

BUILDING BLOCKS FY2018 BUDGET PRIORITIES



FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION, & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Line Item	Program	FY18 Request	HWM Budget	FY2017	Gov's FY18 Budget
7004-9024	Mass. Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)	\$120,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$86,547,706	\$97,503,438
7004-9030	Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)	\$7,500,000	\$4,850,000	\$4,600,000	\$4,600,000
7004-9005	Public Housing Operating Subsidy	\$72,000,000	\$65,500,000	\$64,500,000	\$64,500,000
7004-9007	Public Housing Reform	\$2,000,000	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$1,172,132
7004-9316	Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)	\$18,500,000	\$15,000,000	\$13,000,000	\$13,000,000
7004-0108	HomeBASE	\$35,000,000	\$31,079,696	\$31,943,664	\$31,079,696
7006-0011	Foreclosure Prevention Counseling	\$3,650,000	\$1,650,000	\$2,350,000	\$1,650,000
New	Housing Court Expansion	\$1,200,000	\$0		\$1,000,000
7004-3045	Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP)	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
7004-3036	Housing Consumer Education Centers	\$2,640,000	\$2,291,992	\$2,291,992	\$2,291,992
New	Brownfields Redevelopment Fund	\$15,000,000	\$0		\$0
7004-0104	Home & Healthy for Good	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
4120-4001	Mass. Accessible Housing Registry (MassAccess)	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
New	Fuel Assistance	\$7,500,000	\$0		\$0
4000-0007	Unaccompanied Homeless Youths	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000

For more information, contact Eric Shupin, Director of Public Policy at Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, at eshupin@chapa.org or 617-742-0820

Building Blocks Coalition FY2018 Budget Priorities

for Affordable Housing, Homelessness Prevention, & Community Development Programs

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

FY18 Request: \$120 million

MRVP is the most effective tool to immediately help people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness find homes they can afford by providing a combination of project-based and mobile rental vouchers. Since January 2015, the number of homeless families staying in motels dropped from 1,500 to less than 100 families today. MRVP largely helped to achieve this due to new vouchers made possible by increased support from the Legislature. \$120 million will increase the number of new vouchers available, help preserve affordable housing developments, and make programmatic fixes that will make vouchers more usable and reduce lengthy lease-up times.

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

FY18 Request: \$7.5 million

AHVP provides rental assistance to about 560 very low-income households with persons with disabilities. This program furthers the Commonwealth's goal of providing persons with disabilities choices to live in community-based housing and avoid more costly institutions or homelessness. \$7.5 million will provide rental assistance to approximately 800 people, the number of vouchers originally funded in 1995.

Public Housing Operating Subsidy (7004-9005)

FY18 Request: \$72 million

This line-item supports more than 45,600 state-sponsored public housing units in Massachusetts. Over three-quarters of public housing residents are elderly or persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, years of underfunding have left many housing authorities struggling to operate and keep apartments in good repair. The additional funds will help housing authorities operate and preserve this valuable resource.

Public Housing Reform (7004-9007)

FY18 Request: \$2 million

This line-item funds the implementation of public housing reform, signed into law in August 2014. These reforms improve governance and operation of local housing authorities by assisting with capital improvements, unit turn over, and creating a centralized waitlist. The reforms also increase tenant participation and promote economies of scale by encouraging collaborations among housing authorities.

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) (7004-9316)

FY18 Request: \$18.5 million

RAFT helps families who are at risk of homelessness remain housed by providing assistance of up to \$4,000 in a 12-month period to help with security deposits, first and last month's rent, utility and rent arrears. With \$18.5 million, an estimated 6,000 households could receive immediate resources to prevent homelessness. In FY16 alone, \$12.5 million in RAFT funding saved the state an estimated \$137 million by avoiding higher emergency shelter costs.

HomeBASE (7004-0108)

FY18 Request: \$35 million

HomeBASE offers families an alternative to emergency shelter by providing stabilization services and up to \$8,000 in financial assistance to pay rent, utilities, security deposits, and other expenses that would allow them to stay in their homes, move, or live with another family. These funds will help further reduce the number of families staying in hotels and motels. In addition to the funds, we also request that families be allowed to renew HomeBASE until their income reaches 50% of the Area Median Income. This will help achieve the program's goal of ensuring housing stability and preventing a fall back into homelessness.

Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs) (7004-3036)

FY18 Request: \$2.64 million

This program supports ten regional housing organizations that offer anyone in the Commonwealth a wide range of resources, including housing search assistance, eviction prevention, and homebuyer and foreclosure counseling. HCECs are also essential to delivering other housing resources, such as RAFT and HomeBASE. Since the start of FY17, HCECs have assisted over 31,600 people with questions about housing. Unfortunately, budget cuts threaten HCECs ability to effectively provide these housing supports. Providing \$2.64 million in funds, free of earmarks, will allow HCECs to avoid losing staff and continue to promote access to safe and sustainable housing.

Foreclosure Prevention Counseling (7006-0011)

FY18 Request: \$3.65 million—retained revenue

This line item, funded through retained revenue from mortgage loan originator license fees, supports foreclosure counseling at housing agencies across the Commonwealth. As foreclosure rates rose in 2016, the Chapter 206 foreclosure counseling grants helped achieve the best possible outcome for struggling homeowners. By allowing the Division of Banks to retain more revenue, it can support additional effective foreclosure prevention tools, such as direct advocacy and counseling.

Housing Court Expansion (NEW)**FY18 Request: \$1.2 million**

Currently, nearly a third of Massachusetts residents do not have access to Housing Court, which hears cases involving eviction, code enforcement, and discrimination claims. By including \$1.2 million in funding and language authorizing expansion, every resident in the Commonwealth will have access to Housing Court.

Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP) (7004-3045)**FY18 Request: \$1 million**

TPP is a homelessness prevention program that works with households with disabilities facing eviction because of behavior related to that disability. In consultation with the Housing Court, TPP works with landlords and tenants to determine if the disability can be reasonably accommodated and the tenancy preserved. In FY16, TPP stabilized 92% of households served by preventing an eviction. With the additional funds, TPP could serve 800 more households.

Brownfields Redevelopment Fund**FY18 Request: \$15 million**

The Brownfields Redevelopment Fund, administered by MassDevelopment, is a vital resource for communities to help clean up polluted sites transform them into places where people can live, work and play. Since 1998, the state has invested \$75 million in the program, leveraging many times that in other private and public investments. This has supported over 600 projects in 100 different communities and created over 4,000 homes. Although last year's economic development legislation authorized capital spending for the fund, it is still in need of recapitalization. \$15 million will ensure it remains a reliable redevelopment tool to create housing and jobs on formerly polluted sites.

Home and Healthy for Good (7004-0104)**FY18 Request: \$2 million**

Home and Healthy for Good (HHG) provides housing and supportive services to chronically homeless individuals through a low-threshold, Housing First model that is less costly and more effective than managing their homelessness and health problems on the street or in shelter. HHG also supports a pilot program to provide shelter and support services for LGBTQ unaccompanied homeless youths. Since 2006, 948 chronically homeless adults have been placed into permanent homes with supportive services. HHG saves the Commonwealth an estimated annual average of \$13,351 per person because of a decreased reliance on other expensive public services once an individual is in a permanent home.

Massachusetts Accessible Housing Registry (MassAccess) (4120-4001)**FY18 Request: \$80,000**

MassAccess (www.massaccesshousingregistry.org) works with property managers to market vacant, accessible apartments to help people with disabilities find accessible and affordable housing. This year the website received an average of 80,000 hits a month. MassAccess currently has over 9,900 registered consumers, 1,600 property managers and lists over 9,000 affordable apartments and homes.

Fuel Assistance (NEW)**FY18 Request: \$7.5 million**

Unfortunately, declining support for the LIHEAP program has left nearly 200,000 households vulnerable to exhausting their fuel assistance benefit long before winter ends. This new line-item will help low-income families in Massachusetts keep the heat on through the entire winter by supplementing the decreasing federal allocation for the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (4000-0007)**FY18 Request: \$4 million**

This line-item supports the housing and support service needs for unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness. This investment would help provide the necessary funding to help implement the Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness Law enacted in January 2015. The additional funding would provide expanded housing and service resources targeted for youth and young adults age 24 and younger



Citizens' Housing and
Planning Association, Inc.

*For more information, contact Eric Shupin, Director of Public Policy at Citizens' Housing and Planning Association
eshupin@chapa.org or (617) 742-0820*