

Action Alert! Still time to weigh in on FY20 budget for housing and homelessness priorities

Please see this alert below from the MA Coalition for the Homeless:

With July 1st just around the corner, the Legislature is working to finalize the FY'20 state budget before the new fiscal year launches.

We want to make sure the budget that emerges is as strong as possible on homelessness, housing, and benefits issues. **Please join the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless today in [asking your State Representative and State Senator to support key items in the fiscal year 2020 Conference Committee budget](#) so as to prevent and end homelessness among families, unaccompanied youth, and adults.**

Since June 5th, the three House and three Senate members who make up the [FY'20 Budget Conference Committee](#) have been meeting to iron out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the budget. The conferees are Senate Ways and Means Chair [Michael Rodrigues](#), Senate Ways and Means Vice Chair [Cindy Friedman](#), Senate Ways and Means Ranking Minority Member [Viriato \(Vinny\) deMacedo](#), House Ways and Means Chair [Aaron Michlewitz](#), House Ways and Means Vice Chair [Denise Garlick](#), and House Ways and Means Ranking Minority Member [Todd Smola](#).

Thank you to everyone who already has signed and shared our latest [one-minute online action in support of the Coalition's FY'20 budget priorities for the Conference Committee stage of the budget process](#). If you haven't participated yet, there still is time to sign the online letter and to then share the link with family, friends, and colleagues. The actions will be sent to your State Senator and Representative, asking them actively to weigh in in support of the deepest investments and most helpful budget language possible. If you prefer printing and mailing the letter, a downloadable [PDF version](#) is here.

The action highlights our requests for:

- Senate-proposed language for the Emergency Assistance family shelter program to ensure that children and families do not have to stay in places not meant for human habitation before accessing shelter, and Senate-proposed funding level of \$178.7 million, which is \$13 million more than the House-proposed level (EA, line item 7004-0101). We are grateful that both the House and Senate budgets would allow families to retain shelter benefits while increasing their incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (before the existing grace period would begin).
- Senate-proposed funding of \$5 million for housing and wraparound services for unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness (line item 4000-0007), which is \$1.7 million more than the House-proposed level
- Senate-proposed funding of \$21 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition homelessness prevention program (RAFT, line item 7004-9316), which is \$1 million more than the House-proposed level
- House-proposed direct funding of \$110 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP, line item 7004-9024), which is \$6 million more than the Senate-proposed direct appropriation, and Senate-proposed language that would update the allowable monthly rent levels to match current fair market rents for mobile subsidies issued or renewed on or

after August 1st and that would carry over \$6,000,000 in unspent FY'19 funds

Here is our [Conference Committee page](#) and updated [FY'20 budget chart](#), with our analysis of key line items related to homelessness, housing, and benefits, including our Conference Committee requests in columns O and P.

Yesterday's release of the [2019 Out of Reach report](#) from the National Low Income Housing Coalition underscores the urgency of our work. [Massachusetts is now ranked as the third least affordable state in the nation for renters](#), leaving far too many of our community members experiencing homelessness and housing instability. We must do all we can to secure state funds for homelessness prevention, long-term housing, wraparound services, and income supports. [Please take action today with us.](#)

We are in the homestretch now. Thanks for your collaboration!