



April 19, 2022

Speaker Ron Mariano
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Speaker Mariano:

On behalf of our 97 member organizations across the state, I want to thank you, Chairman Michlewitz and the members of the Ways & Means Committee for producing 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 homeownership education and foreclosure counseling, neighborhood stabilization, community economic development and affordable housing.

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

- **Amendment #1345, Small Business Technical Assistance, Filed by Reps. Coppinger and Miranda:** This amendment would increase funding for the Small Business Technical Assistance program from \$5 million to \$10 million, while maintaining the allocation of \$25 million for grants to underserved businesses. We applaud the Ways & Means Committee for providing the additional investment in grant funding for small businesses – we know the program administered by MGCC this Winter and Spring was hugely oversubscribed, so these funds are very much needed. At the same time and for the same reasons, we cannot cut back on the technical assistance and support offered by the SBTA program. The proposed funding level of \$5 million represents a cut from the \$7 million provided in the FY 22 budget. The reduction is even more dramatic considering that many of the community-based organizations were also funded with \$4 million in Federal Funding that is no longer available. A \$5 million funding level would mean shrinking support for small businesses at this vital moment in our recovery. Therefore, we respectfully request increasing the total line item to \$35 million so the highly successful SBTA program can receive \$10 million while also deploying funding for the grant program. We do not need to cut technical assistance for small businesses in order to fund grants to small businesses – they must go hand in hand.



- **Amendment 936, Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Grant, Filed by Rep. Keefe:** This amendment provides \$15 million in funding for this newly created program. The program awarded funds to 65 outstanding community programs that will expand economic opportunity across the state for those directly or indirectly impacted by the criminal justice system. The problems this program seeks to address are decades in the making so we should not eliminate this program after just two years. We need to sustain these investments over time to enable long-term change to occur.
- **Amendment #543, The Mel King Institute, Filed by Rep. Elugardo:** This amendment provides funding to the [Mel King Institute for Community Building](#), a program operated by our organization, to enable it to expand training for both professional and volunteer leaders working to expand affordable housing, economic opportunity and resident leadership via virtual learning and professional development.

MACDC is also urging your support for three amendments that would make language modifications but not require any additional funding.

- **Amendment 881 - Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program, filed by Rep. Madaro:** This amendment would reduce tenant share of payment from 40% to 30% in the first year of occupancy, which is a fairer and more sustainable rent for low- and moderate-income families and include utility payments in the calculation of rent.
- **Amendment 1371 – RAFT Program Improvements, filed by Rep. Decker:** This amendment would increase eligibility to households with 60% AMI from the current 50% AMI threshold, streamline documentation requirements and allow forward rent payments and stipends for eligible households.
- **Amendment 1493, Rural Microlending, filed by Reps. Blais, Whipps and Mark:** This amendment would ensure that state certified CDCs, in particular those in rural communities like Franklin County, are able to participate in this program.

Thank you for support for 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 or 617-721-7250.

Sincerely,


Joseph Kriesberg
President & CEO