



# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Charles D. Baker, Governor ◆ Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor ◆ Jennifer D. Maddox, Undersecretary

### FAQ: The Commonwealth's Emergency Assistance Intake Center at Devens

#### What is the Emergency Assistance Intake Center?

The Emergency Intake Center is a [temporary measure announced by the Baker-Polito Administration](#) to bolster the Commonwealth's existing Emergency Assistance housing system. In light of increased demand, especially in the family shelter system, the Emergency Intake Center at the Devens Community Center will provide services and shelter to families for approximately 3 to 5 days at the site until other short- or long-term shelter becomes available. In addition to a short-term family shelter, the facility will host a Multi-Agency Resource Center for clients to connect with appropriate services.

#### Why undertake this work and who is involved?

In addition to recognizing and responding to a humanitarian need, the Commonwealth maintains a legal obligation to house families with children and pregnant women experiencing homelessness.

The state partners contributing expertise to this mission include: the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, MassDevelopment, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), the Department of Public Health, the Department of Mental Health, as well as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

#### What will MEMA's role be at the Intake Center?

As the Commonwealth's emergency management agency, MEMA personnel have developed the logistical expertise to plan, build, and operate emergency shelters in urgent times of need. The Agency has years of experience setting up resource centers and shelters with appropriate services to meet residents' basic needs.

MEMA will equip the Devens Community Center for this unique mission. Dedicated spaces include:

- **The Multi-Agency Resource Center** which contains meeting rooms with tables, chairs, and computers for housing and human service organizations providing case management, information, and registration for applicable services.
- **Private space** to facilitate necessary health and mental health assessments and services.
- **The temporary family shelter** to meet the basic safe shelter needs of approximately 60 families (125 individuals maximum).

To provide for basic needs, the shelter area will include spaces set with sleeping cots, pillows, clean linens, and towels. Space for three daily meals and recreation will also be created. To provide for the basic hygiene needs of residents, the site will be equipped with portable shower units. Custodial and linen services will be provided to ensure regular cleaning and delivery of clean sheets and towels to the site.

MEMA will manage operations at the Multi-Agency Resource Center. DHCD will manage the shelter component of the Center with a contracted shelter provider.

#### Who will be sheltered at Devens?

If the regular Emergency Assistance housing system cannot meet high demand, the Emergency Intake Center at Devens will provide short-term humanitarian shelter to families with children and pregnant women in the Commonwealth experiencing homelessness. The Intake Center will only be offered if no other family shelter place is available in Massachusetts.

**The shelter and services offered at Devens will be voluntary**, and the goal is to have residents stay for a short time (3 to 5 days); families may decide to leave at any time.

**Why was the Devens site chosen?**

As a former U.S. Army base in central Massachusetts currently being redeveloped by MassDevelopment into a mixed-use community, Devens Community Center provides a well-maintained facility with the necessary flexible space during this time of need.

**How long will MEMA operate the Devens site?**

It is estimated that the Devens site will be needed for at least 4 months while more capacity is added to the existing Emergency Shelter system throughout the Commonwealth.

**What security measures will be in place for the Intake Center and Shelter?**

Providing security at shelter sites is standard for the safety of those temporarily living and working there. As part of MEMA's commitment to that end, a private security firm with experience in such a facility will be engaged for the duration of the mission. Additionally, the Massachusetts State Police continue to oversee public safety in Devens, and this mission will not impact the services they provide to Devens residents and businesses.

**What will the hours of operation be at the Intake Center?**

The shelter will be staffed on a 24/7 basis, seven days a week. The Multi-Agency Resource Center will be open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Processing and any placements at Devens will occur during DHCD's normal Emergency Assistance intake hours which [occur by phone and in person](#).

**What will be the intake process? How will families access the Intake Center?**

Families must seek assistance through the DHCD's normal Emergency Assistance registration process. If there is no capacity in the regular family shelter system and they are eligible for assistance, they will be offered shelter and services at the Intake Center.

**Families cannot arrive or access services at the Intake Center without a referral from DHCD.**

**Will transportation services be provided to shelter residents?**

DHCD will provide transportation to and from the Intake Center for families checking in and discharging from the facility. No additional transportation services will be provided beyond what is available in the community.

**Will school-aged children staying at the Intake Center be enrolled in local schools?**

Given that school-aged children and their families will stay at Devens Intake Shelter for a short period of time, they will not enroll in local schools.

**As a Devens resident or business, can I continue reserving space in the community center?**

Although the Eisengrein Community Center will not be available for public use while it serves as a temporary emergency assistance intake center, Devens Recreation/Events Coordinator Hillary Andrews is available to identify an alternate location for your needs. Please contact her at [handrews@massdevelopment.com](mailto:handrews@massdevelopment.com)

**As a Devens resident or business, who should I contact if I have additional questions?**

Devens residents and businesses can reach out to Meg Delorier at (978) 784-2929 or [mdelorier@massdevelopment.com](mailto:mdelorier@massdevelopment.com) with any questions or concerns. Members of the media can contact the Department of Housing and Community Development, email Samantha Kaufman at [samantha.kaufman@mass.gov](mailto:samantha.kaufman@mass.gov) or call 617-874-0126.

**Is *The Great Exchange* open?**

Yes, you can visit *The Great Exchange* at its new location, 33 Andrews Parkway.

**Are donations or volunteers being accepted at the Intake Center?**

The Commonwealth and its partners will work to ensure that Intake Center residents' basic needs are met during their very short stay at Devens (anticipated to be less than one week). The Administration encourages those who wish to donate items and provide assistance to support the many reputable causes and organizations serving people experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts.