

CHAPA Housing Briefs

March 9, 2017

State Updates

Massachusetts Legislature Announces Members of the Joint Committee on Housing

The Massachusetts House and Senate announced the members of the **Joint Committee on Housing** for the 2017–2018 Legislative Session.

Rep. Kevin Honan was reappointed as the House Chair of the Committee, and Sen. Joseph Boncore was appointed as the new Senate Chair. Other members of the Legislature assigned to the Housing Committee include:

Rep. Russell Holmes, Vice Chair
Sen. Linda Dorcea Forry, Vice Chair
Rep. Robert Koczera
Rep. Nick Collins
Rep. Christine Barber
Rep. Carmine Gentile
Rep. Michael Connolly
Rep. Solomon Goldstein-Rose

Rep. Chynah Tyler
Rep. Geoff Diehl
Rep. David DeCoste
Sen. Michael Barrett
Sen. Julian Cyr
Sen. Adam Hinds
Sen. Patrick O'Connor

CHAPA looks forward to working with the members of the Housing Committee this session to make sure everyone in the Commonwealth has a safe, healthy, and affordable place to call home.

DHCD and MassHousing Announce \$10 million for Community Scale Housing Initiative

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and MassHousing announced a **Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)** for a new Community Scale Housing Initiative (CSHI) to support small-scale projects in cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

The new program is a special initiative to address the need for smaller scale affordable housing projects that are sized to fit well within the host community. The new initiative will provide \$10 million in funding for these projects. DHCD has committed \$5 million from its Housing Stabilization Fund and MassHousing will make a \$5 million investment from its Opportunity Fund. CSHI funds are intended for projects outside of Boston with between 5 and 20 units. Proposed projects must be new construction or adaptive re-use; have at least 20% of the total units affordable to households earning at or below 80% of the Area Median Income; and a project must include a financial commitment from the host community.

Pre-applications for the CSHI program are due on March 29, with full applications due on May 17. MassHousing and DHCD expect to make award announcements in July.



Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, Inc.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!

Join us in celebrating CHAPA's 50th Anniversary this year! Help us make a difference in MA and across the nation - because everyone should have a safe, healthy, and affordable place to call home.

Click here to donate!

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 20, 2017

CHAPA Homelessness Committee Meeting

March 23, 2017

CHAPA's Public Housing & Rental Assistance Committee Meeting

March 30, 2017

CHAPA Young Professionals Brown Bag Lunch Series: Public Housing and its Role in Massachusetts

April 19, 2017

CHAPA's Production & Preservation Committee Meeting

October 26, 2017

Save the date for CHAPA's 50th Annual Dinner!

To view all CHAPA events please visit www.chapa.org/event.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Help us tell the story of CHAPA's impact throughout the years. Send photos, stories, and quotes to eroussinova@chapa.org.

DHCD Seeks Comments on its Draft FY2018 Moving to Work Plan

DHCD is seeking comments on its **Draft FY2018 Moving to Work (MTW) Plan**. MTW is a federal demonstration program that allows a limited number of public housing authorities flexibility in administering housing assistance to increase cost effectiveness, promote economic self-sufficiency, and improve housing choices for low-income families. Under the MTW program, DHCD administers federally funded Housing Choice Vouchers, along with other state-assisted rental assistance programs, through a statewide network of Regional Administering Agencies.

In FY2018, DHCD expects that rental assistance and related services will be provided to nearly 21,000 households as well as supporting 53 project-based units through MTW. The Draft Plan includes several new initiatives in FY2018, including:

- **Expanding Housing Opportunities:** In support of a major state-funded initiative to redevelop and preserve state-aided public housing, MTW funds will be utilized for short-term relocation assistance for impacted low-income households.
- **Residential Assistance for Families in Transition:** Short term financial assistance will be provided to families with children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- **Support for Secure Jobs:** DHCD will fund targeted case management and employment supports in tandem with voucher assistance for up to 50 participants.
- **A Better Life:** DHCD will fund an economic self-sufficiency program and limited capital improvements at state public housing developments.
- **Health Starts at Home:** DHCD will support and enhance an existing program funded by The Boston Foundation which focuses on improving health outcomes for low-income children.
- **Equity Builder Program:** In partnership with community development financial institutions and developers, DHCD will establish a Lease-to-Own program to support the goal of providing pathways to homeownership for low-income families.
- **Affordable Housing Preservation & Development Fund:** DHCD will use MTW funds to support the development and preservation of affordable rental housing units through implementation of a new Affordable Housing Preservation and Development Fund. These funds will provide loans to eligible projects to leverage private equity and state-aided public housing capital resources.

DHCD will host two **public hearings** on its Draft Plan on March 16th in Springfield and on March 17th at DHCD in Boston. DHCD will accept written comments on the Draft Plan through April 6.

