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July 9, 2012

Governor Patrick Issues His FY'13 Budget Vetoes and Signs the Rest of the Budget into Law

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Dear friend,

Good news! Yesterday afternoon, Governor Deval Patrick issued his fiscal year 2013 budget vetoes and signed the rest of the Legislature's budget into law. The Governor did not issue any negative vetoes related to the line items or programs we have been tracking. (See our previous alert [here](#) for more information about the budget items we have been watching, and [here](#) for our letter to the Governor.)

This means that the final budget, among other things, includes:

- Language establishing the special commission on unaccompanied youth homelessness
- Full funding of \$11.3 million for the transportation of students experiencing homelessness back to their schools of origin
- A \$6 million increase to the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)
- An \$8.5 million increase for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) homelessness prevention program
- A \$2 million increase for state-funded public housing operating subsidies
- Critical language requiring the Administration to notify the Legislature at least 60 days before implementing eligibility changes or benefits reductions in the Emergency Assistance (EA), HomeBASE, Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC) programs.

The Governor also sent back positive amendments on several sections related to the electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card changes proposed by the Legislature. In so doing, he said:

"I'm not going to do anything that makes vulnerable people beg for their benefits. This notion of humiliating poor people has got to be separated, and quite frankly disposed of, from how we make a program work and work well and with integrity."

[Click here](#) for additional coverage from WBUR on the budget signing.

To see the Governor's vetoes and signing statement, [click here](#). To read the Coalition's previous alert on the Conference Committee budget, [follow this link](#). To see the Legislature's complete pre-veto recommendations, [click here](#).

The Governor also filed a supplemental budget request yesterday, which includes a recommendation for additional funds to address family homelessness in FY'13. He is asking for \$15 million more for the Emergency Assistance family shelter and services line item, 7004-0101. If approved, this would bring EA shelter and motel funding up to \$111.7 million, still significantly lower than the FY'12 funding level of \$137.5 million. In his letter to the Legislature that accompanied his request, Governor Patrick said:

"I am also proposing \$15 million for projected funding needs for emergency housing services for low-income families. While the reforms in the emergency family housing program included in the Fiscal Year 2013 budget will save millions of dollars for taxpayers and get better outcomes for families, the current funding level

provided in the Fiscal Year 2013 budget is not sufficient to meet projected costs for the entire year."

[Follow this link](#) to read the letter and supplemental budget request.

Please take a few minutes to thank Governor Patrick and your legislators for their work to protect housing, homelessness, and benefit programs in the FY'13 budget. Please also stay tuned for more information about the anticipated, upcoming implementation of Emergency Assistance eligibility restrictions.

Thank you!

-Kelly Turley
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Next Steps

Please call Governor Patrick to:

- 1.) Thank him for making sure that the positive housing and homelessness elements of the Conference Committee budget are enacted in FY'13.**
- 2.) Thank him for vetoing negative electronic benefits transfer card provisions and for promoting constructive EBT reform.**
- 3.) Ask him to do all he can administratively to protect families and individuals at-risk and experiencing homelessness, especially in relation to the implementation of the new Emergency Assistance (EA) regulations by DHCD.**
- 4.) Thank him for requesting additional funds for the underfunded EA program.**

The Governor's office can be reached by phone at 1-888-870-7770. Additional contact information can be found [here](#).

Please also contact your Legislators to thank them for their support for housing, homelessness, and safety net programs in the FY'13 budget, and to ask for their support for the FY'13 supplemental funding request for EA.

Legislators can be reached through the State House switchboard at 617-722-2000, or can you go [here](#) to search for your elected officials based on your address.

Thank you for your advocacy and support!

For more information, please contact [Kelly Turley](#) at 781-595-7570 x17.

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Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless



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