

# SENATE . . . . . No. 17

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Senate, February 12, 2025 -- Text of the Senate amendment to the House Bill making appropriations for fiscal year 2025 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects (House, No. 58) (being the text of Senate document numbered 16, printed as amended).

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)

1           SECTION 1. To provide for supplementing certain items in the general appropriation act  
2 and other appropriation acts for fiscal year 2025, the sums set forth in section 2A are hereby  
3 appropriated from the Transitional Escrow Fund established in section 16 of chapter 76 of the  
4 acts of 2021, as amended by section 4 of chapter 98 of the acts of 2022, unless specifically  
5 designated otherwise in this act or in those appropriation acts, for the several purposes and  
6 subject to the conditions specified in this act or in those appropriation acts, and subject to the  
7 laws regulating the disbursement of public funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. These  
8 sums shall be in addition to any amounts previously appropriated and made available for the  
9 purposes of those items. These sums shall be made available through the fiscal year ending June  
10 30, 2026.

11           SECTION 2A. To provide for certain unanticipated obligations of the commonwealth, to  
12 provide for an alteration of purpose for current appropriations and to meet certain requirements  
13 of law, the sums set forth in this section are hereby appropriated from the Transitional Escrow  
14 Fund established in section 16 of chapter 76 of the acts of 2021, as amended by section 4 of  
15 chapter 98 of the acts of 2022, unless specifically designated otherwise in this section, for the

16 several purposes and subject to the conditions specified in this section, and subject to the laws  
17 regulating the disbursement of public funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Except as  
18 otherwise stated, these sums shall be made available through the fiscal year ending June 30,  
19 2026.

20           1599-2625     For purposes related to supportive services and safe shelter for unhoused  
21 families in the commonwealth; provided, that the secretary of administration and finance may  
22 transfer funds from this item to state agencies as defined in section 1 of chapter 29 of the General  
23 Laws; provided further, that the secretary of administration and finance shall notify the house  
24 and senate committees on ways and means not less than 14 days prior to any such transfer of  
25 funds from this item; provided further, that temporary respite sites shall be available to eligible  
26 families upon arrival in the commonwealth, subject to appropriation, rules, regulations and  
27 availability, for a period of not more than 30 days, subject to any extensions upon written  
28 certification by the secretary of housing and livable communities; provided further, that  
29 temporary respite sites shall be available for a period of not more than 30 days to families who  
30 appear eligible but are unable to provide sufficient documentation as required by clause (iv) of  
31 subsection (b) of section 6, subject to appropriation, rules, regulations and availability; provided  
32 further, that temporary respite sites shall only be available to families who verify their identity  
33 and provide information sufficient to comply with paragraph (C 1/2) of section 30 of chapter  
34 23B of the General Laws; provided further, that the length of stay at a temporary respite site shall  
35 constitute a benefit received under the emergency housing assistance program for the purpose of  
36 calculating length of stay limit under subparagraph (3) of paragraph (G) of said section 30 of said  
37 chapter 23B; provided further, that placement in a temporary respite site shall not make a family  
38 ineligible for the bridge shelter track after proving eligibility pursuant to section 6; provided

39 further, that the executive office of housing and livable communities shall work with  
40 resettlement agencies to coordinate the provision of services to immigrant and refugee families  
41 and pregnant women in temporary respite centers; provided further, that the executive office  
42 shall continue to facilitate the provision of services to families and pregnant women in temporary  
43 respite centers; provided further, that funds appropriated in this item may be expended for any  
44 purpose under item 1599-0514 of section 2A of chapter 77 of the acts of 2023, item 1599-1213  
45 of section 2A of chapter 88 of the acts of 2024 and items 7004-0101, 7004-0108 and 7004-9316  
46 of section 2 of chapter 140 of the acts of 2024; provided further, that the secretary of  
47 administration and finance may transfer funds from this item to the Workforce Competitiveness  
48 Trust Fund, established in section 2WWW of chapter 29 of the General Laws, for work programs  
49 targeted at supporting the populations served by this item; and provided further, that reporting  
50 requirements under said item 1599-0514 of said section 2A of said chapter 77 and said item  
51 1599-1213 of said section 2A of said chapter 88 shall apply to this item.....\$425,000,000

