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MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

July 8, 2015

Budget Update: The FY'16 Conference Committee Report Includes Many Increases for Key Housing, Homelessness, and Benefits Programs!

The House and Senate will vote on the budget today, and send it to Governor Baker

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Greetings!

Last night, the six members of the FY'16 budget Conference Committee released their recommendations, House Bill 3650: [Conference Committee Report](#).

Today, the House and Senate are scheduled to vote on the budget, before sending it to Governor Baker for his signature and any vetoes.

We wanted to share the wonderful news with you that the Conference Committee included many increases for housing, homelessness, and benefits programs in their budget, such as:

- **\$2 million for housing and services for unaccompanied youth** in a brand new line item, 4000-0007, as well as the continuation of **\$150,000 for the work of the Special Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**
- **\$90.9 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)**, a \$25.9 million increase over the initial FY'15 appropriation
- The House's higher appropriation of **\$31.25 million for the HomeBASE rehousing and diversion program**
- **\$12.5 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) family homelessness prevention program**, a \$1.5 million increase over the FY'15 appropriation
- **\$4.6 million for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)**, an increase of \$1.05 million over the FY'15 appropriation
- **\$8.35 million for the McKinney-Vento transportation line item**, \$1 million more than in FY'15, for school transportation for children experiencing homelessness

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- **An increase in the annual children's clothing allowance under the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) program to \$200/child, up from \$150/child**
- **An increase in the maximum benefit under the state's Earned Income Tax Credit program (EITC) from \$950 to \$1,459**

Wow! While we are disappointed that the Conference Committee did not include some key Coalition priority items, such as language in the Emergency Assistance family shelter and services line item to ensure that families experiencing homelessness can access shelter before staying in places not meant for human habitation, **we are thrilled that so many of our priorities are reflected in the Committee's report.**

Thank you for your ongoing advocacy that helped make these victories possible! Please stay tuned for our more in-depth analysis of the budget.

-Kelly

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Please Thank Your Representative and Senator

Please thank your legislators for their work to make such strong investments in housing, homelessness, and benefits programs in this year's budget. Please also consider reaching out to the conferees to thank them:

- [Senator Karen Spilka](#)
- [Senator Sal DiDomenico](#)
- [Senator Vinny deMacedo](#)
- [Representative Brian Dempsey](#)
- [Representative Stephen Kulik](#)
- [Representative Todd Smola](#)

Legislators can be reached via the State House switchboard (617-722-2000) or directly through the links listed [here](#).

For more information, please contact Kelly Turley at kelly@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570 x17.

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