

## Fiscal Year 2027 State Budget Priorities

- ▶ **Emergency Assistance Program (7004-0101):** Right now, an increasing number of children and families in western Massachusetts and across the state are required to sleep in parks, cars, and emergency rooms due to restrictions on the Emergency Assistance (EA) program. In the FY27 budget, we urge you to: **appropriate adequate funding to provide shelter spaces for all eligible families; remove length of stay limits; remove the cap on the number of families in EA shelter; and restore presumptive eligibility so families have access to shelter while gathering documents to prove ongoing eligibility.** FY26: \$276.4m; Gov's FY27: \$258.6m plus \$7.5m for a new line item (7004-0110) for family shelter diversion (total: \$266.1m)
- ▶ **Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (7004-9024):** While there are approximately 10,000 vouchers in use, in early 2025, the MRVP waitlist was 165,000. By early November, that number had grown to 215,000. In view of this immense demand, we ask you to **increase MRVP funding in FY27 to \$300 million, creating approximately 2,000 new vouchers. We also ask that FY27 budget adopts pending legislative language that would codify the program into law.** FY26: \$253.3m; Gov's FY27: \$278.3m
- ▶ **Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) (7004-9316):** RAFT offers a lifeline for thousands of individuals and families to stay housed and prevent homelessness. For FY27, the Network requests **an increase in RAFT's funding to \$300 million and removal of the notice to quit requirement in order to become eligible for assistance. We also ask that the family cap be increased to \$10,000 per year.** FY26: \$207.4m; Gov's FY27: \$201.2m
- ▶ **Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCEC) (7004-3036):** HCECs suffered a funding reduction in FY26 that resulted in loss of staff across our region and reduced office hours, invariably resulting in greater housing instability. In order to provide their critical services, such as eviction prevention and housing search services, **funding should be restored to the FY25 level of \$8.974 million.** \$5.85m; Gov's FY27: \$5m
- ▶ **Individual Shelter Program (7004-0102):** Shelters across the western region are full beyond capacity. Temporary expanded winter shelter is full - and will end on April 1. To begin to address the immense gap in shelter capacity, we **request \$115 million** in FY27. FY26: \$113.3m; Gov's FY27: \$114m plus \$12m for a new line item (7004-0111) for winter shelter beds
- ▶ **Shelter Workforce Development (7004-0109):** This resource is critical to recruiting and retaining staff to work in shelters since the pay scale is not commensurate with other state funded Health and Human Services programs. We ask for level-funding at \$10 million. FY26: \$10m; Gov's FY27: \$0
- ▶ **Home & Healthy for Good (7004-0104):** A supportive housing program for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, we request **level funding from FY2026 of \$8.89 million to maintain this crucial program for our most vulnerable populations.** FY26: \$8.89m; Gov's FY27: \$8.39m
- ▶ **Sponsor-Based Permanent Supportive Housing (7004-0105):** This program provides funding for more than 330 units of low-threshold, permanent supportive housing across the Commonwealth for individuals with disabilities who have experienced homelessness. In view of the federal threat of funding reductions to supportive housing, this resource is especially critical and we ask for a **\$2 million increase to fund this program at \$12.07 million.** FY26: \$10.072m; Gov's FY27: \$10.072m

- ▶ **HomeBASE (7004-0108):** This short-term rental assistance program helps families avoid or exit shelter. We ask that you **fund it at \$80 million with an increase in the benefit cap to \$50,000 over 24 months for families.** FY26: \$57.3m Gov's FY27: \$82.3m
- ▶ **Access to Counsel Program (0321-1800):** The dedicated line-item for an Access to Counsel program in FY25 and FY26 is making a difference in creating more housing stability. We ask that you **fund the Access to Counsel line item at \$4 million (an increase of \$1.5 million over FY26) so that legal services can sustain the capacity and impact it is building now.** FY26: \$2.5m; Gov's FY27: \$2.5m
- ▶ **Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (4000-0007):** This line-item provides a critical range of services—shelter, housing, support services—to help stabilize youth 18-24 years old who are homeless. We **request funding at \$15 million.** FY26: \$10.6m; Gov's FY27: \$10.4m
- ▶ **Public Housing Operating Subsidy (7004-9005):** In order to ensure the maximum use of this vital affordable housing resource, additional funds are needed to address maintenance and rising costs. **We request \$132.9 million for the Public Housing Operating line item.** FY26: \$115.6m; Gov's FY27: \$117.8m
- ▶ **Public Housing Resident Service Coordinators (7004-4314):** Resident Service Coordinators (RSCs) play a vital role in housing stability, helping seniors age in place, connecting residents to supportive services, and reducing costly unit turnover and health care utilization. Many small and medium-sized housing authorities still lack an RSC and others must share a single position across multiple agencies. To address this gap, we request \$10 million for FY27. FY26: \$6 million; Gov's FY27: \$6 million.
- ▶ **Elder Homelessness Bridge Subsidy Program (new):** This program will help 1,000 older adults preserve their housing, especially critical as elder homelessness increases across the region. We **seek \$10 million to launch this program.**
- ▶ **The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness Earmark: \$100,000** to support the coordinating efforts to prevent and end homelessness across Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties. We thank our lead sponsors, Representative Lindsay Sabadosa and Senator Jo Comerford, along with the entire western MA delegation for their support.