52 SECTION 3. Section 30 of chapter 23B of the General Laws, as most recently amended  
53 by section 3 of chapter 88 of the acts of 2024, is hereby further amended by inserting after  
54 paragraph (C) the following paragraph:-

55 (C 1/2)(1) The executive office shall require each individual adult applicant or  
56 beneficiary to disclose on their initial or subsequent application for emergency housing  
57 assistance benefits all convictions or pending charges for serious crimes, as defined by the  
58 executive office, whether in the commonwealth or another jurisdiction. The executive office  
59 shall not require prior convictions that have been sealed or expunged to be disclosed. An adult  
60 applicant or beneficiary who fails to disclose convictions or pending charges for serious crimes,

61 as defined by the executive office, consistent with this paragraph shall not be eligible for benefits  
62 and any existing benefits shall be terminated.

63 (2) The executive office shall obtain criminal offender record information from the  
64 department of criminal justice information services for each individual adult applicant or  
65 beneficiary prior to placement into the emergency housing assistance program. An adult  
66 applicant or beneficiary who fails to consent to the executive office obtaining such criminal  
67 offender record information consistent with this paragraph shall not be eligible for benefits and  
68 any existing benefits shall be terminated. The executive office shall establish, through  
69 regulations, protocols on information received from the department of criminal justice  
70 information services.

71 (3) The executive office shall promulgate regulations placing limitations or exclusions on  
72 individuals found to have convictions or pending charges for serious crimes, as defined by the  
73 office by regulation.

74 SECTION 4. Paragraph (G) of said section 30 of said chapter 23B, inserted by section 3  
75 of chapter 88 of the acts of 2024, is hereby amended by striking out subparagraphs (3) to (9),  
76 inclusive, and inserting in place thereof the following 6 subparagraphs:-

77 (3) A family with children or a pregnant woman with no other children that receives  
78 benefits through the emergency housing assistance program shall, subject to appropriation and  
79 rules, regulations and availability, remain eligible for the program for not more than 6  
80 consecutive months.

81 (4) A family with children or pregnant woman with no other children that receives  
82 benefits through the emergency housing assistance program may receive extensions to the length

83 of stay limit under subparagraph (3) upon written certification of hardship by the secretary;  
84 provided, however, that such hardship waivers shall be granted by the secretary for a family with  
85 an individual who: (i) is qualified as a veteran under clause Forty-third of section 7 of chapter 4  
86 who is not enrolled in services specifically tailored to veterans, including, but not limited to,  
87 those administered by the executive office of veterans services; (ii) is at imminent risk of harm  
88 due to domestic violence; (iii) is documented as having a disability; (iv) has imminent pending  
89 placement in housing for the entire family receiving benefits under the emergency housing  
90 assistance program; (v) has a high-risk pregnancy, imminent pregnancy due date or has recently  
91 given birth; (vi) is under the age of 6; or (vii) satisfies any additional criteria the secretary of  
92 housing and livable communities deems necessary.

93 (5) The executive office shall limit the number of families with children and pregnant  
94 women with no other children to be terminated from the emergency housing assistance program  
95 in any week due to reaching the length of stay limit established under subparagraph (3). The  
96 executive office shall provide notice not less than 90 days prior to the termination of benefits for  
97 each family and pregnant woman.

98 (6) The executive office shall promulgate regulations or guidance for eligibility which  
99 shall: (i) establish procedures for the termination of benefits pursuant to this paragraph, including  
100 for a hardship waiver under subparagraph (4); and (ii) allow a family with children or a pregnant  
101 woman with no other children to reapply for the emergency housing assistance program;  
102 provided, however, that eligibility determinations when reapplying for the program shall be  
103 consistent with the guidance issued by the secretary of housing and livable communities.

