You Find Your Strength

A guide for women and their families who are homeless

in Cambridge, Somerville, and the Greater Boston Area
“Breathe. Life will try to make choices for you but ultimately you have the power.” — A mother in transitional housing
Applying for Shelter

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)

**Chelsea Office**, 80 Everett Ave., Chelsea ..........617–551–1700
**Dudley Sq. Office**, 2201 Washington St., Roxbury ..617–989–6000

Helpful information lines

**DTA General Information** .........................800–249–2007
Info about how to apply for assistance and for services offered by DTA; however, it is usually best to go to a branch office in person

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**
**Benefits Hotline** .................................866–950–FOOD (3663)
Info about qualifying and applying for SNAP

**TIP** If you are denied housing, seek support through your advocate or a legal service (see pg. 13). All denials (EA, domestic violence, etc.) can be appealed. See pg. 14 for Special Cases.

**TIP** Expect a long wait at DTA; bring with you books, small toys, snacks, diapers, bottles, etc. for your children.

What to expect

When you arrive at DTA you will go through a screening process. **Be prepared to explain how you became homeless.** This will help DTA determine what resources are available to you and your family. If you qualify, you will receive Emergency Assistance (EA).

**Be sure to bring these documents with you:**
- Driver’s license or state ID
- Birth certificate
- Social security card
- Income tax return
- Documentation on any relevant health issues
- Child support information
- Proof of income
- Immigration documents (if not a US citizen)
Other Shelter Options

The following shelters have non-Emergency Assistance (EA) “community rooms” for short-term stays without a DTA referral and paperwork. Beds are extremely limited. Call first; do not just show up.

**Family Aid Boston**  
Boston. ............................ 617–542–7286  
Must be former/current resident of Boston with children under 18

**Sojourner House**, Roxbury .................. 617–442–0590  
Child care, housing advocacy, Spanish speaking staff

**Queen of Peace**, Boston ....................... 617–288–4182  
No teenagers and no male children over three years old

“Try to have a positive attitude because there’s a lot of negativity in this type of situation. Don’t let it bring you down.”  
—Mother in shelter

“Work hard, pay your bills, do everything you can to make sure that you don’t end up back in a shelter!”  
—Recently homeless mother of two
Housing Search

When you are placed in a shelter you will be assigned a case manager or a housing advocate to help you with your housing search. The housing advocate will become your ally in finding sustainable housing. Your advocate will help you establish your housing history so that you can fill out your new housing applications. The more information you are able to share with your advocate, the better equipped they will be to help you.

Your housing advocate will also work with you to get your current
- credit reports
- CORI (if applicable)

These agencies provide free housing search assistance and counseling as well as stabilization services:

**HomeStart**

**HomeStart**, 105 Chauncy St., Boston .............617–542–0338

**Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)**
Dept. of Housing and Homelessness Prevention
178 Tremont St., Boston ..........................617–348–6347

**Somerville Homeless Coalition**
One Davis Square, Somerville ....................617–623–6111

**TIPS**

Be aware of the voucher programs that are available to you based on your income.

Ask your housing advocate about *all* the housing options available to you: Public, State, State Emergency, Federal, Federal Emergency, and Section 8. If you move, be sure to keep your address current with all your open housing applications.

Work with shelter staff to develop a sustainable budget, including establishing a small savings plan to help with future housing costs.
For Kids

Clothes

**Children’s Clothing Exchange**, Roosevelt Towers, 391 Everett St, Cambridge 617-576-0039
T, Th 10am-4pm; W 10am-7pm; every second and fourth Sa 10am-4pm

Child Care

**Our Place, Salvation Army**
402 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge 617-547-3400
Offers homeless women and children access to health care as well as childcare

**Head Start Day Care**
66-70 Union St, Somerville 617-623-7370 x127

**Cambridge-Somerville Early Intervention**

**The Guidance Center, Inc.**
Main Office: 12 Tyler St., Somerville 617-629-3919 x5730
Serves children from birth to age three who have or are at risk of developmental delays or other conditions

“I have to be a pain until something gets done. These children are our future. They need resources to succeed.” —MOM IN SHELTER

