

Budget Priorities (Fiscal Year 2027)

The state budget supports our communities by bringing together resources to invest in our common goals. MassBudget is prioritizing critical areas for investment in partnership with grassroots groups and coalitions.

—\$510 million for Operational Grants to Child Care Providers (3000-1045/1596-2410)

Increase funding for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) program to continue to raise early educator salaries and ensure child care programs can meet growing demand. Because of these operational grants, providers of all types have been able to remain open, and new providers have been able to enter the field. Provider wages have increased by nearly \$9,000 annually since the C3 program began in 2021 (average annual Center-Based, not inflation adjusted). As Massachusetts seeks to continue to improve affordable access to child care, expanding this bedrock funding is vital.

—\$31.2 million to increase access to Income-Eligible Child Care (1596-2411)

Improve access to child care for income-eligible families under the 85th percentile of the State Median Income. Above the funding needed to maintain existing caseloads, an additional \$31.2 million would provide financial assistance vouchers to nearly 2,000 additional children who are currently on the waitlist for income-eligible child care. There are currently over 29,000 low-income children on the waitlist because of lack of funding for child care financial assistance.

—\$300 million for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) (7004-9316) and \$125 million for HomeBASE (7004-0108)

Increase investments in emergency housing assistance programs to better meet needs. RAFT and HomeBASE ran out of funds before the end of the FY2025. HomeBASE has needed nearly \$97 million so far this fiscal year. These programs play a critical role in preventing and reducing homelessness. RAFT helps residents avert eviction and foreclosure, reducing the likelihood that they will need high-cost services like shelters. HomeBASE is a vital lifeline that provides residents with housing stability.

—\$40 million for the Regional Transit Authorities' (RTAs) free fares grant program earmark (1596-2406)

Uphold the state's statutory commitment to the fare free bus program with sufficient funding. This program has been an enormous success, and it is an important part of the Commonwealth's commitment to affordability, especially for lower-income residents. Free bus fares help riders in over 250 communities served by the Regional Transit Authorities to better access education, healthcare, employment and other critical services.



—Extend the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) filers (outside section) and restore funding for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites earmark to \$1.5 million (1201-0100)

Ensure access to the state EITC for the estimated 21,000–26,000 households who are currently excluded because someone in the household pays taxes through an ITIN. About two thirds of these households include U.S. citizens. Workers and their families should not be penalized because of how they file their taxes. Restore funding for VITA sites which offer free tax preparation to people who are low-income. VITA sites help maximize uptake and impact of the EITC and the newer Child and Family Tax Credit (CFTC).

