

Part 6

Finding New Housing

22 Can you get help keeping or moving to housing?

Families experiencing homelessness who are not in shelter: If your family is experiencing homelessness or at “imminent risk” of becoming homeless but is not yet in EA shelter, you may be able to get help keeping your housing, or finding and moving to new housing, from:

- **The HomeBASE program.** You must be found eligible for EA shelter to get HomeBASE. You must apply for HomeBASE at one of the EOHLIC offices listed in **Appendix A** or by calling the EA intake line at (866) 584-0653. If you are eligible for EA and you are age 21 or older, you will be referred to a HomeBASE provider listed in **Appendix D**. If you have no place to stay, you can go to shelter and still be eligible for HomeBASE. HomeBASE can provide you with up to \$20,000 over 24 months to help you move into new housing or stay with another family. This is called HomeBASE Household Assistance. HomeBASE requires families to participate in housing stabilization services for 24 months. The rights and responsibilities of HomeBASE families are individualized and outlined in the Program Participation Agreement.
- **The regional nonprofit agencies listed in Appendix D.** Contact the agency serving your local area. Among other resources, these agencies administer a program called RAFT (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition). The RAFT program helps eligible families keep housing, get new housing, or otherwise avoid homelessness. When funds are available, RAFT provides money for security

deposits; first and last month's rent; moving expenses; rent; utility arrears; and other housing-related expenses for homeless families and families at risk of homelessness. RAFT may also be able to provide funds to prevent an eviction (called "upstream").

Families experiencing homelessness who are in shelter. If your family is in EA shelter, you may get help finding housing from:

- **Your shelter provider**, which receives funds to help you find permanent housing. Shelter providers can connect you to HomeBASE Household Assistance. If you are in a motel, a HomeBASE worker should come to your motel and you can ask your F.O.R. Families worker for help. Families in shelter (including motels) may be eligible for the \$30,000 in HomeBASE to help them move into housing.

Note: If you have an EA termination notice pending, you may not be eligible for HomeBASE until the termination is removed. Contact your local legal services office for help.

- **The DTA Relocation Benefit Program.** DTA (separate from EOHLC) will pay up to \$1,000 to help get permanent housing for some families who are leaving a shelter or a young parents living program. This benefit may be used for advance rent, security deposit, rent or utility arrears, moving expenses or other relocation costs. The relocation benefit is available through a DTA worker for:
 - A family receiving TAFDC or EAEDC who has been in emergency shelter for 60 days or longer
 - A family receiving TAFDC who has been in a domestic violence shelter for 60 days or longer
 - A teen parent age 18 or 19 who has been in a young parents living program for 60 days or more and can live independently. 106 CMR 705.350.

You can only get the \$1,000 relocation benefit once in a 12-month period. It is not an EA benefit and will not disqualify you from receiving an EA benefit within the 12-month period. *See Question 10.*

Other Relocation Resources for Families and Individuals Whether or Not in Shelter. Individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may be eligible for state-funded Special Benefits of up to \$150 in moving costs to move within the state if: the current living situation has been certified as substandard; a move is required due to health, safety or other conditions; or the individual is moving into subsidized housing. Special Benefits for SSI recipients may also be available to cover the cost of replacing furniture, household equipment, food, clothing or supplies lost as a result of a fire or other natural disaster. Ask about Special Benefits at your local DTA office or through your DTA worker.

Advocacy Tips:

- ✓ Ask your shelter provider or EOHLC worker to explain all of the re-housing services that may be available to you and your family and the effect they may have on your future eligibility for shelter and other benefits.
- ✓ If you reject an offer of housing that is affordable, even if it is affordable only for a limited time because of a short-term subsidy, EOHLC may try to terminate your EA eligibility or shelter benefits. *See Question 16* and consult an advocate about your options.
- ✓ You should ask your DTA worker for the DTA relocation benefit while you are still living in a shelter or a young parents living program.
- ✓ DTA may give you less than \$1,000 in relocation benefits unless you can show you need the full \$1,000 for expenses related to getting permanent housing. Be sure to tell DTA why you need the full \$1,000 before you leave shelter.

- ✓ DTA relocation payments in some circumstances may cover furniture and appliances that you need in order to move into permanent housing. DTA Transitions, February 2007, p. 3, *at* <https://www.masslegalservices.org/system/files/library/Feb+07+Transitions.pdf>.