

Building Blocks Coalition FY2017 State Budget Priorities

for Affordable Housing, Homelessness Prevention, & Community Development

Line Item	Program	FY17 Request	FY16	FY15	FY14	FY13	FY12
7004-9024	MRVP	\$120,000,000	\$90,931,597	\$65,000,000	\$57,500,000	\$42,000,000	\$36,000,000
7004-9030	AHVP	\$7,100,000	\$4,600,000	\$3,550,000	\$3,450,000	\$3,450,000	\$3,450,000
7004-9005	Public Housing Operating Subsidy	\$72,000,000	\$64,450,000	\$64,035,000	\$64,400,000	\$64,450,000	\$62,500,000
7004-9007	Public Housing Reform	\$2,000,000	\$800,000				
7004-9316	RAFT	\$18,500,000	\$12,500,000	\$11,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$8,760,000	\$260,000
7004-0108	HomeBASE	\$39,200,000	\$31,249,331	\$25,955,535	\$58,963,556	\$88,674,371	\$66,460,829
7006-0011	Foreclosure Prevention Counseling	\$3,650,000	\$2,350,000	\$2,350,000	\$2,650,000	\$2,590,000	\$2,650,000
7004-3045	Tenancy Preservation Program	\$975,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$350,000	\$250,000
7004-3036	Housing Consumer Education Centers	\$2,640,000	\$2,891,992	\$2,141,992	\$2,641,992	\$1,445,996	\$1,495,996
New	Brownfields Redevelopment Fund	\$15,000,000					
	Housing Preservation & Stabilization Trust Fund	\$11,500,000	\$11,500,000		\$10,000,000		
	Community Preservation Act	\$25,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000	
7004-0104	Home & Healthy for Good	\$3,800,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,200,000
4120-4001	Mass. Access Affordable Housing Registry	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
New	Tenancy Stabilization Coordinator	\$2,500,000					
New	Fuel Assistance	\$10,000,000					



Building Blocks Coalition's FY2017 State Budget Priorities for Affordable Housing, Homelessness Prevention, & Community Development Programs

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

FY'17 Request: \$120 million

MRVP is the most effective tool to immediately help people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness secure homes they can afford. Through a combination of project-based and new mobile vouchers, MRVP provides affordable housing for families and individuals experiencing instability. \$120 million will increase the number of vouchers available, help preserve affordable housing developments, and make programmatic fixes that will make vouchers more usable, help tenants be more stable in their housing, and reduce lengthy lease-up times. Funding MRVP at \$120 million will also restore the program to its 1990 funding when the combined state voucher and Chapter 707 programs funded more than double the number of vouchers funded today.

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

FY'17 Request: \$7.1 million

AHVP provides rental assistance to approximately 560 very low-income households with persons with disabilities. Together with MRVP, this program is capable of furthering the Commonwealth's goal of providing persons with disabilities choices to live in community-based housing and avoid more costly institutions or homelessness. \$7.1 million will provide rental assistance to approximately 800 people, the amount originally funded in 1995.

Public Housing Operating Subsidy (7004-9005)

FY'17 Request: \$72 million

This line-item supports more than 45,600 of state-sponsored public housing units in Massachusetts, with over two-thirds of these units dedicated to seniors and persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, years of underfunding have left many housing authorities struggling to operate and keep units in good repair. The additional \$7.5 million will help provide up to a 6% increase in local housing authority operating budgets to help operate and preserve this valuable resource.

Public Housing Reform (7004-9007)

FY'17 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)

FY'17 Request: \$18.5 million

RAFT helps families who are at risk of homelessness remain housed. RAFT provides assistance of up to \$4,000 in a 12-month period to help families pay security deposits, first and last month's rent, moving expenses, rent, utility and mortgage arrears, and other housing-related expenses. With \$18.5 million, an estimated 6,346 households would be able to receive immediate resources to prevent homelessness. We also ask the Legislature to expand RAFT's definition of family to cover households of all sizes and configurations to allow unaccompanied adults and those without children in the household to access these homelessness prevention resources.

HomeBASE (7004-0108)

FY'17 Request: \$39.2 million

HomeBASE offers families an alternative to shelter by providing stabilization services and up to \$8,000 in financial assistance to pay rent, utility bills, security deposits, and other expenses that would allow them to stay in their homes, move to new housing, or live with another family. Currently, only families who are eligible for shelter under Emergency Assistance may receive HomeBASE. We ask that program eligibility be expanded to allow families in domestic violence shelters and substance abuse programs to access to this resource. We also request that families be allowed to renew HomeBASE until their income reaches 50% of the Area Median Income in order to achieve the program goals of ensuring housing stability and preventing a fall back into homelessness. Providing HomeBASE with at least \$8 million in additional funds over FY2016 will support these program changes while reducing the number of homeless families in shelters and motels.

