



# FY'20 Budget Testimony Day

## #BudgetToEndHomelessness



### Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Line Item Talking Points

**The request:** We are seeking \$5 million in the FY'20 budget (Line Item 4000-0007 under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services) to address the housing and support service needs of unaccompanied youth and young adults, ages 24 and younger, who are experiencing homelessness. This is \$1.7 million above Governor Baker's FY'20 request of \$3.3 million, which would level fund the line item's FY'19 appropriation.

#### Why now?

- The Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, in partnership with youth and youth providers, organized its fifth statewide youth homelessness survey last year. Below are some of the results.
  - 2,150 youth under 25 responded to the survey, of whom 738 (34.3 %) indicated they were experiencing homelessness. Among survey respondents meeting the Commission's definition of homelessness, 17.5% were staying outside, in an abandoned building, in a car, or in another location not meant for human habitation.
  - 77 youth (3.6%) were experiencing homelessness along with their parent or guardian.
  - 462 youth (21.5%) had housing, but had previously experienced homelessness. 35 youth (1.6%) reported having housing the day they completed the survey, but reporting feeling vulnerable to losing their housing in the next two weeks.
  - On average, youth and young adults left home for the first time at age 16.
  - Fighting with a parent or guardian was the most commonly reported reason for why respondents left home.
- FY'19 is the first year that each of the 10 regions across Massachusetts has received funding under this line item. Increasing funding in FY'20 will allow the Commonwealth to strengthen both regional and statewide approaches to addressing and ending youth homelessness.

Youth and young adults deserve and need safe housing, appropriate services, and robust a support network. #YouthCantWait

For more information, visit <http://mahomeless.org/advocacy> or contact Kelly Turley ([kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org)), James Saucedo ([james@mahomeless.org](mailto:james@mahomeless.org)), or Molly Schulman ([molly@mahomeless.org](mailto:molly@mahomeless.org)).





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### Youth and Young Adults Line Item Sample Testimony (2-3 minutes)

Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am here with the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless advocating for \$5 million in the FY'20 state budget, to address the housing and support service needs of unaccompanied youth and young adults, who are 24 and younger and are experiencing homelessness.

There is a desperate need for increased housing, shelter, and service options for youth and young adults age 24 or younger who are living outside the custody and care of their parents or guardians. We know all too well that youth homelessness takes its toll on both the youth and our society at large. While many youth are resilient and are able to overcome countless roadblocks to stability, homelessness often leads to poor health outcomes including increased risk of death, exposure to violence, susceptibility to exploitation and high risk behaviors, and poor academic performance with increased risk of dropping out of school.

Share a personal connection to this cause:

- What part of the state are you coming from?
- Are you a provider for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness? What do you experience in your job? Why do you care about this issue?
- Are you a youth or young adults who has or is experiencing homelessness? What has it been like accessing services? What do you need most?
- Do you have a success story of a youth or young adult accessing services? If so, what enabled that to happen?

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This is why I'm here advocating for \$5 million for housing and wraparound services for unaccompanied youth under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) line item, 4000-0007.

For more information, visit <http://mahomeless.org/advocacy> or contact Kelly Turley ([kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org)), James Saucedo ([james@mahomeless.org](mailto:james@mahomeless.org)), or Molly Schulman ([molly@mahomeless.org](mailto:molly@mahomeless.org)).





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### Sample Letter to Joint Committee on Ways and Means

[Organization Letterhead]

[Contact Information for Letter Writer / Head of Organization]

April 2, 2019

**Re: #YouthCantWait: Please urge the Joint Committee on Ways and Means to allocate \$5 million for housing and wraparound services for unaccompanied youth under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) line item, 4000-0007.**

The Honorable Michael Rodrigues  
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Room 212  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz  
House Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Room 243  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Cindy Friedman  
Senate Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Room 212  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Denise Garlick  
House Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Room 243  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Rodrigues, Chair Michlewitz, Vice Chair Friedman, and Vice Chair Garlick:

**I am writing with the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless to ask you to strongly support \$5 million for housing and wraparound services for unaccompanied youth under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) line item, 4000-0007.**

This investment would provide expanded funding for the unaccompanied youth homelessness law, An Act promoting housing and support services for unaccompanied homeless youths, to ensure that the law truly is meaningful for youth without homes (See Chapter 6A, Sections 16W and 16X of the Massachusetts General Laws).

The additional housing and service resources would be **targeted to unaccompanied youth and young adults age 24 and younger who are experiencing homelessness**, outside the custody or care of a parent/guardian.

Youth and young adults are an especially vulnerable population who are in need of specific supports to address their unique needs. There is a desperate need for increased housing, shelter, and service options for youth and young adults age 24 or younger who are living outside the custody and care of

their parents or guardians. We know all too well that youth homelessness takes its toll on both the youth and our society at large. While many youth are resilient and are able to overcome countless roadblocks to stability, homelessness often leads to poor health outcomes including increased risk of death, exposure to violence, susceptibility to exploitation and high risk behaviors, and poor academic performance with increased risk of dropping out of school.

In the past couple of weeks, we have received endorsements from the Boston Youth Action Board, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, Domus Incorporated, Father Bill's and MainSpring, Horizons for Homeless Children, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, and Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, among others.

We look forward to hearing from you and your staff on the actions you plan to take to amend this budget line item in support of young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

Thank you for your consideration and action.

[Signature(s)]

*CC: Senate President Karen Spilka, Senate Majority Leader Cynthia Stone Creem, Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr, Speaker Robert DeLeo, House Majority Leader Ronald Mariano, and House Minority Leader Bradley Jones.*

*CC: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Member Senators Jason Lewis, Michael Barrett, Joseph Boncore, Michael Brady, Nick Collins, Barry Finegold, Anne Gobi, Adam Hinds, Patricia Jehlen, Eric Lesser, Joan Lovely, Michael Moore, Michael Rush, Viriato deMacedo, Donald Humason, and Ryan Fattman.*

*CC: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Member Representatives Elizabeth Malia, Thomas Walsh, Thomas Stanley, James Arciero, Brian Ashe, Sean Garballey, Carolyn Dykema, Russell Holmes, Paul Schmid, Josh Cutler, Carole Fiola, Mary Keefe, Jay Livingstone, Alan Silvia, Daniel Hunt, John Velis, Christine Barber, Carlos González, José Tosado, Gerard Cassidy, John Barrett, Natalie Higgins, Chynah Tyler, Bud Williams, Andres Vargas, Todd Smola, Angelo D'Emilia, Donald Berthiaume, Hannah Kane, James Kelcourse, David Muradian, and Timothy Whelan.*

*CC: State Senator(s) and Representative(s) serving community/communities of letter writer*