

You Find Your Strength

A guide for women and their families
who are homeless



in Cambridge, Somerville,
and the Greater Boston Area



Your Journey Home



“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., Chelsea617-551-1700

Dudley Sq. Office, 2201 Washington St., Roxbury . .617-989-6000

Newmarket Sq. Office, 1010 Mass. Ave, Boston617-989-2200

Helpful information lines

DTA General Information800-249-2007

*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 Hotline866-950-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.

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)

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

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, Roxbury617-442-0590
Child care, housing advocacy, Spanish speaking staff

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



“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

“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

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

552 Mass. Ave, Suite 208A, Cambridge617-234-5340

HomeStart, 105 Chauncy St., Boston617-542-0338

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)

Dept. of Housing and Homelessness Prevention

178 Tremont St., Boston617-348-6347

Somerville Homeless Coalition

One Davis Square, Somerville617-623-6111



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

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.

Clothes

Children's Clothing Exchange, Roosevelt Towers,
391 Evereteze Way, Cambridge617-576-0039
*T, Th 10am-4pm; W 10am-7pm;
every second and fourth Sa 10am-4pm*

Child Care

Our Place, Salvation Army
402 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge617-547-3400
*Offers homeless women and children access to health care
as well as childcare*

Head Start Day Care
66-70 Union Sq, 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

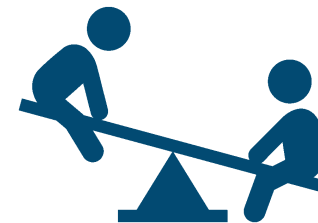
Other Childcare or After-School Options

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
Referral Specialist617-348-6641
M-F, 9:30am-2:00pm

Museum and Library Programs



Cambridge Public Library
Main Branch 449 Broadway617-349-4038
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.

Staying Healthy



Cambridge Health Alliance

Cambridge Health Alliance

1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge617-665-1305

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

Somerville617-591-4800

Cambridge Women's Health Center

1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge617-665-2800
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

Call 617-638-7980 to find a primary care provider. Call 617-414-4841 for a pediatrician.

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 Department617-665-1560

For mental health care in an emergency

Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center

75 Kneeland St., Boston617-457-8140

Adults and youth ages 12-29 only

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

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., Cambridge617-547-4680
W: 5pm-7:30pm, Th: 1pm-5pm, F-Sa: 9am-12noon

ABCD North End / West End Pantry

One Michelangelo St., Boston617-523-8125

Haley House, Inc.

23 Dartmouth St., Boston617-236-8132
*Weekly food pantry and fresh produce, call to register
Th: 10:30am-11:30am*

Cambridge Economic Opportunity Commission (CEOC)

11 Inman St. (basement), Cambridge617-868-2900
M, W: 4pm-6pm, T: 12noon-2pm, Th: 11am-1pm



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.

Meals

Women's Lunch Place

67 Newbury St., Boston617-267-1722
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 Somerville617-776-7687
*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

Training & Education



For you

Crittenton Women's Union

One Washington Mall, Boston617-259-2900
*Career counseling and education programs
for low-income women/mothers*

YouthBuild Boston

27 Centre St., Roxbury617-445-8887
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

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

For your child

Cambridge Schools

Homeless Family Liaison617-349-6490

Somerville Schools

Homeless Family Liaison617-629-5671

Boston Schools

Homeless Education Resource

Network Service Coordinator617-635-8037

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

“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., Cambridge617-354-6394
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., Somerville617-628-8815
Parenting education and support groups for parents.

Women's Lunch Place

67 Newbury St., Boston617-267-1722
Breakfast and lunch provided M-Sa. Please call for programs and services.

Boston Alcoholics Anonymous617-426-9444

Boston Narcotics Anonymous 1-866-624-3578

AIDS Action

359 Green St., Cambridge617-437-6200

Somerville Family Center

366 Somerville Ave., Somerville617-628-8815
A non-profit family services agency that provides family therapy, parenting workshops, and other family-friendly events

The Guidance Center

5 Sacramento St., Cambridge617-354-2275
Early childhood and family services

Mass Coalition for the Homeless

15 Bubier St., Lynn781-595-7570
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, Boston617-227-4188
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 Services617-603-2700

Greater Boston

Legal Services617-371-1234
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., Cambridge617-661-1010

Priorities are family law, housing, immigration, disability benefits

VLP Volunteer Lawyers Project (Boston Bar Association)

90 Chauncy St., Suite 400, Boston617-423-0648

www.vlpnet.org

Priorities are family law, homeownership, unemployment, bankruptcy, criminal record sealing

Harvard Legal Aid Bureau

23 Everett St. Suite #1, Cambridge617-495-4408

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., Cambridge617-349-6340

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.



“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

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.

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

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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)

For additional information or to provide corrections or updates to this guide, please contact the Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women at **617-349-4697**.



A printable pdf of this guide is available at <http://cambridgewomenscommission.org/youfindyourstrength>

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