

HOUSING CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTERS

Support Sen. Wolf's Amendment 335 to Restore Funding For the Housing Consumer Education Centers to \$2.6 million

What Amendment 335 Does:

Restores funding to the Fiscal Year (FY) '14 amount of \$2.6 million in Line Item 7004-3036 for "the operation of nine regional Housing Consumer Education Centers operated by the regional nonprofit housing agencies." This amendment restores funding to the FY '14 level of \$2.6 million to allow HCECs to meet the continued demand for services from individuals and families at urgent risk of homelessness and serve Massachusetts residents in need of housing supports and services.

*Senate Ways & Means FY '16: \$1.7 million House FY '16: \$2.6 million FY '14: \$2.6 million
FY '15: \$1.7* million plus \$400,000 earmarked*

**In FY '15 only, an additional \$400,000 in the line item was earmarked to new, unrelated programs run by other agencies for a total of \$2.1 million in the line item.*

- The Commonwealth's nine **Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs)** are the front line for housing crisis response in the Commonwealth. They are an essential element in the delivery system for other state-funded programs, including RAFT and HomeBASE.
- HCECs have assisted more than 56,350 households through March of this fiscal year; on track to assist more than 75,000 households this fiscal year total. Over the last ten years, this assistance has an average cost of **less than \$28 per household**.
- The HCEC funds pay for the infrastructure that the regional agencies use to leverage additional funding, including but not limited to federal housing counseling grants; private charitable and foundation support; and other state and local initiatives. We were able to serve an additional 14,700 households with these funds through the first nine months of this fiscal year.
- Crisis prevention and housing education services provided through the HCECs result in fewer evictions and foreclosures and take pressure off Housing Courts and other state services.
- HCEC Funding in Fiscal Year 2015 was cut by 35 percent to \$1.7 million, as a result of new earmarks added to the line item. This has strained the ability of the HCECs to provide broad-based proactive education and lengthened the response time to those in immediate need.

Assisting people in crisis requires time-intensive counseling by professional staff. We ask you to restore our ability to serve the residents of Massachusetts through this cost effective program by providing \$2.6 million in Fiscal Year 2016 HCEC funding for the nine regional agencies.

**Please support Sen. Wolf's amendment 335 to restore funding to \$2.6 million for
FY 2016 for the Housing Consumer Education Centers in Line Item 7004-3036.**

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