

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Recommendations



Executive Summary

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means Fiscal Year 2016 budget makes targeted investments to foster shared prosperity, encourage overall economic growth and create new opportunities for people in all corners of our Commonwealth. Earlier this year, the Senate held a statewide Commonwealth Conversations tour to listen to the concerns, priorities and ideas of our residents. Building on shared Senate values and what we learned on that tour, this budget seeks to lift all children, families and communities and provide resources for vulnerable and under-served populations. With fiscal realities in mind, the budget invests in education, workforce development and skills training to help low-income and unemployed residents find well-paid, rewarding jobs. This budget also supports the homeless, at-risk youth, individuals with disabilities, seniors, veterans and individuals struggling with substance abuse and mental health challenges. Finally, the budget takes on efforts to improve access to justice and reduce recidivism and encourage innovative government operations across all agencies.

This executive summary provides the financial context for the Senate Ways and Means FY 2016 budget, followed by budget investments and initiatives in the areas of local aid, education, workforce and economic development, human services, health, criminal justice reform and intergovernmental collaboration.

Spending and Revenue

The Senate Ways and Means FY 2016 budget makes strategic investments with fiscal realities in mind. This budget is balanced and fiscally responsible and maximizes state and federal revenue opportunities.

The FY 2016 budget includes \$38.01B in total spending, an increase of 3.1% over FY 2015 spending. This spending recommendation is consistent with the FY 2016 consensus tax revenue forecast of 4.8% growth, based on \$25.479B in total tax revenue. This budget also relies on \$16.062B in federal reimbursements, departmental revenues and operating transfers. Reflecting the Senate's continued commitment to fiscal responsibility, this budget does not draw from the Stabilization Fund and directs any capital gains revenue in excess of \$300M over the statutory threshold to the Stabilization Fund.

This budget upholds the state's fiscal commitments and encourages government to operate efficiently and effectively. The budget maximizes existing revenue sources through targeted investments in several new initiatives.

- Provides \$4M for the Department of Revenue to hire 40 additional auditors, to generate an estimated \$20M in additional revenue.
- Provides \$1.2M for the State Auditor's Medicaid Audit Unit and \$4.1M for the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Unit to ensure fairness and minimize fraud in the MassHealth system.
- Provides \$200K for Building Innovation in Government (BIG) Grants for state employees who develop practical ideas to generate cost savings for the Commonwealth.
- Creates a multi-agency Illegal Tobacco Task Force to combat contraband tobacco distribution and foster compliance with the law. The budget provides \$2M for the task force for investigation and enforcement actions, expected to generate \$20M in revenue.

Local Aid – Lifting All Communities

The 351 cities and towns across the Commonwealth lay the foundation for success for all families through education, public safety, transportation, infrastructure and other local services. This budget reflects the Senate's continued commitment to supporting our cities and towns in critical areas of local aid.

Chapter 70

The budget includes \$4.51B for Chapter 70 education funds for local, regional and vocational technical schools. This \$111.2M increase over the FY 2015 Chapter 70 aid amount allows for a minimum increase of \$25 per pupil aid. The budget also take steps toward making school funding more equitable for many communities across the Commonwealth with a 50% effort reduction, bringing school districts closer to their target spending.

Special Education

The Senate Ways and Means budget fully funds the Special Education Circuit Breaker to reimburse school districts for the high costs of educating students with disabilities. The budget provides \$271.6M for these costs, in order to ensure schools have the resources to give all students the tools and opportunities they need to learn and thrive.

Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA)

The budget includes \$979.8M for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), which cities and towns can use for any municipal purpose, including community investments in education, public safety, roads and bridges and health care. This \$34M, 3.6% increase over FY 2015 reflects an effort to help cities and towns provide vital resources and services as they face rising health care and pension costs, high snow and ice expenses and continued infrastructure needs.

Tourism Councils

Tourism is a key economic engine for communities across the state. Annually, tourism generates approximately \$1.2B in state and local taxes, as well as nearly \$18.5B in direct spending in our communities. Almost 129,400 jobs are supported through the impact of tourism. In this budget, we continue to promote tourism as a major source of economic development and local prosperity. We fund the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) at \$7.5M to bring artistic, musical, historical and educational opportunities to each community in the Commonwealth. The budget also provides \$5M for Local Tourist Councils, giving direct financial assistance to communities for regional marketing initiatives.

