov/lists/ori-resources

NOTE: Be careful of organizations claiming to offer immigration help, as they could be fraudulent. You can use this page to find trusted organizations.

Resettlement Agencies

Resettlement Agencies provide support to help refugees settle into their new communities. These organizations can only help eligible families and may have a waitlist. You can contact them directly to see if you are eligible.

Agency Name	Website	Phone Number
International Institute of New England (IINE)	iine.org	Lowell: (978) 459-9031 Boston: (617) 695-9990
Ascentria	ascentria.org	Worcester: (774) 243-3100 West Springfield: (413) 562-6015
Catholic Charities of Boston	ccab.org	Boston: (617) 464-8500
Catholic Charities of Springfield	diospringfield.org/Ministries/cca	Springfield: (413) 452-0606
Organization for Immigrant and Refugee Success (ORIS)	refugeesuccess.org	Worcester: (508) 595-8695
Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC)	riacboston.org	Boston: (617) 238-2430 Worcester: (508) 756-7557
Jewish and Family Services of Western Massachusetts	jfswm.org	Springfield: (413) 737-2602
Jewish and Family Services of MetroWest	jfsmw.org	Framingham: (508) 875-3100

Free Immigration Legal Clinics

These organizations run free clinics for immigration help. Make sure you call ahead to find out when the clinics are happening.

City / Region	Organization Name	Address	Phone Number
Cambridge	De Novo: Center for Justice and Healing	47 Thorndike St, Suite. SB-LL-1, Cambridge, MA 02141	(617) 661-1010
Boston	Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement	1 City Hall Sq Boston, MA 02110	(617) 635-2980
Lowell, Lawrence & North Shore	New England Justice for Our Neighbors		(617) 794-7024
Springfield & Western MA	New England Justice for Our Neighbors		(413) 386-9951
Worcester	New England Justice for Our Neighbors		(978) 400-2126
Statewide	Rian Immigrant Center	1 State. St, Ste. 800 Boston, MA 02109	(617) 542-7654 ext. 82

Other Immigration Support

These are trusted organizations across the state that offer immigration help. There is high demand for immigration help, so some organizations might not be accepting new clients, or they might have a waitlist. You can contact these organizations directly to find out if they are able to help.

BOSTON

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.
21 Meridian St. East Boston, MA 02128 // 617-567-8857
714 Parker St. Roxbury, MA 02120 // 617-445-6000
535 River St. Mattapan, MA 02126 // 617-298-2045
554 Columbus Ave. Boston, MA 02118 // 617-267-7400

African Immigration Services Inc.
524 River Street, Suite 500 Mattapan, MA 02126 // 617-332-6704

Agencia ALPHA
62 Northampton St., 1st Fl. (H-101), Boston, MA 02118 // 617-522-6382
East Boston Branch at Iglesia NuevaVida: 70 White St. East Boston, MA 02128 // 617-522-6382

Asian American Civic Association
87 Tyler St., 5th Fl., Boston, MA 02111 // 617-426-9492

ATASK: Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence *(for Survivors of Domestic Violence)*
PO Box 120108 Boston, MA 02112 // 617-338-2355

Brazilian Women's Group
697 Cambridge St, Ste. 106, Brighton, MA 02135 // 617-202-5775

Brazilian Worker Center
14 Harvard Ave., Allston, MA 02134 // 617-783-8001 ext. 101

Catholic Charities of Boston
275 W. Broadway South Boston, MA 02127 // 617-464-8500
Immigration Court Help Desk: 617-464-8000

Centro Presente
12 Bennington St., Ste. 202, East Boston, MA 02128 // 857-256-2981

East Boston Ecumenical Community Council
50 Meridian St. East Boston, MA 02128 // 617-567-2750

Greater Boston Legal Services
197 Friend St. Boston, MA 02114 // 617- 371-1234

Immigrant Connection at Awaken City
184 Hyde Park Ave. Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 // 617-535-3139

Immigrant Family Services Institute
1626 Blue Hill Ave. Mattapan, MA 0212611617-322-1348