104 (7) The executive office shall provide printed handouts to families with children and  
105 pregnant women receiving benefits through the emergency housing assistance program, which  
106 shall include, but shall not be limited to, information about: (i) authorized training programs; (ii)  
107 approved training programs; (iii) food resources, including food pantries; (iv) services offered by  
108 resettlement agencies; (v) other housing programs; (vi) other nonprofit or available resources the  
109 executive office deems necessary or helpful; and (vii) length of stay limits and extension process.  
110 All written information shall be translated into multiple languages and shall be available on the  
111 executive office's website.

112 (8) This paragraph shall apply during any period in which the secretary of housing and  
113 livable communities has determined that the shelter system unable to meet all current and  
114 projected demand for shelter from eligible families considering the facts and circumstances then  
115 existing in the commonwealth.

116 SECTION 5. Said section 30 of said chapter 23B, as most recently amended by said  
117 section 3 of said chapter 88, is hereby further amended by adding the following paragraph:-

118 (H) The executive office shall require each adult applicant or beneficiary that joins a  
119 family receiving emergency housing assistance to provide notice to the executive office of any  
120 addition to the family and the executive office shall require a complete review of all information  
121 necessary to verify the individual's eligibility pursuant to this section and 760 CMR 67.00 or  
122 successor regulations. An adult applicant or beneficiary who fails to report to the executive  
123 office for complete verification of requirements pursuant to this section or 760 CMR 67.00 or  
124 successor regulations shall not be eligible for benefits and any existing benefits shall be  
125 terminated.

126 SECTION 6. Item 1599-1213 of section 2A of said chapter 88 is hereby amended by  
127 inserting after the word “equity” the following words:- ; provided further, that a portion of such  
128 funds shall be expended to rapidly rehouse families residing in temporary respite sites into  
129 permanent, stable housing.

130 SECTION 7. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the  
131 following meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

132 “Emergency housing assistance program”, the program of emergency housing assistance  
133 program under section 30 of chapter 23B of the General Laws and funded by item 7004-0101 of  
134 section 2 of chapter 140 of the acts of 2024.

135 “Executive office”, the executive office of housing and livable communities.

136 (b) Notwithstanding item 7004-0101 of section 2 of chapter 140 of the acts of 2024, the  
137 executive office shall:

138 (i) require families whose income exceeds 200 per cent of the federal poverty level for 4  
139 consecutive months to be deemed ineligible for the emergency housing assistance program;

140 (ii) require that all emergency housing assistance program benefits be provided to  
141 families consisting entirely of residents of the commonwealth who are citizens of the United  
142 States or persons lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise permanently residing in  
143 the United States under the color of law, except in cases where a child in the family is a citizen  
144 of the United States, a person lawfully admitted for permanent residence or a person permanently  
145 residing in the United States under color of law;

146 (iii) to the extent practicable, make best efforts to place a family receiving benefits under  
147 the emergency housing assistance program within 20 miles of the household's home community;

148 (iv) verify, for each emergency housing assistance program applicant, their: (A) identity;  
149 (B) Massachusetts residency pursuant to clause (v); (C) relationship status; (D) pregnancy status;  
150 and (E) other eligibility requirements under said item 7004-0101 of said section 2 of said chapter  
151 140 and pursuant to 760 CMR 67.00 or any successor regulations, through third-party  
152 verification or otherwise, prior to placement in an emergency shelter; provided, however, that the  
153 executive office shall not be required to provide shelter to families who are unable to provide  
154 required verifications in this section prior to placement; provided further, that the executive  
155 office may offer a case-specific waiver for exigent circumstances and at the discretion of the  
156 executive office; and provided further, that the executive office shall establish, through  
157 regulations, a criteria for case-specific waivers, which shall include, but not be limited to,  
158 waivers for: (1) an imminent threat of domestic violence; (2) families with a family member who  
159 has a documented disability; (3) families with a family member who has a high-risk pregnancy  
160 or who has recently given birth; and (4) families with a qualified veteran under clause Forty-third  
161 of section 7 of chapter 4 of the General Laws who is not enrolled in services specifically tailored  
162 to veterans, including, but not limited to, those administered by the executive office of veterans  
163 services; and