Arts

The arts are essential to keeping all of the Commonwealth's communities healthy and vibrant centers of innovation and culture. To that end, this budget invests \$12M in the Massachusetts Cultural Council for grants to promote excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and contribute to the economic vitality of our communities. In addition, this budget establishes a permanent Massachusetts Percent for Art Program, which will provide a minimum of 0.5% of the cost of constructing or renovating state-owned buildings and properties to the preservation of existing public art and the creation of new public art.

Municipal Libraries Local Aid

Local libraries are important resources for families, providing informal educational opportunities and fostering intellectual curiosity and a love of learning for all ages. The budget invests \$9M in direct grant aid to municipal libraries to hire staff, purchase materials and continue to provide educational programming.

Public Safety

The wellbeing of our communities depends on a well-trained, well-equipped public safety system. This budget invests \$267.7M in the Department of State Police and \$21M in the Department of Fire Services. It includes \$5.9M for a new state police class and increases the budget of the Municipal Police Training Committee to \$5.2M to improve police officer training throughout the Commonwealth.

Education – Lifting All Children

The influential education reformer Horace Mann once called education “the great equalizer.” Lifting all families and helping everyone achieve success starts at birth with high quality educational programs and services. Education opens doors and prepares children to succeed and compete in the global workforce. In addition to Chapter 70 education aid and the Special

Education Circuit Breaker, this budget invests in education at all levels: from birth to college to workforce development and lifelong learning.

Early Education and Care

Overwhelming scientific research suggests that brain development within the first 4 years of life is critical to long-term academic and social success. In order to give children a strong foundation for future learning and achievement, this budget supports a range of early education and care programs, increasing funding for accounts within the Department of Early Education and Care by \$17.9M over FY 2015.

- Appropriates \$12M to reduce the waitlist for infants and toddlers for childcare services.
- Provides \$14.8M for the Children's Trust Fund Healthy Families program, which offers neo-natal and post-natal home-visiting support for young parents.
- Provides \$2.8M for early literacy and literacy intervention programs.
- Includes \$2.5M for the Early Educator Salary Reserve.
- Provides a \$1M increase to the Head Start program to support salaries of early educators.
- Increases funding for Child Resource and Referral Centers by \$171K over FY 2015.
- Increases funding for Family Support and Engagement Programs by \$1M over FY 2015.

Connecting K-12 Education to Workforce Needs

The jobs of the future increasingly depend on skills in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subject areas. This budget focuses funding on STEM education in order to prepare students to compete in the global economy once they join the workforce.

- Provides \$1.5M for the STEM Pipeline Fund to encourage more Massachusetts students to participate in STEM programs and increase the number of qualified STEM teachers.
- Provides \$1.5M for the Massachusetts Computing Attainment Network (MassCAN) initiative to bring innovative computer science education programs to public schools across the state.

The budget also provides \$2.8M for the Connecting Activities public-private partnership that links high school students with hands-on learning opportunities through the School to Work Transition Program. These funds support job-shadowing, mentoring and job-placement for high school students.

In addition, the budget includes \$30.4M for the Adult Basic Education program, which serves functionally illiterate adults, English language learners and adults preparing to take the GED/HiSET exam. This funding helps to reduce the waitlist for adult education and connect more adults with the skills they need to join the workforce.

Higher Education

Massachusetts has one of the strongest higher education systems in the nation, and our economy relies on a highly skilled, highly educated workforce. The need for skilled, college-educated

workers is growing, but students' skills are not always aligned with the skills employers need for available jobs. This budget invests in our higher education system, focusing on workforce training and career preparation initiatives.

Overall, the budget increases funding for our State Universities and Community Colleges by a combined \$19.7M, for a total funding level of \$520.4M.

The budget also includes continued support for Community College and State University Incentive Grants and increases funding for the University of Massachusetts by \$18.7M over FY 2015, for a total funding level of \$537.7M.

Other higher education investments include:

- \$1.5M for the Community College Workforce Training Incentive Grant Program to expand vocationally-oriented course offerings and support the work of community colleges in developing tomorrow's workforce.
- \$1.1M for Foster Care Financial Aid and \$4.3M for Foster Care and Adopted Fee Waivers.
- \$1M for Mass Technology Transfer Center.
- \$750K for the Office of Dispute Resolution community mediation grant program.
- \$400K for Bridges to College.
- \$200K for Nursing and Allied Health Workforce Development.

This budget also expands the scope of the current state financial literacy program in the State Treasurer's office, appropriating \$350K for an Economic Empowerment Trust Fund to support the creation of college savings accounts, college and career readiness and programming to promote wage equality.

