

# Know Your Rights: Safety & Stability

\*This fact sheet is for educational purposes only. Nothing here should be considered legal advice. Please consult a lawyer for more specific information.\*

\*Updated as of March 2025\*

## Basic Housing Rights

- You have the right to...
  - ask your landlord to fix any unhealthy conditions/or make repairs to things that do not work
  - a safe living space that includes heating, hot water, and electricity systems that work
  - live in your apartment until you decide to move out, a judge orders you to move out, or your landlord files and wins an eviction case in court
  - refuse to pay any illegal fees
  - take your landlord to court if they do something illegal
- Your Landlord **cannot** enter your apartment without permission unless there is an emergency or court order, and if you are a tenant, they **cannot** lock you out or put your personal belongings out without going to court!

## Healthcare and Rights Visiting the Doctor

- **MassHealth**
  - The main public medical coverage program for residents of Massachusetts.
  - To be eligible you must:
    - Be a Massachusetts resident (no permanent address required)
    - Meet financial requirements
  - MassHealth covers:
    - Annual well check exams
    - Visits with specialists
    - Mental health services
    - And more
- **When visiting the doctor, you have the right to:**
  - Choose the gender of the healthcare provider who examines you (in non-emergency situations)
  - Refuse to take part in research, be examined, watched, or treated by students or other facility staff
  - Receive informed consent (the right not to be treated unless you understand and agree to treatment)
  - Receive emergency treatment
  - Receive privacy during treatment
    - Receive written information about emergency contraception and take emergency contraception if you are a victim of rape

## Basic Employment Rights

- **What CAN you be asked during an interview?**
  - Questions relevant to the job (ex: availability, education, experience)
- **What CAN'T employers ask about**
  - Questions that are biased/discriminatory
  - In your initial application:
    - Previous salary/wage
    - Criminal record
    - Arrests that did not lead to conviction
    - Sealed records
    - First-time convictions for drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray (fighting in public), or disturbing the peace
- **Dress**
  - Employers can require you to dress and groom in certain ways (but they cannot discriminate)
  - If your employer asks you to buy/rent a uniform, your employer must pay for the uniform or refund the actual costs to you
- **If you feel like you have been unlawfully discriminated against you can contact:**
  - Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)
  - Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

## Websites/Other Resources

- **MA Appleseed Homeless Youth Handbook:**
  - <https://www.homelessyouth.org/en/us/massachusetts>
- **Young Adult Emergency Housing Options & Supports (Ages 24 and under)**
  - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/list-of-young-adult-emergency-housing-options-supports-ages-24-and-under>
- **Call 211 for general information about programs in your area that may be able to help you**
- **Mass Legal Help**
  - Visit their website: [masslegalhelp.org](https://masslegalhelp.org)
  - Get legal support with housing, employment, domestic violence, public benefits, health, etc.
- **MassHealth Plans and Enrollment Guide**
  - <https://www.mass.gov/masshealth-plans-and-enrollment-guide>
- **Emergency Mental Health Help**
  - Call Massachusetts Behavioral Healthline at (844) 773-2444
- **“A Guide to Obtaining Housing Assistance” (has resources on the types of programs offered and how to apply to each)**
  - <https://www.mass.gov/guides/a-guide-to-obtaining-housing-assistance>