



# MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING AND SHELTER ALLIANCE

INITIATING SOLUTIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS

## What you can do to end homelessness

### **Be compassionate...and think critically**

Service to individuals is important, yet homelessness is a large-scale housing crisis that affects thousands. To solve the larger issue, action on a larger scale must be taken.

#### **1) Educate yourself and others about the problem**

- a. Become a member of MHSA - or other advocacy groups focused on specific homeless subpopulations that you care about (individuals, families, children, etc.) - to receive eNews, legislative alerts, and other pertinent info about *ending* homelessness.
- b. Read about homelessness. One place to start: *Beside the Golden Door: Policy, Politics, and the Homeless* by James D. Wright, Beth A. Rubin, and Joel A. Devine.
- c. Share what you have learned with others. Talk about it with your family, friends and colleagues.

#### **2) Start locally**

- a. Are there any homelessness task forces in your neighborhood, town, or city? Homelessness planning groups? Get involved! You can contact MHSA for help with this (Erin: 617-367-6447 ext. 25/edonohue@mhsa.net)
- b. Engage your local legislators
  - i. Go to [www.wheredoivotema.com](http://www.wheredoivotema.com) to find out who your legislators are.
  - ii. Tell them you support funding for programs that *change the status quo*, not simply programs that maintain the problem.
  - iii. Be critical about the way your tax dollars are spent – is your town/city/state investing in *solutions* or simply endlessly funding emergency programs?
- c. Media: write your local paper, cable TV, etc. Let others know that homelessness is a problem that can and should be solved, not just managed. Again, MHSA can help with contacts for this.

### 3) Donate to and/or volunteer for outcome-based initiatives

- a. You are an **investor** - Your charitable dollar buys an outcome. Are your dollars being used wisely? Are they funding real solutions for those most in need?
- b. Ask the tough questions of any agency you give money or time to – what are they doing to solve the problem of homelessness?
- c. Examine your charitable giving strategies – gear them toward *change* and new and innovative solutions that work to end homelessness.

**Remember:** *with a few simple steps, you **can** have an impact on ending homelessness in Massachusetts.*

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