Work – Lifting All Families

Lifting all families is about connecting people with the education, training and skills they need to join the workforce and secure good, well-paying jobs. It also means making sure they have access to affordable child care and reliable transportation once they find work. This budget makes targeted investments to help low-income families become self-sufficient, get the unemployed and long-term unemployed back to work and support the sectors of our economy that drive economic growth. Earlier this session, the Senate announced the WorkFirst Initiative, and these recommendations are one part of that effort.

Department of Transitional Assistance Investments

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) benefits are an essential source of support for low-income children and families across the Commonwealth. The programs in this budget will help Massachusetts regain its status as a leader in moving residents from welfare to work.

This budget supports needy families by increasing the clothing allowance to \$200 per child, the highest in the history of this stipend. It also maintains the recently increased transportation reimbursement to working Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) clients at \$80 per month.

In a new initiative, this budget creates a Family Well-Being Plan Pilot program to promote the social and economic well-being of individuals and families of individuals who are exempt from the DTA work requirement due to a disability. These plans, to be implemented in at least two DTA offices, will assess each participant and design a plan to help them overcome barriers to employment by improving access to skills training and job search assistance. The budget allocates \$1M for this pilot program, specifically for transportation and child care costs of participants.

The budget creates another new initiative to provide additional job support services for job-seekers. This initiative requires DTA to provide targeted job search and training assistance, through the use of high risk specialists and full engagement workers, to individuals who will no longer be considered exempt from the work requirement due to a change in the disability standard.

Other efforts to help get DTA clients back to work include:

- \$12.1M for the Employment Services Program to help individuals find jobs and resolve barriers to employment, including skills training and job search assistance. Services include a program for young parents, learning disability assessments, transportation reimbursements and a transportation pilot program, internship and GED/HiSET programs and support for programs operating through the Office for Refugees and Immigrants.
- \$5M for the Pathways to Self-Sufficiency Program to promote financial independence for TAFDC recipients by coordinating the placement of recipients with regional employers.
- \$5M for DDS Community-Based Employment Services.
- Coordination between One Stop Career Centers and DTA and planning for colocation of certain resources to increase alignment between social services and job placement services.

Unemployed and Long-Term Unemployed

Helping unemployed and underemployed individuals update their skills to pursue available jobs is one of the most meaningful ways we can lift all families. Consistent with the Senate's WorkFirst Initiative, this budget appropriates \$2M for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund to train unemployed and low-wage workers for high demand industries such as health care, construction and education.

This budget creates the Training Resources and Internship Networks (TRAIN) grant program to specifically target the long-term unemployed and appropriates \$1.2M for the program. The new TRAIN program partners community colleges with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development to provide training and internship opportunities for individuals who

have been unemployed for over one year. The TRAIN program provides work experience, skill development and the chance to fill resume gaps, which often create barriers in the job search process.

Other employment programs include:

- \$11.5M for Youth At-Risk Summer Jobs to fund salaries for approximately 4,200 summer jobs for at-risk youth, giving them valuable work experience and structured work-readiness training.
- \$150K for an employment training program for young adults with disabilities.

Economic Development

Massachusetts has a competitive advantage over other states and nations in several industry clusters, including information technology, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and other knowledge-based sectors, including professional services and financial services. This budget continues to support these thriving sectors that contribute significantly to the wealth and prosperity of Massachusetts families.

- Provides \$15M for the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center out of the FY 2015 consolidated net surplus.
- Provides \$3M for the John Adams Innovation Institute at the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative to foster the supportive, collaborative ecosystem innovative technology companies need to start, grow and thrive.
- Appropriates \$1.5M for the Big Data Innovation and Workforce Fund to promote the use of big data, open data and analytics.
- Appropriates \$1.5M for the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership to address the shortfall of skilled workers and aid small and mid-sized manufacturing companies through technical assistance and consultant support.
- Provides \$945K for a Precision Manufacturing Program, designed to increase the skill set of middle-skilled workers.
- Funds Regional Economic Development Grants at \$750K.
- Appropriates \$250K for a Layoff Aversion Program for small businesses to prevent business closure and employee displacement.

Transportation

Transportation and the economy are intertwined. Workers need reliable, consistent and convenient public transit to get to and from their jobs. Transportation is also a critical issue for quality of life for families. Individuals with disabilities and seniors depend on public transportation to live independently. This budget fully funds the Regional Transit Authorities, key lifelines for people in communities across the Commonwealth, at \$82M, a \$2M increase over FY 2015.

