

Housing Solutions Campaign

Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program

The MA Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) provides low income families, elders and people with disabilities with assistance in paying their rent and helps developers build housing that is affordable to this population.

FY2012 BUDGET REQUEST: At least \$38.2 million for MRVP (7004-9024) will:

Preserve the tenancies of 5,100 households currently using MRVP at a time when more working families, elders and people with disabilities face rising housing instability. *The loss of a voucher to this population will equate to a further spike in homelessness, something the Commonwealth can ill afford.* On average, the cost to house a family in shelter is about \$3,000 per month, while the average cost of an MRVP is less than \$600 per month.

THE CHALLENGE:

Extremely low income households cannot afford the high cost of rent. Households currently enrolled in MRVP have an *average household income of less than \$11,000 per year*¹ (\$917 per month). Yet, the fair market rent for a *two-bedroom apartment in Massachusetts is as high as \$1,349*.² Too often, rents are significantly higher than the household incomes needed to sustain them, making the MRVP their only options for safe, affordable housing.

The state's emergency shelter system is beyond capacity. As a result, more than 800 homeless families continue to reside in motel rooms across the state. These 800 families are in addition to the 2,000 homeless families and 3,300 individual adults living in traditional shelter settings.

Ensuring housing affordability for low income households benefits the state's economy. Rental vouchers assist landlords by providing a steady stream of rental income, which is especially critical during this economic downturn. MRVP inspectional requirements also ensure that these units are high quality which helps maintain property values. Finally, rental assistance provides low-income, working families with the stability needed to expand their workforce skills and contribute to local economy.

THE SOLUTION:

Fund MRVP (7004-9024) at least at \$38.2 million to help struggling Massachusetts residents – taking into consideration that a deeper investment could relieve pressure on the state's emergency shelter system and provide much-needed opportunities for economic growth.

For more information, contact:

Diane Sullivan, Policy Director, Homes for Families, dsullivan@homesforfamilies.org
Sean Caron, Director of Public Policy, CHAPA, scaron@chapa.org

¹ Ann Verrilli, et al. *The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program: Maintaining the State's Primary Homelessness Prevention Tool* (Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, June, 2009).

² US Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD user, available from http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2011_code/2011state_sum.odn?inputname=STTLT*259999999%2BMassachusetts&county_select=yes&state_name=Massachusetts&ne_flag=&statefp=25.0&data=2011&fmrtype=Final&incpath=C%3A\HUDUser\wwwMain\databases\fmr\fmrs\FY2011_code&path=C%3A\huduser\wwwdata\database; internet; accessed 11 January 2010.

Housing Solutions Campaign Co-Sponsors

Action for Boston Community Development	Mass. Alliance on Teen Pregnancy
Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness	Mass. Association for Community Action
AIDS Housing Corporation	Mass. Association of Community Development Corporations
Asian Community Development Corporation	Mass. Association of Older Americans
Berkshire Housing Development Corporation	Mass. Coalition for the Homeless
Boston Center for Independent Living	Mass. Housing and Shelter Alliance
Boston Tenant Coalition	Mass. Law Reform Institute
Catholic Charities of Greater Boston	Mass. NAHRO
Central Mass. Housing Alliance	Medford Community Housing
Children's Health Watch	Medical Legal Partnership, Boston
Citizens' Housing and Planning Association	Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
City Life/Vida Urbana	National Association of Social Workers MA
Community Teamwork Inc.	Neighbor-to-Neighbor
Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries	Pine Street Inn
Crittenton Women's Union	Project Hope
Crossroads Family Shelter	RCAP Solutions, Inc.
Episcopal City Mission	Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts
Family Economic Initiative	Rosie's Place
Fair Housing Center of Gr. Boston	Rural Development, Inc.
Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority	Shelburne Housing Authority
HAP Housing	Somerville Homeless Coalition
Hearth	South Middlesex Opportunity Council
Home Funders Collaborative	South Shore Housing Development Corporation
Homes for Families	Travelers Aid Family Services
Horizons for Homeless Children	Wellspring House
House of Hope	Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development
Housing Assistance Corporation	The Women's Lunch Place
Housing Families Inc.	