**Clothes**

**Children’s Clothing Exchange**, Roosevelt Towers, 391 Everett St, Cambridge 617-576-0039
T, Th 10am-4pm; W 10am-7pm; every second and fourth Sa 10am-4pm

**Other Childcare or After-School Options**

**Cambridge Center for Families**
70 Rindge Ave., Cambridge 617-349-6385

**Boston Center for Youth and Families**, 1483 Tremont St., Boston 617-635-4920

**Childcare Choices of Boston**, 105 Chauncy St., 2nd Floor, Boston 617-348-6641
M-F, 9:30am-2:00pm

**Museum and Library Programs**

**Cambridge Public Library**
Main Branch 449 Broadway 617-349-4038
www.cambridgema.gov/cpl.aspx (click on Kids or find local branches)

**Boston Public Library**, Main 700 Boylston St. 617-536-5400
www.bpl.org (look for kids programs and local branches)
Area libraries offer free events for kids and parents such as story time or crafts. They also offer museum passes at free or reduced admission prices.

**Boston Children’s Museum**, 308 Congress St. Boston
Open Sa–Th 10am-5pm; F 10am-9pm. Show your EBT card and visit the museum for $2.00 admission price.

**TIPS**

If you are staying in an EA shelter, ask your caseworker about a program called **Cradles to Crayons** that provides free toys, clothes, and other supplies for children in need.

Call your school department’s Title I coordinator or ask your case manager about early intervention, home-based, pre-school, and after-school programs.

Find out about summer camp opportunities where you’re located and remember that families register early in the spring for summer camps.
Staying Healthy

Cambridge Health Alliance

Cambridge Health Alliance
1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge ......................... 617–665–1305
Call to find a primary care provider or pediatrician

If you are pregnant and need to be seen immediately, call either:

Somerville Women’s Health Center
230 Highland Ave., South Building, 5th Floor
Somerville .................................................. 617–591–4800

Cambridge Women’s Health Center
1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge ...................... 617–665–2800
or 617–665–2229

Cambridge/Somerville Health Care for the Homeless

Cambridge Salvation Army Clinic
402 Mass Ave., Cambridge............................... 617–547–3400
Call for clinic times

Boston Health Care for the Homeless

Boston Medical Center, Boston ....................... 617–638–8000

Jean Yawkey Place, 780 Albany St., Boston ........ 857–654–1000

TIP Ask your doctor about the essential immunizations your child needs to stay healthy.

TIP Ask about their Healthy Child Toolkit for Homeless Mothers.

Cambridge Hospital
Psychiatric Emergency Department .................. 617–665–1560
For mental health care in an emergency

“I realized if you show respect it makes people way more willing to help you.” —MOM IN TRANSITION

Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center
75 Kneeland St., Boston ................................. 617–457–8140
Adults and youth ages 12–29 only
Eating Well

Pantries

To find a food pantry near you, call
Project Bread’s FoodSource Hotline at 800–645–8333
Ask if a referral is needed.

Margaret Fuller House Food Pantry
71 Cherry St., Cambridge .......................617–547–4680
W: 5pm–7:30pm, Th: 1pm–5pm, F–Sa: 9am–12noon

ABCD North End / West End Pantry
One Michelangelo St., Boston ..................617–523–8125

Haley House, Inc.
23 Dartmouth St., Boston .......................617–236–8132
Weekly food pantry and fresh produce, call to register
Th: 10:30am–11:30am

Cambridge Economic Opportunity Commission (CEOC)
11 Inman St. (basement), Cambridge ...........617–868–2900
M, W: 4pm–6pm, T: 12noon–2pm, Th: 11am–1pm

Meals

Women’s Lunch Place
67 Newbury St., Boston ..........................617–267–1722
M–Sa: 7am–2pm, breakfast and lunch provided; Groups include: women’s empowerment, coping skills, literacy, computer basics, public speaking, writing/journaling, philosophy, therapy dog, meditation, walking group, yoga, reiki, art classes (watercolor, portraits, jewelry, knitting, etc.)

Project SOUP
Saint Benedict’s Church, 15 Franklin St. (rear basement)
East Somerville. .................................617–776–7687
M: 10am–2pm, T,F: 9am–3pm; W: 11am–4pm, Th: 12noon–4pm,
Sa: 9am–12noon

Hearty Meals for All
Somerville Community Baptist Church
31 College Ave., Davis Square, Somerville
Community dinners second Friday of the month
6:30pm (5:30pm for workshop on nutritional eating)

Community Suppers
First Congregational Church of Somerville
89 College Ave., Davis Square, Somerville
Mondays beginning at 5pm

Tips

Learn about how to get food stamps at your local DTA office or call the SNAP hotline,
866–950–FOOD (3663)
If you are pregnant or your child is under age five, you are eligible to apply for WIC coupons to purchase food.

Eating Well

TIPS

Learn about how to get food stamps at your local DTA office or call the SNAP hotline, 866–950–FOOD (3663)

If you are pregnant or your child is under age five, you are eligible to apply for WIC coupons to purchase food.
Training & Education

For you

Crittenton Women’s Union
One Washington Mall, Boston .................. .617–259–2900
Career counseling and education programs
for low-income women/mothers

YouthBuild Boston
27 Centre St., Roxbury ......................... .617–445–8887
Job-training and education programs for low-income youth ages 14–24

One Family Scholar
186 South Street, 4th Floor, Boston ........ 617–423–0504 x214
A college scholarship program for low-income, homeless single parents

For your child

Cambridge Schools
Homeless Family Liaison ..................... .617–349–6490

Somerville Schools
Homeless Family Liaison ..................... .617–629–5671

Boston Schools
Homeless Education Resource
Network Service Coordinator ................ .617–635–8037

Your child has a right to:

• Remain in her/his old school or transfer to one nearest
to where you are currently staying
• K–6 grader living more than a mile away from school
can get free transportation to/from school
• 7–8 grader living more than 1.5 miles away from school
can get free transportation to/from school
• Begin school immediately even before all paperwork
has been completed
• Obtain equal access to all school programs and services
• Receive free school breakfast and lunch

TIP If you are enrolled in school
(or you work) you may be eligible
for more benefits, such as discounted
childcare and transportation vouchers.

“Try to use your time wisely. Since you’re
gonna be here go to school, do something
instead of just sitting here wasting your time.”
—MOTHER OF TWO IN SHELTER
Transportation

MBTA

Transportation Access Pass (TAP)
If you are disabled, you may qualify for a discounted access pass. Ask your health provider for assistance with the application. You can download the application on the MBTA website (www.mbta.com) or call 617-222-3200 to have one mailed to you.

Children 11 and under
Up to two children ride for free when accompanied by a paying adult

School Enrollment
Junior high and high school students ride for 50% off T fares and are eligible for a $26/month Student T-Pass good for unlimited travel on bus, subway, express bus, and commuter rail.

TIPS
As head of household enrolled in school or working, you may be eligible for transportation support. Be sure to check with your DTA worker (and shelter case manager) about possible childcare and transportation help.

Parents can call School Homeless Family Liaison staff (see page 9) for information or help with school transportation for their children.
Support & Empowerment

Cambridge Women’s Center
46 Pleasant St., Cambridge ..................... 617–354–6394
Women can use the computers and printers. There are support groups and social groups. There are a variety of classes that meet weekly for painting, beading, knitting, drawing, etc. To get a listing of events and programs each month call 617-354-8807 or visit the website www.cambridgewomenscenter.org/news/calendar.html

Parenting Journey
366 Somerville Ave., Somerville ..................... 617–628–8815
Parenting education and support groups for parents.

Women’s Lunch Place
67 Newbury St., Boston ......................... 617–267–1722
Breakfast and lunch provided M–Sa. Please call for programs and services.

