

FY2017 House Budget Amendments Supported by CHAPA



Affordable Housing, Homelessness Prevention, & Community Development Programs

Amendment	Program	Sponsor	Description
<u>52</u>	Mass. Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)	Rep. Donato	Restores funding for MRVP to \$120 million
<u>1018</u>	Mass. Rental Voucher Program	Rep. Garballey	Program improvements for MRVP
<u>60</u>	Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)	Rep. Toomey	Restores AHVP with \$7.1 million
<u>62</u>	Alternative Housing Voucher Program	Rep. Toomey	Program improvements for AHVP
<u>1149</u>	Public Housing Operating	Rep. Holmes	Supports state public housing with \$67 million
<u>817</u>	Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)	Rep. Decker	Expands RAFT eligibility with \$18.5 million
<u>660</u>	Residential Assistance for Families in Transition	Rep. Finn	Allow forward funding for RAFT
<u>1102</u>	HomeBASE	Rep. Barber	HomeBASE expansion, renewal, & forward funding
<u>1044</u>	Municipal Affordable Housing Trusts (MAHTs)	Rep. Honan	Program improvements for MAHTs
<u>296</u>	Foreclosure Counseling	Rep. Madaro	Expands access to foreclosure counseling
<u>1176, 1180, 15, & 18</u>	Housing Court	Rep. Chris Walsh & Rep. Kaufman	Expands Housing Court statewide
<u>1197</u>	Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP)	Rep. Tosado	Expands TPP with \$975,000
<u>994</u>	Brownfields Redevelopment Fund	Rep. Chris Walsh	Capitalizes Brownfields with \$15 million
<u>813</u>	Community Preservation Act (CPA)	Rep. Kocot	Transfers \$25 million to CPA from end-of-year surplus
<u>623</u>	Home & Healthy for Good (HHG)	Rep. Rushing	Expands HHG to \$3.8 million
<u>50</u>	Fuel Assistance	Rep. Donato	Funds fuel assistance with \$5 million
<u>1037</u>	Economic Mobility Commission	Rep. Fox	Creates a commission to study economic mobility and self-sufficiency programs
<u>747</u>	State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	Rep. Decker	Expands the state EITC to 50% of the federal EITC



FY2017 House Budget Amendments Supported by CHAPA for Affordable Housing, Homelessness Prevention, & Community Development Programs

Restore the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) (7004-9024)

[Amendment 52](#)

Representative Paul Donato's amendment restores funding for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) to \$120 million. These funds will increase the number of vouchers available, help preserve affordable housing developments, and allow programmatic fixes. Funding MRVP at \$120 million will also restore the program to its 1990 funding level when the combined state voucher and Chapter 707 programs funded more than double the number of vouchers funded today.

Improve MRVP (7004-9024)

[Amendment 1018](#)

Representative Sean Garballey's amendment makes the following important programmatic improvements to MRVP that will help tenants be more stable in their housing, and reduce lengthy lease-up times:

- Make MRVP more usable by increasing voucher rent caps by aligning them with current fair market rent standards for Section 8 vouchers;
- Get vouchers out faster by mandating a date for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to start issuing new vouchers;
- Improve program efficiencies by authorizing DHCD to create a management system for MRVP; and
- Continue to allow DHCD to set the monthly voucher administration fee.

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

[Amendment 60](#)

Representative Timothy Toomey's amendment increases funding for AHVP from \$4.6 million to \$7.1 million to expand housing opportunities for low-income adults with disabilities. AHVP furthers the Commonwealth's goal of providing persons with disabilities choices to live in community-based housing that helps avoid more costly institutions or homelessness. \$7.1 million will provide rental assistance to approximately 800 households, the number of vouchers originally supported by AHVP in 1995.

Improve AHVP

[Amendment 62](#)

Representative Timothy Toomey's amendment makes important programmatic improvements to AHVP that will help persons with disabilities be more stable in their housing and will eventually help build more affordable and accessible homes. The amendment changes the AHVP's enabling legislation to clarify that AHVP is not a transitional housing program. The amendment also allows for vouchers to be project-based, which can help create new accessible housing.

Increase Public Housing Operating Subsidy (7004-9005)

[Amendment 1149](#)

Representative Russell Holmes' amendment increases funding for state public housing from \$64.5 million to \$67 million. These funds help support over 45,600 state public housing, with over two-thirds of these homes dedicated for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, years of underfunding have left many housing authorities struggling to operate and keep units in good repair. The additional \$2.5 million will help provide a 2% increase in housing authority operating budgets.

Improve the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) (7004-9316) [Amendment 817](#)

Representative Marjorie Decker's amendment increases funding for RAFT from \$12.5 million to \$18.5 million to expand access to the program to serve new populations and to ensure that it is available year-round to help families remain housed. The expanded eligibility will help prevent homelessness by allowing the elderly, people with disabilities, unaccompanied youth, and households without children to access RAFT.