As the legislature continues to pursue reforms to improve service and operations at the MBTA, the budget makes several changes to MBTA governance and accountability. The budget designates the Secretary of Transportation as Chair of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Board of Directors and adds four members, increasing the Board to eleven members. These members must have municipal government experience in geographically diverse areas, and at least one member of the Board must be an actual public transportation rider. The budget also stipulates that four of the members will serve terms that are coterminous with the Governor.

The budget gives the Secretary of Transportation hiring authority over the MBTA General Manager and gives the MassDOT Board greater flexibility to delegate authority to the General Manager. The budget also directs the MBTA to shift all employee costs from its capital budget to its operating budget.

Human Services – Lifting Vulnerable and Under-Served Populations

Lifting all families means providing resources and networks of support for some of our most vulnerable neighbors, friends and loved ones. This budget invests in populations that are often under-served, funding services for the homeless, at-risk youth, individuals with disabilities, seniors and veterans.

Homelessness Prevention and Services

This budget makes significant investments in programs that help prevent homelessness and connect people with affordable, permanent housing. Overall, we provide \$424.2M for low-income housing and homelessness programs, increasing funding in several critical areas.

- Provides \$154.9M for Emergency Assistance Family Shelters, a \$14.6M increase over FY 2015, and preserves shelter eligibility standards.
- Provides \$85.4M for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program, which helps low-income households pay their rent. This \$20.4M increase over FY 2015 funds between 600 and 750 new vouchers, providing stability for many families at risk of homelessness.
- Provides \$44.7M for Homeless Individuals Assistance to help adults who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.
- Provides a \$500K increase for the Department of Mental Health Rental Subsidy Program, for a total funding level of \$5.5M.
- Provides \$4.5M for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program, the rental assistance program for people with disabilities.
- Provides \$2M for housing and supportive services for unaccompanied homeless youth to help these children get back on their feet and into stable living situations.

The budget also creates a new \$7M reserve to fund flexible assistance to divert homeless families, or families at risk of becoming homeless, from shelters to stable housing. Another new

Senate initiative appropriates \$500K for a Housing Authority Self-Sufficiency Pilot Program to encourage self-sufficiency measures such as education, employment and community service.

Child Welfare

All children deserve to grow up in safe, supportive and loving homes. This budget reflects the Senate's continued commitment to improving operations at the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The budget provides \$902.6M for DCF, a \$75.6M increase over FY 2015, to allow the agency to maintain nearly 200 new administrative workers and social workers hired in FY 2015 and bring caseloads down to more manageable levels. It also provides \$500K for a Runaway Prevention Pilot Program created in last year's budget and increases funding for Services for Children and Families and Congregate Care Services by \$16.3M and \$33.1M over FY 2015, respectively.

Other investments to protect children and families in need include:

- \$45.6M for Family Support and Stabilization services, including family reunification counseling.
- \$24.3M for Domestic Violence Services, including \$1.1M to increase bed capacity in domestic violence shelters.
- \$9.9M for the operation and maintenance of 18 Family Resource Centers across the state.
- \$6M for DCF Lead Agencies, which provide community-based services while allowing children to remain in their schools and communities.
- \$500K for the Office of the Child Advocate.

Individuals with Disabilities

People of all abilities deserve access to the tools and opportunities to be as self-sufficient, independent and productive as possible in their communities. In an effort to help individuals with disabilities live independently and achieve their full potential, this budget invests in a range of programs and services. We recommend \$1.75B for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), an increase of \$105.1M over FY 2015, and include funding for programs and services that are a lifeline for many individuals with disabilities and their families.

- Provides \$1.3M for assistive technologies for individuals with physical disabilities.
- Provides a \$500K increase for Independent Living Centers to help individuals with disabilities live independently in their communities.
- Fully funds Turning 22 Services for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and provides a \$500K increase to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Turning 22 program.
- Includes \$5M to continue the transition from sheltered workshops to integrated employment opportunities and appropriate day programs.
- Fully funds Chapter 257 rates for social service providers of MCB, MRC and DDS services.

This budget creates a new \$6M account for Adult Autism Services for individuals newly eligible through Chapter 226 of the Acts of 2014. We also increase the children's Autism Waiver for Medicaid-eligible children ages zero to eight by \$500K to a total of \$4.5M to help reduce the waitlist for these services by 28 children.

In a new Senate initiative, the budget provides \$250K for the Department of Developmental Disabilities to identify best practices, provide training for direct care staff and collect data to meet the needs of aging individuals with disabilities. This program will address the needs of individuals with Down syndrome and Alzheimer's disease and help identify dementia and other age-related conditions in this population.