Boston Alcoholics Anonymous ..................... 617–426–9444

Boston Narcotics Anonymous ..................... 1–866–624–3578

AIDS Action
359 Green St., Cambridge ..................... 617–437–6200

Somerville Family Center
366 Somerville Ave., Somerville ..................... 617–628–8815
A non-profit family services agency that provides family therapy, parenting workshops, and other family-friendly events

The Guidance Center
5 Sacramento St., Cambridge ..................... 617–354–2275
Early childhood and family services

Mass Coalition for the Homeless
15 Bubier St., Lynn ......................... 781–595–7570
Provides help during short-term crisis to homeless or those at-risk to relocate quickly or avoid homelessness altogether

Homes for Families
14 Beacon St. #615, Boston ..................... 617–227–4188
A collaborative of families who have experienced homelessness, they organize and advocate for improved policies that address root causes of family homelessness

“Just take it one day at a time.”
—RECENTLY HOUSED MOM OF THREE
Legal Help

Cambridge and Somerville

Legal Services ........................................ 617–603–2700

Greater Boston

Legal Services ........................................ 617–371–1234
or 617–742–9179 (Bilingual hotline)

SPAN Inc.

105 Chauncy St., 6th Floor
Boston. ................................. 617–423–0750 or 617–482–2717
Assistance to formerly or currently incarcerated. Priorities are case
management, housing, basic needs, social security benefits, career
development, health services, peer support groups

Community Legal Services and Counseling Center (CLSACC)

One West St., Cambridge ....................... 617–661–1010
Priorities are family law, housing, immigration, disability benefits

VLP Volunteer Lawyers Project (Boston Bar Association)

90 Chauncy St., Suite 400, Boston ............. 617–423–0648
www.vlpnet.org
Priorities are family law, homeownership, unemployment, bankruptcy,
criminal record sealing

Harvard Legal Aid Bureau

23 Everett St. Suite #1, Cambridge ............. 617–495–4408
Priorities are employment law issues, family law/domestic violence,
foreclosure, housing, SSI/SSDI, unemployment compensation benefits

Community Legal Assistance Services Project (CLASP)

Cambridge Multi Service Center
362 Green St., Cambridge ......................... 617–349–6340
Free legal clinic for Cambridge people who are homeless, every
Tuesday at 8:30am

TIP If you have a legal issue be sure
to get started early; the process
of finding a legal advocate and completing
your case can be lengthy.
Family Stabilization Services
Once You Are Housed

**Family Stabilization Services** are an important part of maintaining your new household. Typically services include having a case manager or an advocate visit you in your new home to help you connect with your local resources such as a bank, daycare, fuel assistance, school system, parenting groups, food pantry, library, GED, One-Stop Career Center, and more.

Find out what stabilization services your agency offers; work with your case manager to put those in place *before* you move into your new home. Doing this will help ease your and your children’s transition into your new home and help you stay there.

**TIPS**

Read your lease thoroughly. If you have questions, ask your landlord or advocate. Learn and understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

Have your mail forwarded to your new address so that you don’t miss key communication; it is critical to change your address with the housing authorities that you have applied to as well.

As soon as possible, get connected with a new physician and pediatrician in your new location to maintain good health for yourself and your children. Make sure to update your address with Mass Health or other insurance provider.

“When you are first housed it is important to hold on to your supports and realize it will take time to get settled.”

—NEWLY HOUSED MOM
Special Cases

There may be additional services available to you if you have become homeless and you are:

a victim of domestic violence
Call SafeLink, a 24 hour-hotline, at 877-785-2020 for information or

a veteran
Call the Department of Veterans Affairs, Women Veterans’ Homelessness Program, at 857-364-5841 or the Cambridge Veterans’ Services Dept., 51 Inman St., Cambridge, at 617-349-4761 to learn about benefits

Glossary of Terms

Community Rooms/Beds: A specific number of beds in a shelter that do not need a DTA/DHCD referral

CORI: Criminal Offender Record Information

DHCD: Department of Housing and Community Development

DTA: Department of Transitional Assistance

EA: Emergency Assistance

Section 8: a federal housing choice voucher program that sponsors subsidized housing for low-income families and individuals. There are two types:
   1) Tenant based: Your subsidies go with you anywhere you want to live
   2) Project based: The subsidies apply to a specific apartment and cannot be transferred to another

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (food stamps)

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