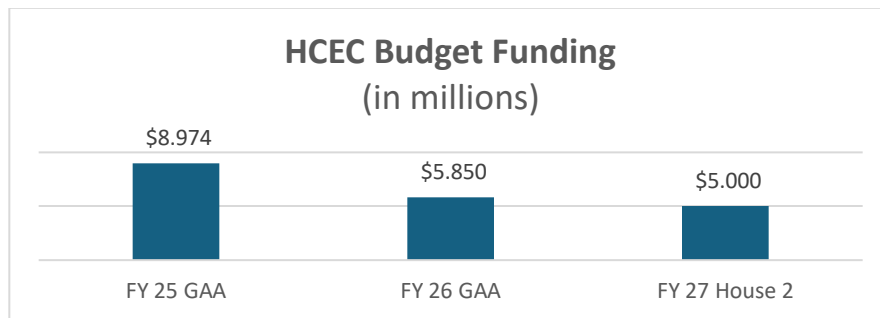




The Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC) FY27 Budget Request: Restore \$8.974 Million in Critical Funding for HCEC Housing First Responders

We respectfully ask the legislature to restore funding in line item 7004-3036 (\$8.974 million) for the Housing Consumer Education Centers, so our housing first responders can assist Massachusetts families facing a housing crisis. HCECs are the front line of housing stability. They connect residents to resources that prevent eviction, foreclosure, and homelessness.

In the Governor's proposed FY27 budget, funding for the HCECs was cut from the current level of \$5.85 million down to \$5 million – a substantial cut for the second year in a row. In FY26, funding for this essential housing resource was cut by 40+% or \$3 million. These budget cuts mean less support for families facing urgent needs while demand continues to surge. HCECs have been forced to reduce staffing, close satellite offices, and cut both in-person and phone support hours. The closures are causing more families to face long waits for critical housing assistance. A reduction of this magnitude would leave the most vulnerable families facing housing crises without the resources to remain stably housed.



Essential Services Provided by Housing Consumer Education Centers

- ◇ Nine Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs) operate throughout the Commonwealth, with several operating satellite locations.
- ◇ The HCECs are the “housing emergency rooms” where first responders triage families and connect them to critical housing and related resources (MRVP, RAFT, HomeBASE, WIC, SNAP, heating assistance, and financial and job counseling services.)
- ◇ During FY 2025, the Housing Consumer Education Centers provided 222,438 services to 74,183 Massachusetts families. **Average statewide expenditures are \$116 per person, making HCEC a highly cost-effective intervention to stabilize at-risk residents.**
- ◇ HCECs work with landlords and tenants to de-escalate and resolve disputes to prevent evictions.
- ◇ All Massachusetts residents can access the correct HCEC by their location at masshousinginfo.org.

We urge you to restore the HCECs to the FY25 level of \$8.974 million for FY27. Restoring funding to HCECs is fiscally responsible: every dollar invested keeps families housed, reduces shelter demand, and strengthens communities.

