Dear friend,

Yesterday, Governor Deval Patrick unveiled his fiscal year 2015 budget recommendations for the Commonwealth. This $36.4 billion budget is known as the "House 2" budget (as we are in the second year of the current two-year legislative cycle). The budget release marks the first step on the path to developing the final state budget for the fiscal year that will begin on July 1st.

Please see the sections below for preliminary information on the Governor's budget proposals for housing, shelter, homelessness prevention, and cash assistance programs. Stay tuned in the week ahead for a more detailed analysis.

As House 2 is only the first of many proposals on the way to the final FY’15 budget, your voice will be critical to helping to protect housing, homelessness, and safety net programs for both families and individuals.

In addition to his recommendations for FY’15, the Governor also filed a FY’14 supplemental budget request yesterday. It includes a request for $32.5 million for the Emergency Assistance family shelter and services account (line item 7004-0101) and $12.6 million for EA motel placements (line item 7004-0103). Both of these accounts are slated to run out of funding in March if these supplemental requests are not approved by the Legislature. We will be sending out a follow-up online action for you to take in support of the supplemental budget later this week.

To advocate with us to protect and promote investment in these programs, follow this link to learn more about our upcoming Legislative Action Day at the State House on Thursday, February 27th. Register today to join us!
The Governor's FY'15 Budget Recommendations for Housing, Shelter, Homelessness Prevention, and Cash Assistance Programs

To access the Governor's complete budget recommendations in PDF format, please go to the Governor's FY'15 Budget Recommendations.

To support his overall increase in spending recommendations, the Governor's budget also calls for new revenue through the application of the sales tax on candy and soda (for an estimated $57 million increase in state revenue) and the closing of certain tax loopholes (for an estimated $40 million increase in state revenue). Follow this link for more details.

A Quick Look at Selected Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Line Items

1. The Governor's budget would increase the overall funding for the Emergency Assistance family shelter and services program (line item 7004-0101) and EA motel placements (line item 7004-0103) above the current anticipated FY'14 spending level of approximately $159 million. He has recommended increased funding shelter and services at $167.3 million (up from the anticipated FY'14 spending level of $103.6 million), and decreased funding for motel placements at $12.3 million (down from the anticipated FY'14 spending level of $55.2 million).

The increased funding in the shelter line item will be used to annualize the costs for the 650 new shelter rooms that have/will come online during FY'14, and to pay for up to 1,000 new shelter rooms for families in FY'15, so as to greatly decrease the state's reliance on motels.

The Governor's budget proposal eliminates key EA line item language that the Coalition would like the Legislature to maintain, including critical language that currently requires DHCD to:

- Provide the Legislature with a 60-day advanced notice period before implementing changes to the EA program that would negatively impact families
- Provide otherwise eligible families with temporary EA placements of up to 30 days pending the receipt of certain verifications ("presumptive placements"), recognizing the heavy verification burden on families who are in crisis
- Provide monthly tracking reports to the Legislature on who the EA program is serving and who the EA program is not serving, outcomes for families, etc.

FY'14 funding level: Currently $109.8 million for the 2 accounts (not including the pending $45.1 million in supplemental EA budget requests filed by the Governor yesterday). If the supplemental budget is passed, the combined appropriations for the EA accounts would be $154.8 million for FY'14.
FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $167.3 million for EA shelters +
$12.3 million for EA motels = $179.6 million

FY'15 MCH funding request: Adequate funding so as to restore
access to families at imminent risk of having to stay in places
not meant for human habitation and to avoid the need for
eligibility restrictions. The Coalition supports the Governor's
shift from providing emergency shelter in motels to more
supportive shelter environments. The Coalition also will be
seeking the retention of key line item language that was
eliminated in the Governor's proposal, as described above.
The language missing from House 2 currently provides
additional protections to families and greater transparency.

Please see this [letter from 75+ medical providers, educators, and
organizations](#) related to this EA request and the request for an
additional $30 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program
(see below for more details).

2. The Governor's budget would decrease funding for the
HomeBASE program (line item 7004-0108) to $24.3 million,
reflecting the termination of the rental assistance portion of the
program. This program will continue to provide short-term
transitional subsidies, diversion, and moving assistance for
certain EA-eligible families, as well as at least 12 months of
"housing stabilization and economic self-sufficiency case
management services to HomeBASE families.

FY'14 funding level: $59 million
FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $24.3 million
FY'15 MCH funding request: $29 million

3. The Governor's budget would slightly increase funding for
the line item that provides funding for shelter and services for
unaccompanied individuals at-risk and experiencing
homelessness (line item 7004-0102) to just under $40.8 million.

FY'14 funding level: $40.5 million
FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $40.8 million
FY'15 MCH funding request: At least $40.8 million

4. The Governor's budget would level fund the Massachusetts
Rental Voucher Program (MRVP, line item 7004-9024) at $57.5
million.

FY'14 funding level: $57.5 million
FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $57.5 million
FY'15 MCH funding request: $87.5 million, recognizing the tremendous housing needs of families, individual adults, and unaccompanied youth, as well as the loss of housing resources with the termination of the HomeBASE rental assistance program

5. The Governor's budget would decrease funding for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition Program (RAFT, line item 7004-9316) to $9.5 million.

The Governor's budget eliminates the funding and language for the Seven Day Temporary Accommodations Program (SDTEA), which assisted 539 families during FY'14 before funding ran out on December 20, 2013. SDTEA was a critical part of the safety net for families deemed ineligible for EA shelter who otherwise were heading to stay in places not meant for human habitation. Please note that the Coalition also is looking for additional FY'14 funding for the SDTEA program as part of the current supplemental budget. Our online action in the week ahead will include this request.

