

FY20 Senate Budget Outcomes

The Senate adopted its proposed budget last week for Fiscal Year 2020. In relation to Network priorities, the highlights include:

- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth housing and support services funding was increased \$1.7 million to \$5 million.
- Secure Jobs Initiative funding was doubled to \$2 million.
- Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) funding for non-elderly disabled individuals was increased \$500,000 to \$8 million.
- RAFT received an additional \$1 million in funding (now at \$21 million), half of which is unrestricted funds and the other half dedicated to survivors of domestic violence.
- Regional Transit Authority funding was increased to \$90.5 million, although \$4.5 million will be awarded through discretionary awards, which still threatens local RTAs with additional cuts.
- The Berkshires' earmark for overflow winter shelter was funded at \$125,000 (big thanks to Senator Hinds for his lead sponsorship).
- The Network itself was funded at \$75,000 (big thanks to Senator Comerford for her lead sponsorship and to every other Western MA Senator for their co-sponsorship!).

Review all Network priorities and outcomes by going [here](#).

For our statewide partner updates, see [CHAPA](#) and [Mass Coalition for the Homeless](#).

Next up is the Conference Committee phase, where 3 Senators and 3 Representatives will work out the differences between the Senate and House versions of the budget. We will do our part to ensure that the progress in each budget holds firm, e.g., the House budget contains the additional funding for Homeless Individuals Assistance (emergency shelters), and Housing Consumer Education Centers. The good news is that Craig's Doors funding is in the Governor's budget as a line-item and ABE/ESOL funding increase exists across both the House and Senate, as does the \$10 million increase in the Mass. Rental Voucher Program.

Unfortunately, Career Centers did not receive their needed funding increase in either the House or Senate budget so the advocacy will have to continue next year.

Additionally, on a related note, the Senate adopted an Amendment that increases the income cap for Emergency Assistance eligibility to 200% of the federal poverty level (up from the current limit of 115%), allowing families to increase their income and gain greater stability without suddenly losing their shelter. MA Coalition for the Homeless, Homes for Families and EmPath led the work on this effort, which will now continue in Conference.

Please stay tuned for additional advocacy updates. Thanks for your partnership!