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**Information for Homeless Families**

(Families with children under age 21 or pregnant women)

We recognize how stressful, frightening and overwhelming it can be to find yourself and your family without a safe, stable home. We hope that the information below will help.

**Emergency Shelter Options**

* **Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter**- To access family shelter **you must be referred by a Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) worker.** During the pandemic, **you must apply by phone (866-584-0653).** (See instructions below.) DCF is the only other way to access a family shelter; contact your DCF worker if you have one. Unfortunately, MGH social workers have NO ABILITY to find you a homeless shelter. We encourage you to call 866-584-0653 or go to a participating DTA office first thing in the morning to apply. More information on EA is below.
* **Community Rooms-** There are a very limited number of family shelters that do not require a DTA or DCF referral. (See list below.) You may call yourself. Each has its own eligibility rules, space is extremely limited, and there are often long waiting lists.
* **Are you leaving an abusive relationship?** All domestic violence shelters in Massachusetts accept both women and children. These shelter beds are limited and patients are encouraged to call every 1-2 hours to check availability. Safelink keeps track of all bed availability in the state of MA. **Safelink may be reached by calling 877-785-2020.** You may also contact our HAVEN program for support or assistance, 617-724-0054.
* Other options include staying with friends/family or staying at a hotel/motel if financially able.

**Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter**

Emergency Assistance (EA) is a Massachusetts program that provides certain pregnant women and homeless families with children with emergency shelter and help finding housing.

**Where can you apply for EA?**

**Call 866-584-0653 or apply at a participating Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) office** (see list below). Ask to see the housing/shelter worker. That person will be an employee of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which runs the EA program. **You can apply for EA between 8 am and 4 pm each weekday.**

**Advocacy Tips:**

* You should **call as early in the day as possible** since the application process often takes all day.
* DHCD should take your application that day. If someone tries to discourage you from applying and you need a place to stay right away, ask to talk to a DHCD Supervisor or contact a legal services advocate.
* DHCD may try to discourage you from applying for EA by suggesting you stay with friends or relatives. If you have no safe place to go and you appear to meet eligibility rules based on your own statements and other information DHCD has, you have a right to be placed in EA shelter or HomeBASE temporary accommodations that night.
* If DHCD says you are not eligible, DHCD should give you a written denial notice that explains why you were denied and that you can appeal. Some non-EA shelters require you to have this notice to qualify.

**Are you eligible for EA?**

EA is for:

* homeless pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy, and the pregnant woman's spouse who meet financial and other eligibility rules and/or
* homeless children under age 21 and their families, including parents, stepparents, other close relatives or legal guardians who are primary caretakers of a child

Additionally:

* You must also have a low income and little savings.
* At least one member of your household must have a legal immigration status.
* You must be homeless “due to no fault of your own” and it has to be for one of certain very specific circumstances OR you and your children must have stayed at least one night in a place not meant for human habitation.

**For more information** go to [www.masslegalservices.org](http://www.masslegalservices.org) and search for “Applying for Emergency Assistance Shelter: A guide for families” (also available in Spanish).

**HomeBASE**

Most families eligible for EA are also eligible for housing-related assistance called HomeBASE.

HomeBASE benefits include up to $8,000 per year for rent or overdue utility bills, payments to allow a homeless family to stay with another household, first and last month’s rent and security deposit, moving expenses and other costs to allow a family to become or remain housed.

**To get HomeBASE, you must first be found eligible for Emergency Assistance (EA) so it is important you complete an EA application even if you only want HomeBASE.** HomeBASE is available to help you avoid going into shelter or is available to help you leave shelter.

**Apply for Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter or HomeBASE**

You can apply either by phone or in-person.

**By Phone: Call 866-584-0653 Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4 pm. You must show certain documents to prove you are eligible.**

* If you are **already receiving benefits from DTA** (such as TAFDC, EAEDC or SNAP) tell the DHCD worker to look you up in BEACON, the DTA computer system.
* If you are **not already receiving benefits from DTA** then it would be helpful to have access to a scanner and either e-mail or a fax machine to submit needed documents.

**Family Shelter Community Rooms**

These are family shelters available to **families who are not eligible for Emergency Assistance through the Department of Housing and Community Development.** There is a high demand for these rooms and thus they are often full.  It is recommended to call them directly to determine availability.

