



Citizens' Housing and  
Planning Association, Inc.

## **Building Blocks Coalition**

**February 14, 2017**

**10:30am–12:00pm**

### **I. Introductions**

### **II. Overview of Budget**

- a. MassBudget published its Budget Monitor including the description for [Housing](#). They've also updated the funding in the Budget Browser for housing programs funding levels going back to FY 2001 adjusted for inflation [here](#).
- b. In the revenue section of the Budget Monitor, there is a description of the Governor's various tax proposals including on the tax on short term rentals (AirBNB). These tax policy changes would generate an estimated \$187 million in new revenue in FY2018.
- c. Education and local aide had highest amount in budget also with increases to early education workforce salaries
- d. For MLRI's Analysis of Selected Cash and Nutrition Assistance, Child Care, Child Welfare, Health Care, Homelessness Services, Housing, and Legal Services Items, please [click here](#).
- e. House and Senate Ways and Means are both putting together their budgets so now is the time to approach legislators about our priorities.

### **III. Budget Priorities – for a detailed description of the Governor's FY18 budget proposal, please [click here](#).**

#### **a. MRVP - \$97.5 million**

- i. \$11 million increase – comes from expected cost savings in the EA line-item
- ii. \$97.5 million is the amount expected to maintain the program in FY18 and not necessarily include any new vouchers. However, it includes funding for units created with project-based vouchers that are coming online for the first time this coming fiscal year.
- iii. Governor's Language Changes:
  1. Increases income eligibility from 50% AMI to 80% and targets up to 75% of vouchers to ELI households. These changes should mitigate the "cliff effect" problem in this housing subsidy program by allowing more families to increase their incomes.
  2. Removes reporting requirement for MRVP and AHVP

3. Allows MRVP funds to be spent on a voucher management system.
- iv. Recommendations to House & Senate Ways and Means:
  1. Keep Governor’s language regarding eligibility, targeting, and voucher management system
  2. Include the reporting requirement
  3. Add language allow prior appropriations continues
  4. Add language to increase fair market rent cap
  5. Add language mandating distribution date
- b. AHVP – level funded at \$4.6 million**
  - i. Will continue to advocate for \$7.5 million
  - ii. Campaign around AVHP will also include raising the rent cap so residents don’t lose their vouchers
  - iii. Rep. Cronin will be the House champion for AHVP
  - iv. Governor’s Language Changes
    1. Removed the word “transitional” to from language to better reflect how the program is used
    2. Removed reporting requirement
  - v. Recommendations to House & Senate Ways and Means:
    1. Keep Governor’s language change regarding “transitional”
    2. Include the reporting requirement
    3. Add language to increase rent cap
- c. Public Housing – level funded at \$64.5 million**
  - i. Will continue to advocate for \$72 million
- d. Public Housing Reform – \$1.2 million**
  - i. \$372,000 increase over FY17
  - ii. The increase is to fund an online waitlist for public housing
- e. RAFT – level funded at \$13 million**
  - i. Will continue to advocate for \$18.5 million
    1. \$14.5 million to serve existing families and the additional \$4 million to meet the needs of those under the expanded eligibility
  - ii. Governor’s Language Changes
    1. Removed expanded eligibility for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and unaccompanied youth and restricts access back to only families with children under the age of 21
    2. Removes reporting requirement

3. Removes the presumption that RAFT payments will enable a family to retain or find new housing;
- iii. Recommendations to House & Senate Ways and Means:
  1. Keep forward funding language that Governor included
  2. Include the reporting requirement
  3. Include expanded eligibility
- iv. Mass. Coalition for the Homeless is leading a campaign to increase RAFT Funding – to sign on and add your name to the campaign, please [click here](#)
- f. HomeBASE – \$31 million – decrease of \$900,000**
  - i. We are lowering our ask from \$39.2 million to \$35 million
  - ii. Governor’s Language Changes
    1. Removes language that would protect a family from losing eligibility because of a single violation of a self-sufficiency plan
    2. Removes the requirement that the Administration must notify the legislature 90 days before it plans to change eligibility standards or program benefits
    3. Removes reporting requirements for the program
    4. Removes forward funding for HomeBASE; and
    5. For the pilot program allowing families in DV and substance abuse shelter to access HomeBASE, the Governor made the following changes:
      - a. Removes families staying at DCF shelters (4800-0038) from eligibility to receive HomeBASE if they would otherwise be eligible
      - b. Removes the requirement that spaces vacated in DV and substance abuse shelters because of HomeBASE would be filled by dually eligible families referred by DHCD
  - iii. Recommendations to House & Senate Ways and Means:
    1. Include language protecting families from losing eligibility
    2. Include language requiring Administration to give 90 day notice of changes to the program
    3. Include reporting requirement
    4. Include forward funding
    5. Support the changes to the DV and substance abuse program
    6. Remove the \$300,000 cap on the DV and substance abuse program
    7. Change the 24 month bar from HomeBASE if a family is terminated to a 12 month bar to bring it in line with the Emergency Assistance program
    8. Improve the HomeBASE renewal process – for example, not requiring a notice to quit

