



CHAPA FY2015 State Budget Priorities for Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention

CHAPA supports increasing revenues in a fair way that will generate sufficient revenue (funding) needed to make greater investments in our state's infrastructure, including the state's affordable housing stock. Making the larger investments that additional revenues will allow will help the state reduce homelessness and housing instability; help persons with disabilities and seniors access affordable housing; and create jobs.

Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) (7004-9024) FY'15 Request: \$87.5 million

MRVP is the most effective tool to immediately address the overwhelming need to help people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness secure homes they can afford. Through a combination of project-based vouchers and new mobile vouchers, this program provides safe affordable housing for families and individuals experiencing instability. \$87.5 million will provide more than 2,000 additional mobile and project-based vouchers and fund the existing stock of approximately 7,000 vouchers.

Public Housing Operating Subsidy (7004-9005) FY'15 Request: \$82 million

Public housing funding is significantly shy of the \$115 million appropriation DHCD and Harvard University independently identify as necessary to adequately maintain this asset. \$82 million will provide housing authorities with more resources to provide resident services, keep units online, and preserve this resource for low-income families, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) (7004-9316) FY'15 Request: \$12 million

RAFT enables families that experience unemployment or other challenges to avoid homelessness through an array of assistance necessary to maintain housing or move into their next home. As of January 2014, the increase in FY2014 has prevented more than 1,600 families from becoming homeless. By allowing more RAFT funds to be used for families between 30% and 50% of area median income, families can get help stabilizing their housing before they are destitute, reducing the likelihood of becoming homeless.

Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) (7004-9030) FY'15 Request: \$5 million

AHVP provides rental assistance to approximately 400 very low income households to persons with disabilities. Together with MRVP, this program is capable of furthering the Commonwealth's goal of providing persons with disabilities with choices to live in community-based housing and avoid more costly institutional living. \$5 million will provide rental assistance to more than 500 households.

Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP) (7004-3045) FY'15 Request: \$750,000

TPP 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. \$750,000 would provide approximately 650 households with TPP services.

Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs) (7004-3036) FY'15 Request: \$2.6 million

The HCECs are an essential element in the delivery systems for other state-funded housing resources, such as the RAFT and HomeBASE programs, meeting with families facing immediate housing crises to assess their circumstances and refer them to available resources. HCECs are also pro-active; offering education for tenants, landlords, and homeowners to promote safe, stable, and sustainable housing. During the first six months of this fiscal year, the HCECs assisted over 31,300 households with more than 5,400 of those at risk of homelessness or seeking shelter and more than 7,800 in search of affordable housing.

Home and Healthy for Good (7004-0104)**FY'15 Request: \$2.2 million**

Home and Healthy for Good is a critical Housing First program. As of January 2014, 723 former chronically homeless people were housed through this program. Since its start in 2006, only 25 people have been documented as returning to homelessness. Data has shown the annual cost to the Commonwealth per person decreased from \$33,474 before housing to \$24,102 in housing and support costs after housing placement, resulting in an annual savings of \$9,372 per person. In FY14, the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance launched a pilot program within Home and Healthy for Good specifically targeting homeless young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 who identify as LGBTQ. This pilot provides 32 units of housing in three areas of the state.

HomeBASE (7004-0108)**FY'15 Request: \$29 million**

HomeBASE is a homelessness prevention program for Massachusetts families who are eligible for Emergency Assistance. HomeBASE offers an alternative to shelter by providing stabilization services and \$4,000 in financial assistance to pay rent, utility bills, security deposits, and other expenses that would allow families to stay in their homes, move to new housing, or live with another family. Over the first six months of this fiscal year, HomeBASE has served nearly 2,900 families.

Foreclosure Prevention Counseling (7006-0011 – retained revenue)**FY'15 Request: \$2.6 million**

Ch. 206 foreclosure counseling grants have helped achieve the best possible outcome for many struggling homeowners. The foreclosure counseling grants are funded through retained revenue from mortgage loan originator license fees.

Massachusetts Access Affordable Housing Registry (4120-4001)**FY'15 Request: \$80,000**

The Mass. Access Registry is an online tool that consumers and housing-search workers use to find affordable housing that does not have physical barriers to persons with disabilities. More than 94,500 people used the site in 2013 to search for housing.

Resident Service Coordinators**FY'15 Request: \$2.5 million**

The funding would provide services in 50 new or existing developments to help tenants with modest incomes maintain housing stability and maximize their independence. As the Legislature recognized with the passage of the Supportive Housing Initiative in 2012, housing is critical in connecting residents to healthcare and other vital services that increase household stability.

Fuel Assistance**FY'15 Request: \$20 million**

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.

Community Preservation Act**FY'15 Request: Transfer \$25 million from the end-of-****year budget surplus into the Community Preservation Trust Fund**

Just as the \$25 million approved by the legislature for transfer from the state's end-of-budget surplus to the Community Preservation Trust Fund for FY2014, this revenue would supplement 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. 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.

*For more information, please contact
Rachel Heller, CHAPA Director of Public Policy, rheller@chapa.org*