Justice Bridge Legal Center UMass School of Law
67 Batterymarch St, LL, Boston MA 02110 // 617-860-3414

Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice
200 Portland St. 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02114 // 617-417-4325

MA Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
(Citizenship and DACA assistance only)
Chauncy St., Ste. 901, Boston, MA 02111 // 617-350-5480

Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project
98 N. Washington St. Boston, MA 02114 // 617-742-9296

Project Citizenship *(Citizenship assistance only)*
11 Beacon St. Suite 720, Boston, MA 02108 // 617-694-5949

Somali Development Center
10 Malcolm X Blvd., 2nd Fl., Boston, MA 02119 // 617-522-0700

Rian Immigrant Center
1 State St., Ste. 800, Boston, MA 02109 // 617-542-7654 ext. 82

VACA: Vietnamese American Civic Association
42 Charles St. Dorchester, MA 02122 // 617-288-7344

Victim Rights Law Center *(for Sexual Assault Survivors)*
PO Box 962158, Boston, MA 02196 // 617-399-6720 ext. 19

CAMBRIDGE

De Novo: Center for Justice and Healing
47 Thorndike St., Ste. SB-LL-1, Cambridge, MA 02141 // 617-661-1010

Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers
1046 Cambridge St. Cambridge, MA 02139 // 617-864-7600

CHELSEA/EVERETT

Chelsea Legal Services
Arlington St. Fl. 2., Chelsea, MA 02150 // 617-466-3037

HarborCOV *(for Survivors of Domestic Violence)*
P.O. Box 505754 Chelsea, MA 02150 // 617-884-9799

La Colaborativa *(Citizenship assistance only)*
318 Broadway Chelsea, MA 02150 // 617-889-6080

LUMA: Latinos Unidos en Massachusetts
198 Ferry St. Everett, MA 02149 // 617-381-0015

LAWRENCE, LOWELL & LYNN

Lawrence Family Development & Education Fund, Inc.
400 Haverhill St., Lawrence, MA 01841 // 978-794-5399

New American Association of Massachusetts
(Citizenship assistance only)
330 Lynnway, Suite 302 Lynn, MA 01901 // 781-593-0100

Northeast Justice Center
50 Island St., Ste. 203B, Lawrence, MA 01840 // 978-458-1465
181 Union St., Ste. 201B, Lynn, MA 01901 // 978-458-1465
79 Merrimack St., Ste. 302, Lowell, MA 01852 // 978-458-1465

Open Door Immigration Services
10 Dane St., Beverly, MA 01915 // 978-414-5732

FRAMINGHAM & WALTHAM

Jewish Family and Children's Service
1430 Main St. Waltham, MA 02451 // 781-647-5327

MetroWest Legal Services
63 Fountain, 304, Framingham MA 01702 // 508-620-1830

TRII: The Right to Immigration Institute
14b Felton St. Waltham, MA 024530 // 781-209-0183

SOUTH COAST

Catholic Social Services of Fall River
1600 Bay St. Fall River, MA 02724 // 508-674-4681

Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands
372 North St. Hyannis, MA 02601 // 508-771-1727

DOVE *(for Survivors of Domestic Violence)*
P.O. Box 690267 Quincy, MA 02269 // 617-770-4065 ext. 400

Immigrant's Assistance Center, Inc.
58 Crapo St. New Bedford, MA 02740 // 508-996-8113

Justice Bridge Legal Center UMass School of Law
257 Union St. New Bedford, MA 02740 // 508-449-9296

Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts
62 Main St., Ste. 302, Brockton, MA 02301 // 508-586-2110

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Community Legal Aid/Central West Justice
405 Main St., 3rd Fl., Worcester, MA 01608 // 800-649-3718

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Berkshire Immigrant Center
67 East St. Pittsfield, MA 01201 // 413-445-4881

Catholic Charities of Springfield
65 Elliot St. Springfield, MA 01105 // 413-452-0626

