

# Introduction

Emergency Assistance (EA) is the Massachusetts program providing emergency shelter and rehousing services for homeless families with children.

Effective July 1, 2009, the Massachusetts Legislature transferred responsibility for administering EA from the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). See St. 2009, c. 4, §§ 34 – 38 and 83, as amended by St. 2009, c. 37, §§ 13 – 16, creating M.G.L. c. 23B, § 30.

The transfer to DHCD was made in recognition that homelessness is primarily a housing problem and that DHCD may be better situated to help homeless families find permanent housing.

DHCD created a new Division of Housing Stabilization (DHS) to administer EA. As of this writing, the transition to DHCD/DHS is still new.

As required by the Legislature, homeless families are able to apply for EA in local DTA offices, since that is where many families go for other services. St. 2009, c. 37, § 142. **Appendix A** includes the locations of the 22 local DTA offices where DHCD staff are taking applications. **Appendix B** includes the names, phone numbers and fax numbers of the DHCD staff assigned to cover the various offices.

As required by the Legislature, DHCD/DHS is still applying the DTA regulations that were in effect on June 30, 2009. St. 2009, c. 37, § 109. Those regulations, 106 C.M.R. §§ 309, can be found at the DHS website. [www.mass.gov/Ehed/docs/dhcd/hs/106cmr309.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/Ehed/docs/dhcd/hs/106cmr309.pdf). The EA regulations cross-reference some of the DTA regulations that apply to the TAFDC (family cash assistance) program, including those that govern counting of income. DTA's regulations are at [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta) under the heading "Key Resources" on the left side of the page.

DHCD and DTA regulations are cited in this Guide. Changes to the regulations may be made before this Guide is updated, so always be sure to check the regulations to make sure you have the most up-to-date version of the rules. And check the Housing Stabilization section of the DHCD

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website, [www.mass.gov/dhcd](http://www.mass.gov/dhcd), and the EA section of the legal services website, [www.masslegalservices.org](http://www.masslegalservices.org), for current EA policy materials. And review historical EA policy materials from DTA on the legal services website, which may help you make arguments for how DHCD should interpret the regulations now.

If you think you are eligible for EA but are having problems getting services, or if you receive a notice from DHCD saying you are being terminated from shelter or have been found to violate EA shelter rules, you may want to consult a legal advocate. **Appendix C** includes a list of legal services advocates who may be able to help you. Contact the office in your local area.

If you are homeless or at risk of homelessness and need help to find new housing or to stay in your housing, you can contact the Regional Entity for your area listed in **Appendix D**. These Regional Entities were recently created by the state's Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH), based on the work of the state's Commission to End Homelessness, and may be able to help you.

In addition to the ICHH Regional Entities, there are Regional Nonprofit Housing Agencies across the Commonwealth that provide housing consumer services and administer the **RAFT** program discussed in **Question 19**. The Regional Nonprofits are listed in **Appendix E**.