- a. Currently, 13% of families renew HomeBASE
- 9. Potentially, de-link the RAFT and HomeBASE limits
- g. Foreclosure Counseling – \$1.65 million -- \$1 million decrease**
  - i. Continue to advocate for DOB authorization to retain \$3.65 million in fees from loan originators for the purpose of foreclosure counseling
  - ii. Governor’s Changes
    - 1. Changes language to create competitive grants for a pilot program for best lending practices, first-time homeowner counseling for non-traditional loans and 10 or more foreclosure education centers; and
    - 2. Allows grants to be made to support the Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs).
    - 3. The Governor may be moving administrative funds from this line-item to another line-item, which would reflect the lower funding for the line item
  - iii. Recommendations to House & Senate Ways and Means
    - 1. Do not include language about creating a pilot program
    - 2. Do not include language about HCECs in the line-item. Keep the line-item dedicated to foreclosure counseling
    - 3. Increase the retained revenue for foreclosure counseling services
- h. Housing Court – \$1 million**
  - i. Governor included \$1 million to expand Housing Court in line-item 0336-0003 but did not include language authorizing the expansion
  - ii. Legislation has been filed to authorize the expansion, *An Act relative to the geographical jurisdiction of the Housing Court Department (SD1224 / HD177)*
  - iii. Recommendations to House & Senate Ways and Means
    - 1. Include \$1.2 million for Housing Court expansion
    - 2. Include authorization to expand housing court
  - iv. To join the campaign for a statewide housing court, [click here](#)
  - v. For more information, visit [www.housingcourt4all.org](http://www.housingcourt4all.org)
- i. Tenancy Preservation Program – level funded at \$500,000**
  - i. Continue to advocate for \$1 million to continue to help prevent homelessness for households with disabilities
- j. HCECs – \$2.29 million – level funded but \$350,000 decrease from original FY17 levels (not counting 9C cuts)**
  - i. In December, 9C cuts eliminated two earmarks within the line-item and cut \$350,000 from direct program costs, leaving HCECs with \$2.29 million. However, DHCD said that level funding would be provided

through an interagency service agreement with the DOB from the foreclosure counseling program (7006-0011)

- ii. Governor's budget funded it at the 9C level and allows, but does not require, the foreclosure counseling line-item to fund HCECs
- iii. Governor's Language Changes
  - 1. Allows funds to be given to other administering agencies, as procured by DHCD, in addition to the regional nonprofit housing authorities
  - 2. Removes reporting requirements
- iv. Recommendations for House & Senate Ways and Means
  - 1. Provide full funded of \$2.64 million for HCECs in HCEC line item
  - 2. Keep current HCECs funded
  - 3. Add back reporting requirement

**k. Brownfields**

- i. The Governor's budget did not provide funding for Brownfields in his budget proposal
- ii. Continue to advocate for recapitalization of Brownfields at \$15 million
- iii. This will help support the \$2.5 million that has been allocated through the capital budget

**l. Home and Healthy for Good – level funded at \$2 million**

- i. Continue to advocate for level funding

**m. Mass Access Housing Registry – level funded at \$80,000**

- i. Continue to advocate for level funding

**n. Fuel Assistance – not included in Governor's budget**

- i. Continue to advocate for \$7.5 million

**o. Unaccompanied Homeless Youth – level funded at \$2 million**

- i. These funds are being distributed through 8 regional consortia
  - 1. Additional funds could allow regions of the state without a regional consortium, including the Cape and South Shore, to serve unaccompanied homeless youth. The funds may also allow small programs to scale-up. Information on the work to date of the program should be coming out soon

**IV. Other Updates**

- a. The **End Family Homelessness Reserve Fund (1599-0017)** at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services was level funded at \$1 million. This program funds the 8 regional consortia. The On Solid Ground Coalition may be seeking and expansion of this program to allow more flexibility among EOHHS agencies and giving direct access to funds by agencies that work with families.
- b. The **Housing Preservation and Stabilization Trust Fund (HPSTF)** could see funding as transfers from other housing programs.

- c. In order to help support the effective administration of housing programs, we may advocate for increased support for the **DHCD Admin (7004-0099)** line-item. We will work with DHCD to find out more information.
- d. Changes were made in the last year to the **Get the Lead Out Program** lead paint program, we will check with MassHousing and those who use the program to check on how the changes are working
- e. The Governor has again proposed to cut **TAFDC (4403-2000)** to families where the parent has a severe disability and gets SSI. His proposal would eliminate TAFDC for 4,400 families and cut it for 1,400 more. Last session, the Legislature stopped the Governor from implementing a similar proposal last year. There will be a campaign again this year to stop the Governor's proposal again. for children in 4,400 families
- f. Building Blocks may consider commenting on **revenue increases**. In the past, we have used the following statement on revenue: "The Building Blocks Coalition supports increasing revenues in a fair way in order to generate sufficient revenue to make greater investments in our state's infrastructure, including the state's affordable housing stock. Making these larger investments will help the state reduce homelessness and housing instability; help persons with disabilities and seniors access affordable housing; improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and communities; and create jobs."

**V. Capital budget update**

- a. The Housing Bond Bill was filed (HD1074) which seeks to authorize \$1.7 billion in capital spending over the next five years for affordable housing program. The Housing Committee is expected to schedule hearing on the bill in the spring. The Administration is also expected to release its own bond bill.
- b. The FY2018 Capital Budget is expected to be released in May.