164 (v) require each applicant for benefits under the emergency housing assistance program  
165 to establish residency in the commonwealth; provided, however, that an applicant's family shall  
166 be required to show an intent to remain in the commonwealth, which may be shown through  
167 sources of verification accepted by the executive office; provided further, that the executive  
168 office shall promulgate regulations on sources of acceptable verification which shall include, but



169 shall not be limited to, documentation showing a person is enrolled with MassHealth,  
170 documentation showing a person receives public benefits in the commonwealth, a bill or other  
171 insurance documentation with an address, an email, letter or statement from a licensed health  
172 care worker on office letterhead or office email stating that the person resides in the  
173 commonwealth or a photo identification issued by the commonwealth.

174 (c) An applicant who appears to be eligible for shelter based on statements provided by  
175 the family and any other information in the possession of the executive office but who need  
176 additional time to obtain any third-party verifications reasonably required by the executive office  
177 shall be placed on a waitlist for emergency housing assistance; provided, however, that each  
178 adult in the family of applicants shall provide proof of identity and provide information sufficient  
179 to comply with paragraph (C 1/2) of section 30 of chapter 23B of the General Laws to be placed  
180 on said waitlist; and provided further, that an applicant on the waitlist shall be eligible for  
181 immediate placement in a temporary respite site subject to appropriation, availability and any  
182 relevant rules and regulations.

183 SECTION 8. Notwithstanding section 30 of chapter 23B of the General Laws, for the  
184 period of December 31, 2025 to December 31, 2026, inclusive, the total capacity of the  
185 emergency housing assistance program established pursuant to said section 30 of said chapter  
186 23B shall not exceed 4,000 families.

187 SECTION 9. The executive office for administration and finance shall submit a biweekly  
188 report to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives and the house and senate  
189 committees on ways and means that shall include, but not be limited to: (i) reporting under item  
190 1599-0514 of chapter 77 of the acts of 2023; (ii) reporting required under section 19 of chapter

191 88 of the acts of 2024; (iii) the total caseload of the emergency assistance housing program,  
192 delineated by rapid shelter track and bridge shelter track; (iv) the number of families who have  
193 applied for emergency assistance housing in the previous 14 days, delineated by rapid shelter  
194 track and bridge shelter track; (v) the number of families who were unable to provide the  
195 required verification during application as established under section 6 in the previous 14 days;  
196 (vi) the number of families who were unable to provide the required verifications but were  
197 granted a case-specific waiver by the secretary of housing and livable communities in the  
198 previous 14 days; (vii) the number of families on the waitlist for services under the emergency  
199 assistance housing program, delineated by rapid shelter track and bridge shelter track; (viii) a  
200 description of the services provided to such families, delineated by rapid shelter track and bridge  
201 shelter track; (ix) the total number of families who have exited the emergency assistance housing  
202 program in the previous 14 days, delineated by rapid shelter track and bridge shelter track and  
203 delineating length of stay in emergency shelter of each family, with information on housing  
204 outcomes for each family including, but not limited to, exits to stable housing, transitional  
205 housing, a homeless shelter or homelessness; (x) a summary of resources, programs and  
206 assistance, including, but not limited to, HomeBASE, used by families who exited shelter in the  
207 previous 14 days, delineated by rapid shelter track and bridge shelter track, and including the  
208 length of time between when families apply for assistance and when they are approved, with  
209 information on housing outcomes for each family including, but not limited to, exits to stable  
210 housing, transitional housing, a homeless shelter or homelessness; (xi) the total number of  
211 families who exited emergency shelter in the previous 14 days due to the length of stay limits,  
212 delineated by rapid shelter track and bridge shelter track, and including information on resources  
213 or supports for those families exiting; (xii) the total number of families on the waitlist who have

