



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ♦ Aaron Gomstein, Undersecretary

Notice 2013-03

TO: HomeBASE Administering Agencies
CC: EA Shelter Providers
FROM: *EW* Ellen Ward, HomeBASE Program Manager
RE: **Guidance for use of HomeBASE funds for furniture**
DATE: November 15, 2013

DHCD is committed to providing HomeBASE resources to assist EA families who are working with providers to be diverted or re-housed from EA shelter. HomeBASE funds are used in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, startup costs, moving costs, utility arrearages and purchasing necessary furniture. Furniture costs include beds, cribs, tables and chairs for families that cannot relocate without these essential items. DHCD is pleased to continue the use of HomeBASE funds to purchase necessary furniture items; however, **effectively immediately, furniture costs cannot exceed \$1,000 per HomeBASE family.**

Since the inception of HomeBASE, furniture costs have varied widely from family to family. As families have differing needs depending on their specific situation, this flexibility was deemed necessary to avert and decrease homelessness. However, DHCD has also noticed some questionable uses of HomeBASE funds for furniture; in some instances, more funds are being spent on furniture than start-up costs or on-going rental stipends. This limits the amount available to families in the event they fall behind on rent or utility bills during the 12 months of stabilization and do not have additional funds to support them. Because DHCD's priority is that families remain housed, the decision has been made to focus HomeBASE funds more directly on housing costs rather than furniture.

In extraordinary cases involving large households with more than 6 members, or victims of fire/flood/natural disaster, the Administering Agency may request a waiver of the \$1,000 limit by emailing Ellen Ward or Simon Sandvik. A waiver request must include items requested, cost per item, and reason for exceeding the \$1,000 limit.

As always DHCD encourages families to utilize furniture banks and other donation centers before using HomeBASE funds to purchase furniture and other essential household items.

Please share this information with appropriate staff or subcontracting agencies working with EA families. As always if you have any questions please contact either Simon Sandvik (Simon.Sandvik@state.ma.us) or Ellen Ward (Ellen.E.Ward@state.ma.us).