



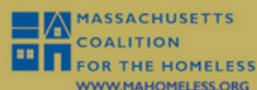
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Today, the Senate Committee on Ways & Means released its FY'18 budget recommendations on homelessness, housing, benefits, and other issues.

Stay tuned for next steps on amendments at  
[www.mahomeless.org/advocacy/item/senate-budget-fy18](http://www.mahomeless.org/advocacy/item/senate-budget-fy18)



Read the full SWM recommendations here:  
[www.ma legislature.gov/Budget/FY2018/SenateWaysMeansBudget](http://www.ma legislature.gov/Budget/FY2018/SenateWaysMeansBudget).



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

May 16, 2017

Greetings!

This morning, the Massachusetts Senate Committee on Ways and Means (SWM) released [its version of the FY'18 state budget](#). We are thrilled to report that Senate Ways and Means has recommended:

- A \$5.5 million increase to the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program (line item 7004-9316) to bring the funding to \$18.5 million, the retention of language that will allow families of all configurations to access the program-- including elders, people with disabilities, and unaccompanied youth, and an earmark of up to \$2 million to serve households without children under 21 (up from the FY'17 earmark of \$500,000)
- Language to ensure that families experiencing homelessness are able to access the Emergency Assistance family shelter program (line item 7004-0101) before being forced to stay in places not meant for human habitation
- An increase in funding to serve unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness to \$2.5 million, up from the FY'17 funding level of \$2 million and \$2 million more than the House's recommended FY'18 funding level of \$500,000 (line item 4000-0007)
- An investment of \$100 million in the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (line item 7004-9024), a \$13.5 million increase over the final FY'17 funding level so as to provide 350-400 new housing subsidies
- An increase to HomeBASE benefits (line item 7004-0108) so that families can access up to \$10,000 to be diverted from entering shelter or rehoused from Emergency Assistance shelter (up from the current \$8,000/family cap)
- An increase to the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (line item 7004-9030) from \$4.6 million to \$5.5 million
- An increase to \$300/child for the annual clothing allowance for children participating in the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (line item 4403-2000)

Wow! We are so grateful to Senate President Stan Rosenberg, Senator Karen Spilka, Chair of Senate Ways and Means, and the full SWM Committee for their support of so many of the [Coalition's key budget priorities](#). Our work is not finished yet, however.

We are working with Senator Jason Lewis and Senator Julian Cyr on two youth homelessness amendments. Senator Lewis' amendment will focus on increasing the unaccompanied youth homelessness funding to \$4 million, and Senator Cyr's amendment will seek to add language and \$150,000 in funding to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services line item, 4000-0300, to support the work of the Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. **Please ask [your State Senator](#) to sign on as a cosponsor to both of these amendments.**

We also are working on additional amendments to eliminate the homelessness penalty in the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children program (EAEDC, line item 4008-1000) and to strengthen housing line items.

**Please stay tuned and be ready to reach out to your State Senator in support of other key amendments in the next day or two.**

The full Senate is scheduled to debate its version of the budget next week, and then the House and Senate FY'18 Budget Conference Committee will meet to work out the differences between the two budgets.

Thank you for taking action and for your ongoing commitment! Please check [this page](#) often for updates.

-Kelly

Kelly Turley  
Associate Director  
[kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org)  
781-595-7570 x17



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