Massachusetts Joint Committee on Ways & Means Announces FY2018 Budget Hearings

The Massachusetts Joint Committee on Ways and Means announced its **schedule for hearings** on the FY2018 State Budget. On March 15th at Everett High School, DHCD will testify on housing programs. The Joint Committee will host a hearing on the FY2018 Budget in Gardner Auditorium at the State House on March 31st where the public will be invited to testify. For a list of CHAPA's budget priorities, please **click here**.

Governor Baker Files Supplemental Budget for the Emergency Assistance Family Shelter System

In February, Governor Baker filed a \$259 million **supplemental budget** for underfunded programs in the current FY2017 state budget. The Governor provided nearly \$21 million more for Emergency Assistance (7004-0101) family shelter system. This would bring total spending for Emergency Assistance shelters in FY2017 to \$176 million. The budget also amends the foreclosure counseling program (7006-0011) to allow these funds to be used for Housing Consumer Education Centers. The supplemental budget is currently before the House Committee on Ways and Means.



CHAPA IS HIRING!

We are hiring a **Policy Associate!** Join us and help advance policies that support housing stability and economic mobility!



CHAPA YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP & THE ALLIANCE

2017 MENTORING PROGRAM!

Apply by March 31st for the 2017-2018 Mentoring Program!



Federal Updates

Administration Considering Cutting 14% from HUD Budget in FY2018

The Washington Post **reported** today that “preliminary budget documents” propose a more than \$6 billion (14%) cut to HUD’s budget for FY2018, with big cuts to public housing – including a 13% reduction (\$600 million) in operating subsidies and a one-third cut in funds (\$1.3 billion) for capital improvements – despite the current multi-billion backlog in capital repairs. It would cut rental assistance programs as well, including reducing the Section 8 program by \$300 million, the HUD 202 program by nearly 10%, and the Section 811 program by nearly 20%. It would eliminate all funding for HOME as well as for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program (potentially providing some CDBG funding through an infrastructure package). The proposals flow from the Administration’s stated goal of cutting domestic spending by \$54 billion to offset proposed increases in defense spending.

Ben Carson Confirmed as Secretary of HUD

The Senate confirmed Dr. Ben Carson as HUD Secretary on March 2 by a vote of 58-41. He addressed HUD employees on March 6, as reported by the **Washington Post** and **New York Magazine**, but gave little insight into his position on housing policy. **Housing Wire** has posted a recording of the speech.

Two New Executive Orders Set Limits on New Regulations and Required Review of Existing Regulations

On January 31, the President issued an Executive Order (**EO 13371**) that requires federal agencies to propose at least two existing regulations for repeal whenever they publicly propose for notice and comment or otherwise promulgate a new regulation. For fiscal year 2017, the total incremental cost of all new regulations, including repealed regulations, to be finalized this year can’t exceed zero, unless otherwise required by law or advised by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The President’s budget will set incremental cost caps for future fiscal years. On February 24, **EO 13777** was issued, requiring federal agencies to establish a Regulatory Reform Task Force to be overseen by a designated Regulatory Reform Officer. The Task Forces identify all outdated or unnecessary regulations and regulations that rely on insufficiently transparent data or methods.

IRS Issues 2017 Population Estimates

On February 27, the IRS **published** the calendar year 2017 population estimates used to determine states’ 2017 low income housing tax credit ceiling and tax-exempt private activity bond caps. The Massachusetts population estimate increased by 0.26%, to 6,811,779, resulting in a 2017 LIHTC allocation of \$16,007,681 (\$2.35 per capita) and tax-exempt bond cap of \$681,177,900 (\$100 per capita).



Recent Research & Reports

Strengthening Housing Investments for Community Revitalization – A Multifaceted Research Study

A new **report**, *Strengthening Housing Investments for Community Revitalization: Research for Massachusetts Policy and Practice*, concludes that enlisting affordable housing production as part of the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods ‘makes sense.’ Research from across the country demonstrates that producing Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) housing in high poverty neighborhoods positively impacts the immediate surrounding neighborhood – in terms of modest property value gains and increased safety. This paper provides recommendations to consider for sharpening goals and tools to advance community revitalization in Massachusetts, particularly through the Qualified Allocation Plan.

The study was conducted by Keri-Nicole Dillman, PhD with staff support from CHAPA’s Ann Verrilli in partnership with the DHCD – it was made possible by contributions from The Boston Foundation, DHCD, and CHAPA.

