



## FY2016 House Budget Amendments Supported by CHAPA

### **MRVP Administrative Fee (7004-9024)**

[\*Amendment 950\*](#)

Representative Aaron Vega's amendment maintains consistency with the current administrative fee for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) at \$40 per voucher per month. The language as drafted would allow DHCD to reduce the fee below FY06 levels at \$30 per voucher per month despite the significant increase in administrative expenses since that time. Maintaining the administrative fee is critical to the program's efficiency and effectiveness. The amendment also removes language unrelated to the program regarding the cost of inspections and their effect on the subsidy amount of a voucher.

### **Restore the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) (7004-9030)**

[\*Amendment 1034\*](#)

Representative Timothy Toomey's amendment increases funding for AHVP from \$3.55 million to \$5 million to expand housing opportunities for people with disabilities. Launched in 1996, AHVP was funded at \$4 million and provided rental assistance to 800 individuals. Today, AHVP serves 418 people, despite growing demand. AHVP has a current wait list of more than 2,000 people. The \$1.45 million increase will restore 150 vouchers.

### **Amendments to HomeBASE (7004-0108)**

HomeBASE offers families an alternative to shelter by providing stabilization services and up to \$8,000 in financial assistance to pay rent, utility bills, security deposits, and other expenses that would allow them to stay in their homes, move to new housing, or live with another family. The following are amendments that will improve HomeBASE:

- **Expand Eligibility to Domestic Violence & Substance Abuse Shelters**

[\*Amendment 988\*](#)

Representative Christine Barber's amendment allows families living in domestic violence or substance abuse shelters to access rehousing resources available under HomeBASE. Currently, only families who are eligible for shelter under Emergency Assistance are able to access HomeBASE resources. Families in domestic violence and substance abuse shelters have few resources to help them exit the shelter system. This language change will help approximately 300 families in domestic violence and substance abuse shelters move out of shelter while providing openings for additional families in need of these services

- **Remove 24-Month Bar to EA Shelter or More HomeBASE Benefits**

[\*Amendment 639\*](#)

Representative Marjorie Decker's amendment ends the current 24-month bar on re-accessing Emergency Assistance shelter and HomeBASE re-housing and diversion resources placed on certain families experiencing homelessness after leaving the HomeBASE program. The amendment will reduce the maximum bar to 12-months, running from the time financial assistance runs out, and allow DHCD to waive requirements in particular instances.

- **Restore Forward Funding for HomeBASE and RAFT**

[\*Amendment 273\*](#)

Representative Michael Finn's amendment allows for forward funding of the HomeBASE and Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) programs. Currently, non-profit administering agencies are collectively advancing over \$2 million in critical resources to help families avoid or exit the shelter system. This creates a strain on cash flow that can delay payments when the Commonwealth falls behind on reimbursements and creates an unnecessary borrowing cost that detracts from the main purpose of these valuable resources. In the past, agencies received funds in advance based on prior spending, allowing the program to operate more effectively.

### **Recapitalize the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund**

[Amendment 753](#)

Representative Chris Walsh's amendment creates a line item for the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund and recapitalizes the program with \$15 million. Since its creation in 1998, more than \$82 million has been awarded for the assessment or remediation of environmentally distressed sites in 106 cities and towns. It has created over 4,000 homes and supported over 2,600 jobs. Redeveloping these sites revitalizes distressed areas and advances the state's desire to promote smart, sustainable development.

### **Increase Public Housing Operating Subsidy (7004-9005)**

[Amendment 721](#)

Representative Peter Kocot's amendment increases funding for public housing authorities from \$64 million to \$66 million. The additional funds will be used to cover increased snow and ice removal costs from this previous winter. It will also be used to implement the Public Housing Reform legislation, signed into law during last session, at the local level. The amendment will help preserve public housing for very low-income families, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

### **Expand the Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP) (7004-3045)**

[Amendment 954](#)

Representative Michael Brady's amendment increases funding for TPP from \$500,000 to \$1 million. The additional funds would provide approximately 850 households with TPP services. The program prevents homelessness among people with disabilities by working with landlords and tenants, and providing clinical consultation services to the Housing Court. The program is extremely cost effective, stabilizing 87% of households served with an average cost of \$2,950 per case.

### **Make New Funding Available for Fuel Assistance**

[Amendment 1005](#)

Representative Paul Mark's amendment creates a new \$20 million line item for fuel assistance. The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) allocation has decreased from \$200 million to \$121 million, leaving nearly 200,000 households vulnerable to exhausting their fuel assistance benefit long before winter ends. By creating a new line item and supplementing the federal allocation, these 200,000 low income families, children, and elderly residents will stay safe and warm throughout the entire winter season.

### **Supporting the Community Preservation Act**

[Amendment 881](#)

Representative Peter Kocot's amendment transfers \$25 million from the end-of-year budget surplus to the Community Preservation Trust Fund. The transferring of funds from the state's end-of-budget surplus supplements revenue from the existing CPA deeds recording fee. This funding is vital to sustaining the CPA program, which is now experiencing rapid growth following the legislature's recent approval of important amendments to the Act. The CPA is one of the most effective state-local partnerships, resulting in a significant investment in affordable housing, historic preservation, recreational facilities, and open space.

### **Invest in the Gateway Cities Transformative Development Initiative**

[Amendment 733](#)

Representative Tony Cabral's amendment creates a line item for the Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) and capitalizes it with \$5 million. This MassDevelopment program, created through the economic development legislation passed by the Legislature in 2014, supports redevelopment in Gateway Cities. TDI is an integrated systems approach to investment and urban redevelopment, focused on local collaborative partnerships, strategic district focus, and community engagement. The program includes technical assistance, additional capacity for selected cities through a Fellows Program, and equity investments in real estate.

### **Increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

[Amendment 626](#)

Representative Marjorie Decker's amendment increases the state Earned Income Tax Credit from 15% to 50% of the federal EITC amount. Increasing the EITC in Massachusetts will help working families make ends meet. Long-term structural trends in the U.S. economy leave many working families struggling to pay for housing, food, and childcare. A growing body of research has found that expansions in the EITC have increased participation in the workforce and have resulted in increased mobility and opportunity.