Allow Forward Funding for RAFT (7004-9316)

[**Amendment 660**](#)

Representative Michael Finn's amendment allows for forward funding of RAFT. Currently, non-profit administering agencies must borrow money to cover the cost of administering and distributing RAFT. 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 the program to prevent homelessness.

Improve HomeBASE (7004-0108)

[**Amendment 1102**](#)

Representative Christine Barber's amendment builds off of the pilot program proposed in the budget to make HomeBASE available to eligible homeless families in domestic violence shelters or substance abuse programs. The amendment also allows a household to renew HomeBASE if the family is facing eviction, loss of housing stability, or the need to re-enter shelter. Finally, the amendment continues forward funding of HomeBASE so that non-profit agencies do not have to borrow money in order to administer the program. The amendment increases funding for HomeBASE to \$39.2 million.

Technical Changes to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) Statute (7004-0108)

[**Amendment 1044**](#)

Representative Kevin Honan's amendment makes technical changes to the MAHT statute. MAHTs and the Community Preservation Act (CPA) are tools that many communities use to create affordable housing. Most of these local trusts receive much of their funding from the CPA. Currently, the CPA and Housing Trust statutes are not aligned in how funding can be used. As a result, the rules of CPA do not necessarily follow as the money is placed into MAHTs. Chairman Honan's amendment:

- Clarifies that any eligible use of CPA funds for affordable housing is also an eligible use of MAHT funds;
- Clarifies that restrictions on the use of CPA funds remain in force even after CPA funds are transferred to a MAHT and requires that the use of those funds by the Trusts be included in the CPA reporting to the Department of Revenue;
- Authorizes MAHTs to execute grant agreements, establishing conditions for the transfer of CPA funds; and
- Makes these changes effective at the beginning of FY17.

Expand Access to Foreclosure Counseling (7006-0011)

[**Amendment 296**](#)

Representative Adrian Madaro's amendment allows the Division of Banks to retain an additional \$1.3 million from mortgage loan originator license fees in order to support foreclosure counseling at housing agencies across the Commonwealth. The Ch. 206 foreclosure counseling grants have helped achieve the best possible outcome for many struggling homeowners. Increased funding for the program will support other effective foreclosure prevention tools, such as direct advocacy and counseling.

Expand Housing Court Statewide

[**Amendments 1176, 1180, 15, & 18**](#)

Representative Chris Walsh's and Representative Jay Kaufman's amendments authorize and fund the statewide expansion of Housing Court. Currently, nearly a third of Massachusetts residents do not have access to Housing Court, which hears cases involving eviction, code enforcement, and discrimination claims.

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

[**Amendment 1197**](#)

Representative Jose Tosado's amendment increases funding for TPP from \$500,000 to \$975,000. In consultation with the Housing Court, TPP works with households with disabilities facing eviction to determine whether a disability can be reasonably accommodated in order to preserve the tenancy. In FY2015, TPP stabilized 93% of households served. With an additional \$475,000, TPP would be able to meet the needs of an expanded Housing Court in FY2017.

Recapitalize the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund

Amendment 994

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. The Fund has created over 4,000 homes and supported over 2,700 jobs. Redeveloping these sites revitalizes distressed areas and advances the state's desire to promote smart, sustainable development.

Support the Community Preservation Act (CPA)

Amendment 813

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 end-of-budget surplus supplements revenue from the deeds recording fee. This funding is vital to sustaining the CPA program. 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.

Expand Home and Healthy for Good (HHG)

Amendment 623

Representative Byron Rushing's amendment increases funding for HHG from \$1.8 million to \$3.8 million. HHG is a Housing First program that provides permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless, including a program for LGBTQ unaccompanied homeless youths. Since 2006, the program has placed 860 homeless people into homes. According to the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, the program saves the Commonwealth an annual average of \$12,101 per person because of a decreased reliance on other expensive public services, including emergency medical care, shelter, and incarceration. The additional funds will be used to serve over 100 additional homeless individuals.

Fund Fuel Assistance

Amendment 50

Representative Paul Donato's amendment creates a new \$5 million line item for fuel assistance. The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) allocation has decreased from \$200 million to \$133 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 low-income families, children, and elderly residents will have additional help staying safe and warm through the entire winter.

Economic Mobility Commission

Amendment 1037

Representative Gloria Fox's amendment brings together stakeholders to study data related to programs that provide joint support for stable housing and efforts to increase economic self-sufficiency. The Commission will bring together state agencies with researchers, service providers, and policy groups to examine program components and the feedback of program participants and those not enrolled in the program to determine which models work best and what kinds of programs could be scaled throughout the state to help families and individuals with low incomes to increase their incomes and their economic mobility.

Increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Amendment 747

Representative Marjorie Decker's amendment increases the state EITC from 23% to 50% of the federal EITC amount. Increasing the EITC will help working families make ends meet to help 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.