Center for New Americans
42 Gothic St. Northampton, MA 01060 // 413-587-0084
150 Fearing St. Amherst, MA 01002 // 413-239-9550
278 Main St., Ste. 411, Greenfield, MA 01301 // 413-772-0055

Community Legal Aid/Central West Justice
1 Monarch Pl., Ste. 350, Springfield MA 01144 // 800-649-3718
152 North Street, E155 Pittsfield , MA 01201 // 800-649-3718
20 Hampton Ave. Northampton, MA 01060 // 800-649-3718

Victim Rights Law Center *(for Survivors of Sexual Assault)*
P.O Box 1700 Belchertown, MA 01007 // 413-842-4020

CHILDREN AND YOUTH LEGAL SUPPORT

Ascentria Care Alliance *(Unaccompanied Minors)*
230 Second Ave., Ste. 125, Waltham, MA 02451 // 781-373-9152

Children's Law Center of Massachusetts
298 Union St. #2 Lynn, MA 01901 // 781-581-1977

KIND: Kids In Need of Defense
11 Beacon St., Ste. 820., Boston, MA 02108 // 617-207-4138

Food Resources

If you are struggling to afford food, there is help available. Below you will find options to help you pay for food, as well as places where you can get food for your family at low or no cost.

Food Assistance (SNAP)

What is SNAP?

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal food health program by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) for Massachusetts residents.

SNAP benefits include:

- Money to buy healthy food.
- Money is added each month to a debit-like Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.
- It is fast and easy to apply.
- Money added monthly to a debit-like Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to buy food
- More money is put on your card when you buy buy local produce via the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)
- SNAP Path to Work free education and training opportunities, Families who participate may be able to get free childcare.

Connections to other kinds of help, such as:

- Utility discounts
- Free school meals
- Direct eligibility for Head Start childcare (www.mass.gov/HeadStart)
- Discounted internet through the Affordable Connectivity Program
- Discounted tickets to many state museums and cultural places with EBT Card to Culture

Am I eligible for SNAP?

SNAP eligibility is based who is in the household, income and certain expenses. “Eligibility” means who can and can’t get the benefit. Check your eligibility in 30 seconds using the SNAP confidential screener at DTAConnect.com.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you might still be eligible for SNAP. Contact DTA to find out if you are eligible.

Even if you are not eligible, it is safe for you to apply and get SNAP for an eligible family member (like a U.S. citizen child). SNAP is not part of a public charge test. This means that taking SNAP benefits will not impact your ability to gain permanent resident status.

How can I apply for SNAP?

Online: www.DTAConnect.com (you can select your language on the page: Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Chinese and Haitian Creole)
Phone: Call 877-382-2363 Mon – Fri 8:15 am-4:45 pm
In Person: Find a DTA office location at **www.mass.gov/ContactDTA**
To find out more or request a paper application: www.mass.gov/SNAP or call the number above.

Women, Infants, & Children Nutrition Program (WIC)

What is WIC?

Women, Infants, & Children Nutrition Program (WIC), is a nutrition program that provides money to buy healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to healthcare and other services, free of charge, to Massachusetts families who qualify.

Am I eligible for WIC?

WIC is available regardless of immigration or citizenship status. WIC is for all kinds of families: married and single parents, working or not working. If you are a parent or legal guardian of a child under 5, you can apply for WIC for your child.

You can participate in WIC if you:

- Live in Massachusetts
- Have a nutritional need (WIC staff can help you determine this)
- Are a parent (father or mother) or caregiver of kids under 5
- Are a pregnant mother
- Have a family income less than WIC guideless

You are automatically income eligible for WIC if you currently receive:

- MassHealth/Medicaid insurance plans
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) or cash assistance

How do I apply for WIC?

Online: www.mass.gov/WIC
(You can translate the page. In the blue bar at the top, click 'Select Language.' A list will open to choose your language from)

Phone: (800) 942-1007, Monday through Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. If you hear a recording, please leave a message with your name and telephone number. You can also call your Local WIC Office directly. All local programs are answering phones and/or returning messages.

In Person: Find your local WIC office at www.mass.gov/WICoffices

Food Pantries

What is a food pantry?