FY'14 funding level: $10 million, with an earmark of $500,000 for the SDTEA program

FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $9.5 million, with no funding or language for the SDTEA program

FY'15 MCH funding request: $12 million, including at least $1.5 million for the SDTEA program

6. The Governor's budget would provide $64.3 million in funding for public housing authority operating subsidies (line item 7004-9005), a slight decrease from the FY'14 level.

FY'14 funding level: $64.4 million

FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $64.3 million

FY'15 MCH funding request: $82.0 million

7. The Governor's budget would decrease funding for the Home and Healthy for Good Program (line item 7004-0104) to $1.4 million. This program, overseen by the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, employs a Housing First model to provide housing and services to unaccompanied adults who have experienced chronic homelessness.

FY'14 funding level: $1.6 million

FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $1.4 million

FY'15 MCH funding request: $2.2 million
A Quick Look at Selected Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Line Items

1. The Governor's budget does not explicitly include funding or language in the EOHHS administrative account (line item 4000-0300) for the work of the Massachusetts Special Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. FY'14 funding primarily is being used to conduct a statewide survey of unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 who are experiencing homelessness, so as to better understand the demographics and need of these youth. We are working now to clarify the absence of this language with officials from the Administration.

FY'14 funding level: $150,000

FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $0*

FY'15 MCH funding request: $500,000 to fund at least 3 demonstration projects providing housing and services to unaccompanied youth and to conduct a follow-up, improved statewide youth homelessness survey.

2. The Governor's budget would decrease funding for the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program (EAEDC, line item 4408-1000), to $88.9 million. This is just under the anticipated FY'14 spending level of $89.1 million. The Governor's proposal also would eliminate the requirement that the Administration provide advance notice before implementing negative changes to eligibility and benefit levels.

As of November 2013, there were 23,249 households served by EAEDC, a decrease from the previous year.

FY'14 funding level: $93.2 million

FY'15 House 2 funding proposal: $88.9 million

FY'15 MCH funding request: Adequate funding to at least maintain current eligibility standards and benefit levels and retention of advance notice language

2. The Governor's budget would decrease funding for the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children grants (TAFDC, line item 4403-2000) to $263.8 million for FY'15, and further cut the related Employment Services Program (ESP, line item 4401-1000) to $7.4 million. The Governor's proposal also would eliminate the requirement that the Administration provide at least advance notice of at least 75 days before implementing negative changes to eligibility and benefit levels.
As of November 2013, there were 47,157 households served by TAFDC, a decrease from the previous year. In addition, harsh new eligibility restrictions are being debated by the House and Senate, which are anticipated to be in effect in FY’15.

The ESP line item has seen dramatic reductions over the past decade, from a funding level of over $30 million to a recommendation for only a quarter of that.

FY’14 funding level: $302.0 million for cash assistance and $7.7 million for ESP

FY’15 House 2 funding proposal: $263.8 million for cash assistance and $7.4 million for ESP

MCH FY’15 funding request: Adequate funding to at least maintain current eligibility standards and benefit levels, retention of the 75-day advance notice language, and a minimum of $7.7 million for ESP to families access and retain jobs and move forward economically

A Quick Look at the Education Transportation Line Item

The Governor’s budget would provide $7.35 million, or level funding, for reimbursements to cities and towns for costs associated with transporting students experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Line Item 7035-0008, previously 7035-0005).

FY’14 funding level: $7.35 million
FY’15 House 2 funding proposal: $7.35 million
FY’15 MCH funding request: At least $7.35 million

Take Action!

1. Please contact the Governor’s office to:

   - Thank Governor Patrick for his proposal to provide much needed supplemental funding for the Emergency Assistance program for FY’14, and for recognizing the need to maintain the safety net in FY’15.

The Governor’s office can be reached at 617-725-4005 or 888-870-7770.
2. Please contact your State Representative and State Senator to ask for their support for the Coalition’s budget priorities, in particular:

- Investing in housing and services for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness
- Expanding the safety net of shelter for families by capturing those families at imminent risk of having to stay in places not meant for human habitation and other families facing dangerous situations
- Increasing the investment in MRVP, public housing, and other affordable housing programs
- Increasing the investment in the RAFT homelessness prevention program and maintaining the Seven Day Temporary Emergency Accommodations Program
- Protecting the EAEDC and TAFDC cash assistance programs, and reinvesting in the Employment Services Program

State Representatives and Senators can be reached through the State House switchboard: 617-722-2000, or directly through the numbers listed here: Directory of Representatives and Directory of Senators.

To search for your elected officials based on your address, please click here.

We hope you will join us as the Coalition continues to push for the protection of housing and homelessness programs for FY’15. We will keep you informed of the progress as the state's budget makes it way through the next stages in the months ahead.

For more information, please contact Kelly Turley at 781-595-7570 x17.

Don't forget to **register** for our upcoming Legislative Action Day!
SAVE THE DATE!

JOIN THE MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS FOR OUR ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION DAY

WHEN:
Thursday
February 27, 2014
9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

WHERE:
The Great Hall
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon St, Boston, Massachusetts

For more information, to register, or to volunteer, please go to
http://www.mahomeless.org/mch-events/2013-02-12-00-00-38
or contact: tina@mahomeless.org, 781-505-2570 x23 or
kelly@mahomeless.org, 781-505-7570 x17.

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Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless

Please join us in raising money to help end homelessness, just by searching the Internet or shopping online with GoodSearch.