Foreclosure Prevention Counseling (7006-0011)

FY'17 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. The Ch. 206 foreclosure counseling grants have helped achieve the best possible outcome for many struggling homeowners. Increased funding for the program will help support other effective foreclosure prevention tools, such as direct advocacy and counseling as demonstrated by the former Community Based HomeCorps (CBHC) program. CBHC, administered by CHAPA, empowered housing agencies to assist homeowners facing foreclosure by training homeowner advocates with loan modification and advocacy skills. In its only year of operation ending in June 2015, CBHC directly reviewed 1,000 cases from homeowners facing foreclosure, with only 2.6% of those cases resulting in a foreclosure.

Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP) (7004-3045)**FY'17 Request: \$975,000**

The Tenancy Preservation Program is a homelessness prevention program that works with individuals and families with disabilities facing eviction as a result of behavior related to that disability. In consultation with the Housing Court, TPP works with the landlord and tenant to determine whether the disability can be reasonably accommodated and the tenancy preserved. In FY2015, TPP stabilized 93% of households served, with an average cost of \$2,045 per case. With an additional \$475,000, TPP could provide direct counseling services to 200 more households and consultation services for 600 more households.

Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs) (7004-3036)**FY'17 Request: \$2.64 million**

This line item supports nine regional HCECs that offer tenants, landlords, homeowners, and prospective buyers a wide range of resources, including housing search assistance, eviction prevention, and homebuyer and foreclosure counseling. HCECs are also an essential element in the delivery systems for other state-funded housing resources, such as RAFT and HomeBASE. During the first five months of FY2016, HCECs assisted over 34,300 households, including more than 5,400 at risk of homelessness or seeking shelter, and more than 6,360 facing evictions. Level funding in FY2017, free of earmarks, will allow HCECs to continue to promote safe and sustainable housing.

Brownfields Redevelopment Fund**FY'17 Request: \$15 million**

The Brownfields Redevelopment Fund, administered by MassDevelopment, is a vital resource for communities across Massachusetts to help clean up polluted sites in neighborhoods and transform them into places where people can live, work and play. Since 1998, 671 awards have been made across the Commonwealth, creating over 4,000 housing units and more than 2,700 jobs. The Fund is in urgent need of recapitalization. As of December 2015, the program is unable to accept new applications for projects. Creating a line-item and capitalizing the Fund with \$15 million will ensure it remains a reliable redevelopment tool for communities to create new housing, jobs, and other public benefits on formerly polluted sites.

Housing Preservation & Stabilization Trust Fund (HPSTF)**FY'17 Request: \$11.5 million**

HPSTF provides a flexible tool for funding affordable housing for low income families and individuals, particularly those most at-risk of becoming homeless. Since its creation, HPSTF has helped to build supportive housing for veterans, the elderly, and disabled; supplemented HomeBASE to help more families avoid or exit homeless shelters; and provided funding for the Secure Jobs initiative to connect low-income families with job training services.

Community Preservation Act (CPA)**FY'17 Request: \$25 million transfer**

The transferring of \$25 million from the state's end-of-year budget surplus to the Community Preservation Trust Fund supplements revenue from the existing deeds recording fee to support the CPA. This will sustain the CPA as an effective smart growth tool that helps communities create affordable housing, preserve open space and historic sites, and develop recreational facilities. The CPA also strengthens the state and local economies by expanding housing opportunities and construction jobs in Massachusetts.

Home and Healthy for Good (7004-0104)**FY'17 Request: \$3.8 million**

Home and Healthy for Good is a Housing First program that provides permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless, including a program for LGBTQ unaccompanied homeless youths. Since 2006, the program has placed 860 homeless people into homes. According to the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, the program saves the Commonwealth an annual average of \$12,101 per person because of a decreased reliance on other expensive public services, including emergency medical care, shelter, and incarceration costs. The additional funds will be used to serve over a hundred additional homeless individuals.

Massachusetts Access Affordable Housing Registry (4120-4001)**FY'17 Request: \$80,000**

The Massachusetts Access Affordable Housing Registry supports www.massaccesshousingregistry.org, an online tool that helps people find affordable rental and homeownership opportunities in Massachusetts. The Registry highlights homes for people with disabilities who need accessible or barrier-free housing. In the past year, more than 143,000 people visited the site to search for affordable housing across the Commonwealth.

Tenancy Stabilization Coordinators (NEW)**FY'17 Request: \$2.5 million**

This funding would establish a line-item to provide service coordinators in up to 50 new or existing privately owned state and federally assisted housing developments to help reduce evictions, increase housing stability, and coordinate residents' access to opportunities for education, job training, and other services to promote self-sufficiency.

Fuel Assistance (NEW)**FY'17 Request: \$10 million**

The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) allocation has decreased from \$200 million to \$133 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.