A food pantry is a distribution center where hungry families can receive food. Food pantries are available at low or no cost to families.

Where can I find food pantries near me?

To find food pantries near you, go **to** www.helpsteps.com or reach out to Mass 211 for referrals: mass211.org; 877-211-6277.

Housing Programs

If you are in an emergency housing situation, you can contact 211 to see if there are any non-EA shelter resources in your area. Mass 211: **www.mass211.org**; 877-211-6277.

Resources to search for housing

- Housing Navigator offers a listing of affordable housing
- **www.HousingNavigatorMA.org**

Massachusetts Housing Programs

Massachusetts has a variety of housing programs, summarized here: www.mass.gov/HousingPrograms. The majority of these programs have long waitlists. We highly recommend joining these lists as a *long-term* housing strategy, but these programs most often do not offer immediate housing solutions.

HomeBASE

The newly redesigned HomeBASE program helps families who have been found eligible for EA Family Shelter by providing up to $30,000 over a 2-year period, with the possibility of a 3rd year of up to $15,000 of help (totaling $45,000 over three years).

You pay at least 30% of your gross monthly income toward rent. You don't need to have income now to get started using HomeBASE. You can work with your case manager on increasing your income once you are safely housed.

Of the state housing resources available to homeless families, HomeBASE is the most immediately available way to secure housing for most.

You can use HomeBASE to rent an apartment, share an apartment with another family or pay a host to live with them. You can also use it to move to another state. When moving out of state it will pay your first month and last month of rent and the security deposit, as well as bus or air travel costs. It will only provide ongoing rental assistance in that state of Massachusetts.

When you accept HomeBASE, **you maintain your homeless status for state public housing and vouchers (MRVP)**. You do not maintain your homeless status for federally funded units.

For more information:

- **www.mass.gov/HomeBASE**
- **www.mass.gov/HomeBASEforLandlords** (a page you can share with potential landlords)

A Note on Housing Vouchers

You may have heard from other families living in shelter that they have received a housing voucher (Section 8 or MRVP). The EA shelter system did receive a one-time group of 1,200 Housing Vouchers to distribute to families. This was an emergency allocation to support making room in shelter for families on the EA Shelter waitlist. The majority of those vouchers have already been distributed. You should not count on receiving a voucher given extremely limited availability.

All families can apply for housing vouchers directly through the MRVP or Section 8 programs (visit: mass.gov/HousingPrograms). Like public housing, these programs have long waiting lists, but the only way to be considered to receive a voucher is to be on the waitlist, so it is important to join.

Community Resources

Cultural Communities

Finding cultural communities may help you and your family feel more at home and integrated in your area. Identifying people to connect with in a new area requires effort and time. Please see this site to find a cultural community in your area: **www.massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/find-your-lcc/**

- **Research and Explore Online:** Look for local community centers in your area. Look online for events, gatherings, or groups that interest you.
- **Visit Cultural Centers and Events:** Attend cultural festivals or events in your new area. It's a great way to meet people from all backgrounds.
- **Attend Language or Cultural Exchange Programs:** Many communities offer English learning classes. You can meet new people from all backgrounds.
- **Be Open and Respectful:** Approach new cultures with an open mind and respect for diversity.

Resources for Family Members with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) funds family and autism support programs and services across the state to provide information and help to families with children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, who are living at home.

For the most up to date resources for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS):
mass.gov/ddsfamilysupport
(scroll down to the "Family Support Directory." You can download the directory to find support in your area).

Family Resource Centers

Family Resource Centers are funded by the Commonwealth across Massachusetts to support families in accessing basic needs and resources.
To find a location near you, visit: **www.FRCMA.org**

Charities in Area

Massachusetts has charities and organizations that can often provide support to people who need it. Please visit **www.mass211.org** or call 211 at **877-211-6277** to find possible resources in your area. You will be able to find resources from childcare to food, to transportation in your new area.

More Information

For an up-to-date online version of the information in this packet, please visit **www.mass.gov/EAFamilyResources** (coming soon).