Study Finds State Investment in Community-Based Support Services for Homeless Individuals Pays Off

A new **study** from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation and Pine Street Inn “demonstrates the importance of housing stability and case management as key determinants of health.” *Estimating Cost Reductions Associated with the Community Support Program for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness* found that every dollar spent on flexible support services for chronically homeless individuals in permanent supportive housing saved \$1.61-\$2.43 in health care costs. The study, conducted by Thomas Byrne, Ph.D., of the Boston University School of Social Work, analyzed the use and cost of physical and behavioral health care to 1,300 persons enrolled in the Community Support Program for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness (CSPECH) between FY2007-FY2013. CSPECH uses Medicaid funds to pay for community-based support services to chronically homeless individuals who live in subsidized permanent supportive housing (the housing is separately financed and administered through non-Medicaid programs). The authors note that in this study it was not possible to determine the extent to which the receipt of housing and the receipt of CSPECH services were separately responsible for the reductions in care costs. However, the study found that health care costs of recipients fell relative to costs 1-2 years before enrollment in CSPECH and that the reduction in health care costs rose over time (from an average decrease of \$226 per month in the first month after enrollment to \$765 in the 24th month).

New Report on Trends in Family Homelessness in Massachusetts

On February 23, The Boston Foundation issued *The Growing Challenge of Family Homelessness – Homeless Assistance for Families in Massachusetts: Trends in Use FY2008-FY2016*, a detailed **report** using state data to shed light on trends in family homelessness. Overall, the authors found that the number of families entering shelter more than doubled between FY2008 and FY2016, rising from 2,302 in FY2008 to a peak of 6,383 in FY2014 then falling to 4,794 in FY2016, with dips usually coinciding with greater investment in diversion programs. The demographics of families in shelter have changed except for family size, while is rising, primarily due to an increase in the share of families that include a spouse or partner (19% in FY2016 v. 8% in FY2008).

The report found average lengths of stay are growing. Among families with only one stay, the average stay rose from 183 days for families entering in FY2008 to 330 days for families entering in FY2013. Stays for families entering shelters in Boston were on average 100 days longer than for those entering shelter in other regions and the greatest growth in average length of stay was in Boston and the Central region. Overall, 23% of families entering shelter between FY2008 and FY2013 returned to shelter at least once. The authors identified four patterns of shelter use:

- “Temporary stayers” - 66% of families had one use, averaging 157 days
- “Long Stayers” - 13% were long stayers (average 700 days)
- “Repeat Stayers” - 19% were repeat stayers but not long stayers (average total stay 322 days)
- “Long and Repeat Stayers” - 2% were long and repeat stayers (average stay 954 days).

The report also compared family homelessness trends and policy responses among Boston, New York City, and Seattle, to understand whether the experiences of cities with similar market conditions might have lessons for Massachusetts. They suggest that focusing additional resources on families most at risk for long stays might help them leave shelter earlier and avoid returning and recommend targeting families earlier in their shelter stay and building an understanding of their support needs.

NLIHC Reports Extremely Low Income (ELI) Rental Housing Shortage Growing

On March 2, the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) issued *The GAP: A Shortage of Affordable Homes – March 2017*, an updated estimate of the gap between the number of ELI renter households and the number of rental units available and affordable to them. Using 2015 American Community Survey data, the authors estimate that the gap rose to 7.4 million units nationwide, up from 7.2 million a year earlier. The number of ELI renter households rose by 1 million nationwide between 2014 and 2015, while the number of very low income renters (30.1%-50% of area median) fell by 1 million. In Massachusetts, the estimated ELI gap declined slightly (to 158,769 units), as did the gap in the Boston metro area (111,942). Among the 50 largest metro areas, greater Boston still has the highest number of rental units affordable and available to ELI renters households (46 per 100).

New Study Details Impacts of Federal Housing Expenditures on People and Communities

A recent **report**, *A Place to Call Home: The Case for Increased Federal Investments in Affordable Housing*, released by NLIHC examines the impact of federal housing expenditures on people, communities, and states, summarizing research on the impact of affordable housing on health, economic mobility and homelessness and estimating the numbers of jobs created by HUD expenditures. It estimates that the \$2.13 billion spent in Massachusetts in 2015 supported 14,410 direct jobs as well as over 11,000 indirect jobs.

Study Finds Furthering Education Raises Likelihood that Rent-Assisted Households Will Exit Assistance

A new **report** by the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation (PAHRC), *The Education Boost: Lifting Families Out of Poverty*, finds that rent-assisted householders aged 18-29 have lower high-school and college completion rates than their unassisted peers, and that 30-39 year old rent-assisted households have higher high school completion rates but lower college completion rates than their unassisted peers. Based on statistical modelling, the authors estimate that every additional year of education for rent-assisted householders increases their chance of successfully leaving rental assistance by 11%, though age and household size also affect that likelihood of exit, and tuition costs are a barrier. They recommend expanding GED programs for younger recipients and promoting college enrollment for a broader age group. They recommend investing in programs to help rent-assisted households enroll in educational programs and to support their ability to complete programs through help with childcare, transportation costs, internet access, and mentoring, tutoring, and college preparation programs. The authors also include an **look-up tool** with data on local education gaps and college costs.





Citizens' Housing and
Planning Association, Inc.

18 Tremont Street, Suite 401

Boston, MA 02118

www.CHAPA.org

[Follow on Twitter](#) | [Like on Facebook](#)

