



**Protect homeless children with no safe place to stay!**

**Barring families from shelter does not end family homelessness!**

**We can improve housing resources AND preserve the safety net!**

**Protect children experiencing homelessness by protecting the shelter safety net!**

## **Proposed Regulations from the Patrick Administration Would Deny Emergency Shelter to Most Homeless Children and Their Families!**

### **Take Swift Action to Ensure Homeless Children Are Kept Safe!**

- On July 17<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) released a draconian plan for restricting access to Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter. The changes are set to take effect 60 days after the notice, **unless the Legislature or Governor Patrick intervenes to stop these inhumane rules from being implemented.**
- While the final FY'13 budget requires DHCD to provide shelter to *at least* all families falling in 4 categories delineated in line item 7004-0101, the line item language provides the Administration with the discretion to provide shelter to additional families as well.
- Unfortunately, DHCD proposes to only provide shelter to families that fit into their *very narrow* interpretation of the categories. If implemented, DHCD's proposed regulations will leave thousands of children and families in very unsafe situations.
- **Based on the proposed regulations, families rendered ineligible for shelter would include those who:**
  - Are staying in places not meant for human habitation, but where there is heat, electricity, running water, and a toilet (such as a hospital emergency room, police station, or train station)
  - Have been evicted for purely "no fault" reasons, such as cases where a property owner evicts the family because she/he wants to move into the unit or is selling the building
  - Are living in unsafe situations, but have their names on a lease
  - Have no place to go after being kicked out by a former host if the conditions in that now *unavailable* unit did not pose significant health and safety risks to the homeless child
  - Are currently separated from one another due to lack of housing or shelter and the parent is sleeping in a car, so long as the child could continue to find alternative housing without the parent. Families could be denied if the child is in an unsafe situation that could potentially be fixed even if the landlord refuses to do so.
- DHCD's proposed regulations will place the most vulnerable children in the Commonwealth at great risk! Please speak to Leadership to **ask them to include in any legislation that will be enacted before the end of July language that will stop these inhumane restrictions from being implemented.** (See possible language on back).

**Thank you for your continued commitment to children and families experiencing homelessness!**

For more information, please contact the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute 617-357-0700 (Ruth Bourquin x333, [rbourquin@mlri.org](mailto:rbourquin@mlri.org)) or the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless 781-595-7570 (Kelly Turley x17, [kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org)).

## **Proposed Language Stopping Unreasonable Eligibility Restrictions for Family Shelter**

Item 7004-0101 in section 2 of chapter 139 of the acts of 2012 is hereby amended by adding the following words:-

provided further that, notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the department shall not implement the proposed revised regulations and policies submitted to the Legislature for review on July 17, 2012 or any other policies or regulations restricting access to emergency shelter without express authorization from the Legislature enacted on or after July 20, 2012.