



Why Domestic Violence Advocates Want Housing Courts Statewide

One-third of Residents Have No Access to Housing Court

The Housing Court Department currently has five divisions that cover 80% of the state geographically, but 1/3rd of the state's residents still do not have access to a housing court. *See list of towns on reverse.*

Special Housing Laws for Victims of Domestic Violence

In 2013, Massachusetts passed a law providing special housing protections to help domestic violence victims stay safe in their apartments or get out of a lease if they need to escape.

“We have seen situations where landlords are refusing to change the locks when someone is facing domestic abuse. We need a court that to enforce this law where housing is a priority.”

Rosie Medina, Chelsea Police Department, Detective, Domestic Violence Unit

Every Night the Domestic Violence Shelters Are Full

In 2016, SafeLink, the statewide domestic violence hotline, received 19,888 calls for emergency domestic violence shelter. Seventy-four percent (74%), or 14,718 callers, were told that there was nothing available. Every night - the state's 180 emergency domestic violence shelter rooms are full.¹

“More and more people are calling SafeLink for shelter because they are facing homelessness.

Housing Courts can educate tenants and landlords about the 2013 law that provides vital housing protections to domestic violence survivors.” *Stephanie Brown, CEO, Casa Myrna*

Access to a Court Where Housing Is the Priority

Tenants who have experienced domestic violence are vulnerable in ways that other tenants are not. They need more support and may need immediate safety, medical, legal, and housing assistance.

“Housing courts have special resources that can reduce unnecessary and unlawful evictions and protect domestic victims from homelessness, and in doing so save the state millions of dollars in shelter costs.” *Julia Devanthéry, Legal Services Center, Jamaica Plain*

Victims Should Not Be Re-Victimized

So far in 2016, 4,286 families have entered an emergency assistance shelter or motel/hotel; 659 families said that the reason was domestic violence.²

“We need the resources and expertise in Housing Court to keep tenants experiencing domestic violence from becoming homeless and being re-victimized by the trauma of eviction.”

Kourou Pich, Co-Executive Director, HarborCOV, support services for survivors of domestic violence

Costs & Savings

Housing Court expansion would cost \$2.4 million. Every year, the Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP), a program only in the Housing Court, saves the state millions in emergency shelter spending.

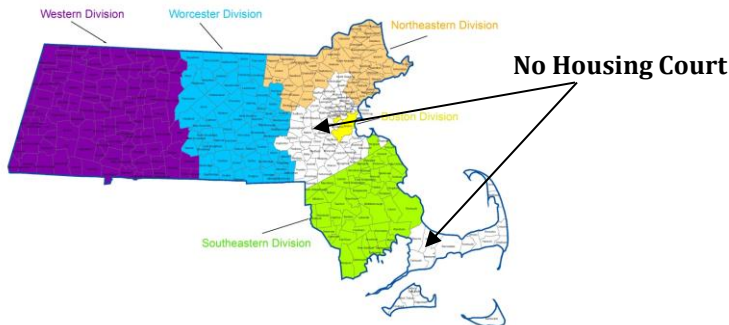
“In FY2016, TPP saved an estimated \$4 million in emergency shelter spending, and if Housing Court and TPP were expanded statewide, it could save an additional \$1.8 million per year.

That could fund the expansion of both the Housing Court and TPP statewide.

Annette Duke, Housing Attorney, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Close the Gap - Provide Everyone in Massachusetts with Access to Housing Court

Current Housing Court Division



Comprehensive Statewide Housing Court Expansion



Towns and Cities with No Housing Court

Suffolk County

Chelsea
Revere
Winthrop

Barnstable County

Barnstable
Bourne
Brewster
Chatham
Dennis
Eastham
Falmouth
Harwich
Mashpee
Orleans
Provincetown
Sandwich
Truro
Wellfleet
Yarmouth

Middlesex County

Arlington
Ashland
Bedford
Belmont
Burlington
Cambridge
Everett
Framingham
Holliston
Hopkinton
Lexington
Lincoln
Malden
Medford
Melrose
Natick
Newton
North Reading
Reading
Sherborn
Somerville
Stoneham
Sudbury
Wakefield
Waltham
Watertown
Wayland
Weston
Wilmington
Winchester
Woburn

Norfolk County

Avon
Braintree
Brookline
Canton
Cohasset
Dedham
Dover
Foxborough
Franklin
Holbrook
Medfield
Medway
Millis
Milton
Needham
Norfolk
Norwood
Plainville
Quincy
Randolph
Sharon
Stoughton
Walpole
Wellesley
Westwood
Weymouth
Wrentham

Dukes County

Aquinnah
Chilmark
Edgartown
Gosnold
Oak Bluffs
Tisbury
West Tisbury

Nantucket County

Nantucket

For More
Information Go To:

HousingCourt4All.org

1. Data from SafeLink, the statewide domestic violence hotline, operated by Casa Myrna
2. DHCD Report, August 2016