

Protecting safety net access for Massachusetts residents

Please Co-Sponsor: House: 234, Senate: 134 • Sponsored by: Senator Moore, Representative Keefe, and Representative Duffy

An Act to Protect Safety Net Access for Massachusetts Residents



The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) serves one in eight residents of the Commonwealth with direct economic assistance (cash benefits), food assistance (SNAP benefits), and workforce training opportunities. To access these safety net services, DTA offices need to be in locations accessible to all residents.

The Act to Protect Safety Net Access will require the Department of Transitional Assistance to give notice to the Joint Committee of State Government and Regulatory Oversight which will then hold public hearings in the communities affected by any proposed office closure or relocation.

The legislation will help ensure that residents and community organizations have a voice in this important issue.

1 Those without transportation or technological access, our most vulnerable families—those with children, the elderly, the homeless, and disabled face many challenges.

The technological divide is real. For many residents accessing assistance and supports via phone or computer is a huge challenge if not impossibility.

2 DTA has been closing and relocating offices throughout the state without asking for the input of the communities it serves.

Some of the relocations are to areas that are impossible to access via public transportation. Even where public transportation is available, the relocation increases the commuting time for residents from 2 to 3 hours each way! This has widened the accessibility gap between those who have access to a car and those who do not.

3 DTA is required to provide meaningful access to its services.

It cannot do this when its offices are isolated from a resident's reach.

4 Considering that some of the programs that DTA manages bring over 1 billion dollars to the Commonwealth, it is in the best interest of residents to have access to this important resource.

For more information contact:

Gina Plata-Nino: gplatanino@cwjustice.org

Jean McMurray: Jean@foodbank.org