214 been placed in emergency shelter in the previous 14 days, delineated by rapid shelter track and  
215 bridge shelter track; (xiii) the total number of individuals in the emergency assistance housing  
216 program that are employed; (xiv) the average and median length of stay for families currently in  
217 the emergency assistance housing program, delineated by rapid shelter track and bridge shelter  
218 track; (xv) the total number of families who have applied for a hardship waiver established under  
219 section 4 and were granted a hardship waiver by the secretary of housing and livable  
220 communities in the previous 14 days; (xvi) the total number of hotel and motel rooms in use in  
221 the previous 14 days, delineated by municipality; (xvii) the total number of hotel and motel  
222 rooms that have been phased out of emergency shelter use in the previous 14 days, delineated by  
223 municipality; (xviii) a summary of the reasons for which families within the emergency housing  
224 assistance program have become homeless, including whether they had previously applied for  
225 other forms of housing assistance and were delayed or denied in receiving such assistance  
226 immediately before becoming homeless, and the total number of families attributed to each  
227 reason; (xix) the weekly average per-family cost associated with housing families in the  
228 emergency housing assistance program; and (xx) the total estimated cost of the emergency  
229 assistance housing program for fiscal year 2026 based on projected changes to estimated  
230 caseload, capacity and other policy changes under this act.

231 SECTION 10. The executive office for administration and finance, in consultation with  
232 the executive office of housing and livable communities, shall submit a report not later than 60  
233 days following the effective date of this act to the clerks of the senate and house of  
234 representatives and the senate and house committees on ways and means detailing a plan to  
235 phase out the use of hotels and motels for emergency housing assistance not later than December  
236 31, 2025. The report shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) the total number of hotel and

237 motel rooms to be phased out; (ii) the planned number of hotel and motel rooms to be phased out  
238 each month; (iii) the planned date by which phasing out hotel and motel rooms is to be  
239 completed; (iv) the methodology to identify and prioritize hotel and motel rooms to phase out;  
240 (v) the communication protocols or plans to inform stakeholders of changes and support families  
241 exiting hotels; (vi) the total estimated savings due to phasing out hotel and motel rooms; and (vii)  
242 the monthly estimated savings due to phasing out hotel and motel rooms.

243 SECTION 11. Not later than 45 days following the effective date of this act, the  
244 executive office of housing and livable communities, in coordination with the executive office of  
245 health and human services, the Massachusetts interagency council on housing and homelessness  
246 and family homelessness service providers, shall submit a report to the clerks of the senate and  
247 house of representatives and the senate and house committees on ways and means that shall  
248 include, but not be limited to: (i) detailed information on the most effective and cost-effective  
249 state programs and investments for the prevention of family homelessness; (ii) strategic and cost-  
250 effective changes to the emergency housing assistance program that prevent homelessness and  
251 promote stable rehousing; and (iii) the impact of various benefit levels for programs, including,  
252 but not limited to, the residential assistance for families in transition program and the  
253 HomeBASE rental assistance program, on the prevention of family homelessness and on  
254 ensuring stable housing for families transitioning out of the emergency housing assistance  
255 program.

256 SECTION 12. The executive office of housing and livable communities, in coordination  
257 with the department of state police, shall study the feasibility of conducting a background check  
258 through the National Crime Information Center for each adult applicant or beneficiary placed in  
259 the emergency housing assistance program. The study shall include, but not be limited to,

260 information on: (i) federal approvals necessary to conduct such background checks; (ii) projected  
261 costs for conducting such background checks; and (iii) any impediments to conducting such  
262 background checks, as determined by the executive office in consultation with the department of  
263 state police in the course of the study. The executive office of housing and livable communities  
264 shall submit a report summarizing the results of the study to the clerks of the senate and house of  
265 representatives and the senate and house committees on ways and means not later than March 31,  
266 2025.

267 SECTION 13. Not later than March 31, 2025, the executive office of housing and livable  
268 communities, in consultation with the executive office of public safety and security, shall create,  
269 enforce and from time to time update a statewide safety plan for the emergency housing  
270 assistance program established in section 30 of chapter 23B of the General Laws. The executive  
271 office of housing and livable communities shall make the plan publicly available on its website.

272 SECTION 14. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, any funds  
273 expended after the effective date of this act for the purpose of providing services through or  
274 related to families and pregnant women served by the emergency housing assistance program  
275 pursuant to section 30 of chapter 23B of the General Laws shall be subject to a competitive  
276 bidding process.