

Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness

Our Budget Priorities for the fiscal year 2010 State Budget (July 2009 through June 2010). The Massachusetts Legislature reviews, debates and votes on the budget from January thru June 2009.

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT). RAFT is a key safety net to prevent families in crisis from becoming homeless or to help families in a shelter move to housing. RAFT funds currently run out in from six weeks to six months, so many applicants are turned down. **Funding Request: \$7.5 million**, a \$2 million increase over this year, with \$5.5 million reserved for families while providing for expanding eligibility to individuals. Budget line item 7004-9316.

Adult Basic Education (ABE). Approximately 20,000 adults are currently on waiting lists for ABE programs (adult literacy, English language learners programs, job training) funded by the Mass. Dept. of Education. Waiting lists vary from 2 to 8 months for literacy to up to two years for English learners. ABE programs are key programs for low-income persons to escape poverty. **Funding Request: level funding at \$30.1 million.** Budget line item #7035-0002.

Mass. Rental Voucher Program (MRVP). Thru rent subsidies, provides very low-income households (families, seniors, disabled people, and others in need) assistance in paying rent and helps developers build housing that is affordable to this constituency. MRVP is a cost effective alternative to shelters. Funding recommendation will preserve the 5100 existing homes currently leased with MRVP and restore 400 housing opportunities. **Funding Request: \$40 million.** Budget line item: 7004-9024.

Mass. Commission to End Homelessness. Recommendations center on testing new approaches to ending homelessness, while still retaining critical safety net resources. The program provides: rental assistance and emergency assistance; assessment tools to determine the risk of homelessness; and, connecting those experiencing and at-risk of homelessness with services. **Funding Request:** Pilot programs take place over next 18 months with FY2009 funds. No FY2010 funding is needed.

No Place Like Home, a new early intervention, homeless prevention initiative by the Mass. Coalition for the Homeless. Establishes regular housing stability screenings to assess if families and individuals who receive cash and nutritional assistance from the Department of Transitional Assistance are at risk of homelessness. Also provides stabilization funds and services to link at-risk households to needed resources. Homeless prevention avoids the trauma of homelessness and eliminates the costs of months in emergency shelter. **Funding Request: \$5 million.** Budget Line item: Will be set when the program is funded.

More information on these issues and on family homelessness can be found on our web site, www.coopmet.org/AdNetEndFamHom.htm. Download fact sheets for these five fiscal year 2010 Budget Priorities there too.

The Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness is committed to eliminating the root causes of family homelessness through public education and advocacy. Based in Concord and Acton, the Network also includes congregations, organizations and individuals from Sudbury, Carlisle, Lincoln, Maynard, Stow, Bedford, and Lexington. The Network is a model for other areas and welcomes inquiries and members from all locales.

For more information, contact Carl Miller, Network Coordinator, at NormanCMiller@comcast.net or 978-369-3755

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