



# Join us for a regional public forum on Homelessness

The Department of Transitional Assistance is conducting regional public forums to discuss:

- ◆ **Family Homeless Service Provision**
- ◆ **Shelter Re-procurement**
- ◆ **Cross-System Collaboration**



We are redesigning the family shelter system and need your input. Please attend one of the forums below! Tell us how our providers can work with stakeholders to reduce homelessness, decrease our use of shelters, and increase the economic stability of families across the Commonwealth.

## **Upcoming forums near you:**

**Worcester: Tuesday, May 13 from 9am-12pm**  
Worcester State College, Blue Lounge

**Lowell: Thursday, May 15 from 9am-12pm**  
Community Teamwork Inc.  
Houlares Early Learning Center, 126 Phoenix Avenue

**Holyoke: Monday, May 19 from 1-4pm**  
Holyoke Community College, Leslie Phillips Theater, Building C, 2<sup>nd</sup> fl

**Boston: Wednesday, May 21 from 9am to 12pm**  
UMass Boston Campus Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> fl

**Dartmouth: Friday, May 23 from 9am-12pm**  
UMass Dartmouth, Woodwin Commons Building

To RSVP, please contact **Annette Jackson** at [annette.jackson@state.ma.us](mailto:annette.jackson@state.ma.us) or (617) 348-5335.

Believing you can.

[www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta)





## Department of Transitional Assistance Regional Stakeholder Forums to Discuss a New Model of Temporary Emergency Shelter for Homeless Families

As one of the Commonwealth's initial phases of reforming the overall homeless system, the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is re-procuring its temporary emergency shelter system for homeless families. The goals of the newly procured system are: to decrease the state's reliance on shelter by more quickly moving families from shelter to sustainable permanent housing; to increase families' income and economic stability, helping families to maintain permanent housing; and to increase community collaboration and connectedness to better serve and house families.

**To inform the re-procurement and our overall systems' change, DTA is soliciting input from consumers, homeless service providers, community based human service providers and other organizations, housing providers, education, workforce development, local government, state agencies, advocates, and other stakeholders.**

We need stakeholders to tell us how our providers can better collaborate with others in their community to produce better outcomes for families.

There are many factors that contribute to homelessness, including: high housing, utility, and food costs; low wages; and insufficient housing subsidies. DTA is committed to reducing homelessness and increasing the economic self-sufficiency of the people we serve through job training and employment supports, emergency shelter, housing placement assistance, Food Stamps, and cash benefits. While some families struggle with domestic violence, trauma histories, criminal histories, physical and mental health challenges and substance abuse issues, these issues do not have to be impediments to housing.

Research has shown that, in Massachusetts:

- ◆ Families become homeless for a variety of reasons and are not significantly different from other low-income families;
- ◆ Approximately 10,500 families become homeless each year and 5,000 are served in our family shelter system;
- ◆ Homeless families have a median number of three members;
- ◆ The average age of a homeless person is 8 years old; and
- ◆ The average length of stay in shelter is almost seven months.

Reducing barriers to permanent housing and providing the necessary supports to increase economic self-sufficiency are crucial steps toward not only ending homelessness, but breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty for so many of the people we serve. Homelessness has many faces, but only one solution: permanent housing with appropriate supports. **We believe that with a way to pay the rent, connections to community supports and flexible funding, everyone can access and retain permanent affordable housing.**

### Regional Forums

DTA is holding five regional forums to gather your input. At these forums, we will share our plans for the re-procurement and ask for your input on how you and your community can support shelter providers, identify gaps and barriers to collaboration, and significantly better outcomes for families, specifically in the areas of Housing, Workforce Development/Economic Stability and Human Services. We will also discuss how to identify the most critical gaps in homeless services that could be addressed through DTA Emergency Shelter Grants.

**For more information or to RSVP, contact Annette Jackson at [annette.jackson@state.ma.us](mailto:annette.jackson@state.ma.us) or (617) 348-5335.**

