

Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Program Eligibility Requirements

What do families need to be eligible and placed into shelter?



Proof of Identity

All family members must provide proof of identification, i.e. state issued driver's license, birth certificate, or passport



Child or Pregnant Person

Family must have at least one child or have a pregnant person in the family.



Proof of Family Relationship

We need to be able to confirm that you & your children are all part of one family.



Criminal Background Check

Families must consent to a criminal background check with no convictions or pending charges for serious crimes.



Income and Assets

Income at or below 115% FPL (Federal Poverty Limit) and assets below \$5,000.



Qualifying Reason for Homelessness

Family must be homeless due to domestic violence, fire/flood/natural disaster, no fault eviction, or sleeping in an unsafe place.



Lack of Feasible Alternative Housing

Family must have no other safe place to stay.



Citizenship & Immigration Status

All family members must have a qualifying immigration status.

If a child has an eligible immigration status, that satisfies the requirement for the family.



Massachusetts Residency

Family members 18+ must provide documentation to prove they are residents of MA who intend to remain in the state permanently.

Can families be eligible for EA if they are missing documents?

In **rare** cases, families may be placed into shelter before providing some documents. Waivers will only be granted to **prioritized families on a case-by-case** basis. Families with a waiver will have **up to 30 days** to provide documents or they will be denied.

Learn more about what you need to apply for EA at www.mass.gov/ApplyforEA or using this QR Code:



What documents do I need to apply for EA Family Shelter?

Document Type	Document Examples
Proof of Identity	State issued driver's license, birth certificate, or passport
Proof of Family Relationship	Birth certificate, custody paperwork
Income & Assets	Pay stubs, bank statements
Massachusetts Residency	MassHealth or public benefit from Massachusetts registration, voter or school registration, any Massachusetts ID, bill or insurance document with a Massachusetts address
Citizenship & Immigration Status	U.S. issued passport, green card, documentation that the United States is aware of the person's presence and is not trying to make the person leave the country right away
Qualifying Reason for Homelessness	Eviction paperwork, documentation showing an inability to stay in your current home due to health, safety, or other reasons
Other Forms	• Criminal Background check (CORI) Acknowledgement Form

How long can I stay in shelter?



The Length of Stay (time that families can stay in shelter) for families in the Bridge Shelter Track is 6 months (changed from 9 months). You will receive notices about your exit date. The Length of Stay for families in the Rapid Shelter Track is 30 business days. All families should work with their shelter provider to find stable housing.

Who should I talk to if I have questions?



Ask your Homeless Coordinator for more information about what documents we accept. A Homeless Coordinator is the person from the state who helps you apply to EA and determines if you are eligible for the program. Call (866) 584-0653 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. A call center representative will refer you to your Homeless Coordinator.

Why are there changes to EA Eligibility?



The state has made changes to the EA Family Shelter Program under a new law that passed. These changes make sure the EA Family Shelter Program is safe and can continue to operate.