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| **Greater Boston** | |
| **Family Aid Boston** To qualify for our emergency shelter program, families must be homeless, **from Boston, and have children under the age of 18.** Families also must be over-income or otherwise ineligible for state-funded Emergency Assistance (EA). | To access services during normal business hours, call 617-542-7286 x229. On nights, weekends, or at any other time that our offices are closed, families can access the program through the Mayor’s Hotline at 617-635-4500. |
| [**Hastings House**](http://www.liveworkthrive.org/ways_we_help/housing/emergency_and_transitional_family_housing)  CWU Main Office: One Washington Mall  Boston, MA, 02108  617-259-2900  Total Capacity: 58 | EMPath provides staff that help women and their children address the issues that they are facing. The average length of stay is 8-24 months.  Services: Access to counseling, advocacy, education resources, childcare vouchers, medical referrals, transportation aid, and help finding and maintaining permanent housing.  Restrictions: No drug or alcohol use  **Referrals come through EA or**[**Family Aid Boston**](http://www.familyaidboston.org/). |
| [**Queen of Peace**](http://health-centers.findthebest.com/l/8343/Queen-of-Peace-Shelter) 401 Quincy Street Dorchester, MA 02125 617-288-4182 Total Capacity:  11 | Services:  Dinner & breakfast and clothing if available. Restrictions: Only women and children; no males over the age of 3; must not be heavily reliant on medications, drugs, or alcohol; must be in at 4 pm & out by 8 am; 3-week limit.  **Must be referred by an agency.** |
| [**Project Hope**](http://www.prohope.org/)  45 Magnolia Street  Dorchester, MA, 02125  617-442-1880  Total Capacity: 11 | This is a shelter for single mothers and their children; no males over the age of 14.  Services: Assistance finding housing and access to educational and workforce development programs. Restrictions: Sobriety- no history of drug addiction, not a shelter for battered women.  Most referrals come from EA but the shelter does have community rooms to house those that refer themselves. |
| [**Sojourner House**](http://sojournerhouseboston.org/)  85 Rockland Street  Roxbury, MA, 02119  617-442-0590  Total Capacity: 9 | Open to both male and female parents and children of all ages.  Services: Access to advocacy, referrals, counseling, a food pantry, clothing, medical care through [Health Care for the Homeless](http://www.bhchp.org/), day programs, and transportation to housing search appointments.  Restrictions: Sobriety  Community rooms available for self-referral and/ or referrals from [Family Aid Boston](http://www.familyaidboston.org/) as well as EA beds. |

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| **North Shore/Merrimack Valley** | |
| [**Inn Between**](http://cahns.org/inn-between/)25 Holten Street Peabody, MA 01960 978-532-2372 Total Capacity:  One family, no more than 4 persons | Services:  Case management; assistance finding housing; life skills development; access to educational programs. Restrictions:  No alcohol; no drugs; no violence.  Curfew: weekdays: 9 pm; weekends: 11 pm. Self-referral for community room. |
| [**Lazarus House Ministries, Inc.**](http://www.lazarushouse.org/) 48 Holly Street Lawrence, MA 01842 978-269-5283  Total Capacity: 41 beds and seven cribs | Services:  Advocacy; limited counseling; 3 meals/day; clothing; medical and dental once a week.  Restrictions: Night shelter only; in at 5 pm and out at 8 am; must be sober while in facility; 5-month time limit.  Can be referred by: social workers; Department of Transitional Assistance; places of worship; hospitals; self. |
| [**Family Promise North Shore Boston, Inc.**](http://www.familypromisensb.org/) 330 Rantoul Street Beverly, MA 01915 (978) 922-0787 | Uses an interfaith network of local congregations to shelter families one week at a time.  Services: Case management; meals; temporary shelter; access to day center with Social Workers to help find housing, employment, and other services; life skills development. |

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| **Southeastern Massachusetts** | |
| [**Interfaith Shelters - Friends of the Homeless of the South Shore**](http://www.friendsofhomeless.org/our-story/) 8 Driftway Road N. Weymouth, MA 02191 781-340-1604 Total Capacity: 3 families | Services: Advocacy; referral resources. Self-referral. **Community rooms are located at the North Street Community Chapel in Hingham or First Parish Unitarian Church in Cohasset.** |

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| **Metro West** | |
| [**Family Promise Metrowest**](http://www.familypromisemetrowest.org/) 13 Common Street P.O. Box 847 Natick, MA  01760 508-318-4820  Total Capacity: 4 families | Program for families with at least one child under the age of 18; at least one adult in a family must be employable. Services:  Case management, meals, shelter; career development.  Restrictions: Sober program; will take people with addictions if they have been sober for 6 months and can show proof of a recovery program completion; criminal background check on each adult; will not accept anyone with a record of violent felonies. Can self-refer or be referred by an agency. |

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| **Central Massachusetts** | |
| [**Friendly House**](http://www.friendlyhousema.org/) 87 Elm Street Worcester 01609 508-792-1799 Total Capacity: 13 | Services: Case management; life skills training; parenting support; advocacy; assistance finding housing.  Self-referral or through DHCD for a community room, must show denial letter from DHCD. |
| [**Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester**](http://ihnworcester.org/) 91 June Street Worcester, MA 01602 508-755-2212 Community rooms: All Total capacity: 6 families | Shelter for families with children.  Services: Case management; advocacy; assistance finding housing, employment, educational programs, and other services; parenting and employment skill classes.  Restrictions: Guests are required to seek employment unless receiving disability or enroll in school; no active substance abuse or domestic violence.  Self-referral. |
| [**Montachusett Interfaith Hospitality Network**](http://www.mihnetwork.com/) 758 Main Street  Leominster, MA 01453 978-466-1704 Total Capacity: 5 families | Services: Case management; meals; clothes; necessary daily living supplies; assistance and referrals for employment, day care, health services, housing, custody issues, court appearances, state and federal programs, etc.  Restrictions: Sobriety; families must be willing to engage in program towards self-sufficiency.  Self-referral or through an agency. |

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