Seniors

One in five Massachusetts residents is over the age of 60, and the senior population is expected to increase to one in four residents by 2030. Our seniors require a comprehensive system of support and services. The Senate Ways and Means budget reflects continued and enhanced support for high quality, community-based services for Massachusetts seniors.

The budget includes a total of \$283.3M for the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, an \$11.5M increase over the FY 2015 budget. We eliminate the waitlist for Home Care services and invest an additional \$3.1M in home care services for seniors who require more intensive care, including those with behavioral health concerns. The budget makes investments in the following areas:

- \$15.1M for Supportive Senior Housing, Congregate Housing, the Elder Nutrition Program and Elder Homeless Placement.
- \$11.5M for local Councils on Aging, allowing for \$8.50 per senior per year for innovative programs serving the elderly in communities across the Commonwealth.
- \$642K for Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), which allow seniors to remain in their homes and communities.
- \$90K for the Serving Health Information Needs of Elders (SHINE) program to help seniors navigate the complex process of choosing a Medicare plan.

Veterans

Massachusetts leads the nation in providing for our 388,000 veterans, including 42,000 men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11. We remain committed to ensuring that returning veterans and our aging veteran population receive high quality health, housing and employment benefits and services. This budget reflects our commitment to benefits and assistance for the heroes who put themselves in harm's way to protect our values and our way of life. They deserve our gratitude and our wholehearted support when they return home. This budget recommends \$92.3M for the Department of Veterans' Services, a \$2.8M increase over FY 2015, including the following investments:

- \$77.2M for Veterans' Benefits and Annuity Payments.
- \$3.1M for Veterans' Homeless Shelters.

- \$3M for Veterans’ Outreach Centers and \$110K for outreach programs that focus on the unique needs of female veterans.
- \$250K for the Train Vets to Treat Vets career development program that trains returning veterans to provide behavioral health services and treatment for other veterans.

Health

Our Commonwealth’s prosperity depends on healthy communities. Physical and mental health are key for emotional wellbeing and career success. This budget makes targeted investments in public health prevention and treatment initiatives, including efforts to address the state’s substance abuse crisis, help people struggling with mental health challenges and improve health services for low income and at-risk individuals.

Substance Abuse Prevention, Recovery and Treatment

Opiate addiction is a public health crisis in our communities. Too many families across the Commonwealth struggle with the heart-breaking consequences of the substance abuse epidemic. This budget continues the Senate’s mission to break the cycle of addiction through investments in counseling and mental health services and efforts to improve treatment and recovery options.

- Provides \$10M to support the Substance Abuse Trust Fund, which funds a range of treatment services including detoxification, clinical stabilization, transitional support, residential services and outpatient treatment.
- Adds \$5M for over 150 new clinical stabilization beds, to provide additional treatment options after detoxification.
- Provides \$1.5M for grants to school districts to hire mental health and substance abuse counselors.
- Provides \$1M to continue the Narcan Pilot Program, which supports training and the purchase of Narcan for bystanders and first responders in 24 cities and towns to save the lives of people overdosing from opioids.

The budget also creates a new \$3.1M line item for Recovery High Schools, including \$1M to establish two new programs. These schools provide youth with substance use disorders a safe, healthy learning environment as they continue on the path toward recovery.

In another new Senate initiative, the budget creates and funds the administration of a Municipal Naloxone Bulk Purchase Program to allow municipalities to purchase the lifesaving overdose reversal drug commonly referred to as Narcan at a discounted rate.

In addition, the budget provides \$500K for an Academic Detailing program to reduce inappropriate opioid prescribing and encourage evidence-based chronic pain management.

Mental and Behavioral Health

The budget funds a full spectrum of services for individuals with mental health challenges, providing \$739.4M for the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to fund important mental health services for children and adults.

- Provides \$374.4M to fully maintain Adult Support Services, including \$13.2M for community-based placements for discharge-ready individuals in mental health continuing care facilities and \$5M of new funding to create 50 additional placements.
- Provides \$86.9M for Children's Mental Health Services, including \$3.6M to fund the Massachusetts Child Psychiatric Access Program (MCPAP), which provides pediatricians with behavioral health consultations. This includes \$500K in new funding to expand the MCPAP for Moms program to address mental health needs in pregnant and postpartum women.
- Provides \$1.1M for the Mental Health Legal Advisors program, which trains attorneys and justices on mental health issues and assists people in mental health facilities with legal issues.

