



May 15, 2022

Senate President Karen Spilka  
Senator Michael Rodrigues  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Massachusetts FY 2023 Operating Budget

Dear Senate President Spilka and Chairman Rodrigues:

On behalf of our more than 90 member organizations across the state, I want to thank you for proposing a FY 23 budget that includes significant investments in housing and economic development that will help advance an equitable and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 health and economic crisis. The investments in this budget will put us on the path toward a more equitable and sustainable Commonwealth. We are especially grateful that many MACDC priorities were funded in the budget, including funding for small business assistance, homeownership education and foreclosure counseling, MRVP, RAFT, the Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Grant Program as well as many other community economic development and affordable housing programs.

At the same time, the urgent needs of our communities drive us to respectfully request your support the following amendments:

- **Amendment #185, Small Business Technical Assistance, filed by Senators Edwards and Collins:** This amendment would increase funding for the Small Business Technical Assistance program from \$7 million to \$10 million. We applaud the Ways & Means Committee for level-funding this program, but we believe that more is needed to address the continuing crisis in our small business community, especially among those from underserved communities. Rising costs, supply disruptions, labor shortages and on-going concerns about the pandemic make this a challenging time for many small business owners. It can also be a time of opportunity, but only if entrepreneurs have the support they need to succeed. This program had demonstrated its value repeatedly during the pandemic by helping entrepreneurs overcome today's challenges, including the structural obstacles faced by so many businesses owned by people of color, women, low-income people and others. [For more information, please refer to our fact sheet.](#)
- **Amendment 208, Receivership Authorization for Nonprofits, filed by Senator Lesser:** This amendment to M.G.L. c. 111, section 127I would permit a court to allow the sale of a vacant receivership property to a nonprofit entity for the fair market value of the property "as is," in order for the nonprofit entity to rehabilitate the property and sell it



affordably to an income-eligible first-time homebuyer. In this way the amendment would leverage a municipality's code enforcement work to create an inventory of affordable properties, thereby simultaneously reducing blight, promoting homeownership among low-and moderate-income households, and stabilizing neighborhoods.

- **Amendment #298, Improving Access to MRVP, filed by Sen. Keenan:** This amendment would allow rent up to 120% of fair market rents in certain circumstances & includes utilities when calculating tenant rent share.
- **Amendment #253, Expanding Access to RAFT, filed by Sen. Keenan:** This amendment increases eligibility for RAFT to people making up to 60% of the area median income. This is a critical change because households in that income range are having an increasingly difficult time maintaining housing security. It also aligns RAFT with the income standards in other key housing programs.

Thank you for supporting our communities and for your consideration of these amendments.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at [joek@macdc.org](mailto:joek@macdc.org) or 617-721-7250.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph Kriesberg  
President & CEO