Health Care Access and Cost Containment

The budget supports a number of investments at MassHealth to promote access to quality medical and behavioral health services and contain costs.

- Provides \$137M to support Applied Behavioral Analysis therapy for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder on MassHealth plans.
- Provides \$16M to support full-year coverage for adult dentures and dental services included in the FY 2015 budget.
- Provides \$6M to cover emergency services for MassHealth mental health patients.

The budget also directs Medicaid and state agencies to identify cost saving measures, including bulk purchasing consortiums, to curb unsustainable increases in prescription drug costs for all residents. In addition, the budget establishes a multi-agency commission to review opportunities to negotiate bulk purchasing discounts for non-Medicaid prescription drugs. Bulk purchasing consortiums in other states have negotiated discounts up to 65% on generic drug prices and over 20% on brand-name drugs, allowing agencies, municipalities and patients to save money on health expenses.

Public Health

In order to promote health and wellness for all families, the budget invests in a variety of public health programs, including family health services and HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.

- Appropriates \$33M for HIV/AIDS Services to expand community screening and testing.
- Increases funding for Family Health Services by \$500K to provide comprehensive family planning and community-based health education and outreach services.

- Includes \$1.8M for Pediatric Palliative Care to alleviate the waitlist for services to meet the needs of terminally ill children and their families.
- Creates a new \$500K line item for stroke prevention.
- Appropriates \$250K for a new public health evaluation grant program to evaluate the effectiveness of state-funded public health programs.

Access to Justice

This budget reflects the Senate’s commitment to public safety, while encouraging criminal justice innovation in order to reduce recidivism and improve the fairness and effectiveness of the Massachusetts justice system.

The budget provides \$633.2M total for the Trial Court, a \$20.8M increase over the FY 2015 budget to support operations and employees at the state’s trial courts and several key programs, including a pre-trial probation program, enhanced drug testing, security system enhancements in courthouses and increased access to justice for self-represented litigants. Funding also supports implementation of Chapter 260 of the Acts of 2014, which requires the Trial Court to provide training on domestic violence issues, review existing batterers’ programs and develop a risk assessment tool for use by probation officers in domestic violence cases.

Funds for the Trial Court include \$2.5M for the Massachusetts Offender Recidivism Reduction (HOPE/MORR) Program, allowing the Trial Court to expand the program to an additional ten sites. HOPE/MORR is an evidence-based probation program that seeks to deter recidivism and better serve probationers with swift and well-defined punishments for specific infractions. Participants in a similar program in Hawaii were 55% less likely to be arrested for a new crime, 72% less likely to use drugs, 61% less likely to skip appointments and 53% less likely to have their probation revoked, compared to the control group.

In addition, the budget fully funds the Specialty Courts within the Trial Court system at \$3.2M, encouraging collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Public Health and the Department of Veterans Services to help link individuals to the proper services for mental health issues, drug addiction and post-traumatic stress. These specialty courts reduce recidivism, encourage rehabilitation and save taxpayer money.

Other access to justice investments in the budget include:

- 2% increase for District Attorneys’ offices over the FY 2015 budget.
- \$750K for the Assistant District Attorney Retention Fund to encourage retention of more experienced ADAs through more competitive salaries.
- \$400K to cover bar dues for Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) public defenders and Assistant District Attorneys to help offset cost-of-living expenses.

The budget also provides the Chief Counsel for CPCS with the authority to waive the billable hours cap requirement for children and family law cases, in order to ensure effective representation for residents.

The budget creates a new process to allow for the conditional medical release of inmates who are terminally ill or permanently and totally disabled. After a thorough petition and review process, this program would allow inmates in Department of Correction facilities to receive necessary end of life care and also save the Commonwealth the cost of prisoner medical care services.

Intergovernmental Collaboration

In line with the Senate's Intergovernmental Affairs initiative, this budget seeks to maximize federal revenue opportunities and enhance intergovernmental and state-federal collaboration.

The budget establishes a Federal Grants Management Task Force to study best practices and issue recommendations on maximizing federal revenue opportunities in Massachusetts. The budget also requires the Executive Office for Administration and Finance to oversee and manage federal grant applications and opportunities.

The budget requires MassHealth and the Massachusetts Health Connector to provide an implementation plan to enhance health data sharing with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

In addition, this budget directs the Executive Office for Administration and Finance to coordinate with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to develop a pay-for-performance model to incentivize vendors to seek innovative ways to deliver services and promote employment among DTA clients.