

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Recommendations



Executive Summary

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means Fiscal Year 2024 budget recommendations represent the advocacy of each Senator, reinforcing an already strong economic foundation to move Massachusetts forward towards a more inclusive and resilient post-pandemic future for our residents, businesses, and communities.

Focused on our shared priorities and shared values, the Committee's budget is a fiscally responsible plan, thoughtfully building on our work to support an equitable recovery and shape a post-pandemic economy for our state. It strategically invests in an array of programs and services, providing historic levels of support for education, housing, regional transportation, mental health, workforce development, climate, and much more, while centering equity and opportunity as part of a broader, more comprehensive strategy to make our Commonwealth more affordable, accessible, competitive, and inclusive.

Prioritizing prudent budget management and sound fiscal discipline, the Committee's budget spends responsibly and maximizes state and federal revenue opportunities, recommending a total of \$55.8 billion in spending, a \$3.4 billion increase over the Fiscal Year 2023 General Appropriations Act. This reasonable spending recommendation is based on a tax revenue estimate of \$40.41 billion for FY 2024, representing 1.6 per cent growth, as agreed upon during the Consensus Revenue process in January, plus \$1 billion from the new Fair Share surtax.

Remaining vigilant about our current fiscal environment, the Committee's FY 2024 budget is clear-eyed about tax revenue collection trends for the current fiscal year to date. As such, our budget continues to maintain stability and build up available reserves with our Stabilization Fund, which has grown to a record high of \$7.16 billion, projected to close FY 2024 at \$9.07 billion, ensuring we continue to uphold fiscal responsibility during a time of ongoing economic volatility.

With these budget recommendations, our Commonwealth is on firm fiscal footing and well positioned to confront any challenges, while further investing to support our communities and maintain our long-term economic health.

Maximizing Fair Share Resources to Improve Public Education and Transportation

Consistent with the consensus revenue agreement reached in January, the Committee's FY 2024 budget includes \$1 billion in revenues generated from the Fair Share ballot initiative voters approved in November 2022, establishing a new surtax of 4% on annual income above \$1 million.

To safeguard this new source of revenue, the Committee's budget establishes an Education and Transportation Fund to account for these Fair Share funds in an open and transparent manner. This will ensure the public is visibly informed about how much revenue is collected from the new surtax and how much of this revenue is being dedicated to improving our public education and transportation systems in accordance with the ballot initiative.

Maximizing this new source of revenue, the Committee's budget invests \$1 billion in public dollars into several new initiatives to strengthen pillars of our state's economic foundation and boost our competitive advantage, dedicating \$500 million into each sector – for quality public education and for public transportation.

Notable *Education* investments include:

- \$125 million for Higher Education Capital Funding, focused on reducing backlog of deferred maintenance projects.
- \$100 million for Financial Aid Expansion to expand financial aid programs for in-state students attending state universities through MASSGrant Plus.
- \$100 million for MSBA Capital Supports for cities, towns, and school districts with experiencing extraordinary school project costs impacted by post-COVID inflationary pressures.
- \$30 million for Student Support Services to ensure students in the Commonwealth have success on the post-secondary level through wraparound supports.
- \$25 million for the Income-Eligible Childcare Waitlist to create approximately 2,200 new slots, reducing the waitlist by over 10%.
- \$25 million for Early Education and Care Capital investments to build capacity and ensure ability to safely accommodate additional slots.
- \$20 million for MassReconnect, as a first step towards a free community college system in the Commonwealth for individuals most in need.
- \$20 million for Nursing Program Free Community College as a pilot program in a high-need workforce area in the Commonwealth.
- \$15 million for Free Community College Implementation Supports to collect necessary data, develop best practices, and build capacity for a free community college system.
- \$15 million for CPPI Pre-K Initiative, matching \$15 million in funds from the General Fund, for a total of \$30M to support pre-school and pre-kindergarten expansion.

- \$15 million for Early Education Workforce Aid to continue to support the childcare costs of our early education and care workforce.
- \$10 million for Early College and Innovation Pathways.

Notable *Transportation* investments include:

- \$190 million for MBTA Capital Investments
- \$100 million for Regional Transit Funding and Grants, which will be exclusively used to support the work of the Regional Transit Authorities that serve the Commonwealth. These funds include:
 - \$56 million to be distributed to RTAs for operating assistance with special attention paid to those RTAs with historically low state operating assistance.
 - \$25 million for an innovation grant program for transportation providers across the commonwealth for initiatives such as electrification, infrastructure, capital investments, new and innovative service delivery models, expanded service hours or weekend service, rural connectivity, and connectivity improvements across regional transit authority service areas.
 - \$15 million for fare free pilot program grants
 - \$4 million through the Community Transit Grant Program to support expanded mobility options for older adults, people with disabilities and low-income individuals.
- \$100 million for Roads and Bridges Supplemental Aid, half of which will be expended consistent with the Chapter 90 program, while the other half will be spent with a larger focus on total mileage of participating municipalities.
- \$50 million for Federal Matching Funds, which will focus on providing projects with enough financial support to secure federal matching funds.
- \$50 million for Highway Bridge Preservation to make sure that consistent funds are provided to make sure that critical infrastructure does not fall into disrepair.
- \$5 million for MBTA Means Tested Fares, which will cover initial exploration of the feasibility of implementing a means-tested fare program at the MBTA.
- \$5 million for Water Transportation, which will cover one-time expenses for a pilot program covering operational assistance for ferry services.

Education

Supporting high-quality education opportunities for students of all ages and all backgrounds is vital to the economic growth, health, and success of our Commonwealth. Emerging from the pandemic stronger than before, the Committee’s budget makes several meaningful investments throughout each education sector, supporting students, families, and educators as a top Senate priority and a key element to moving Massachusetts towards a more inclusive and resilient post-pandemic future.

Early Education and Care

Throughout the last three years - as we responded fervently to pandemic related disruptions - the Senate prioritized increased investments in early education and care to stabilize providers, support workforce needs, and protect access to services for children and families. Now, as we move to shape a post-pandemic future for our residents and communities, the Committee's budget seeks to further build upon our previous actions, recognizing that investing in our early education system is an investment that supports the underlying economic health and security of the Commonwealth.

The Senate Ways and Means Committee budget makes the largest investment ever in early education and care, including \$1.5 billion to prioritize the accessibility and affordability of our high-quality early education and care sector. This level of funding provides a sturdy foundation to support the early education and care workforce and ensure the long-term success and economic well-being of children, families, and the Commonwealth.

- \$417.9 million for Income-Eligible Childcare and \$355.7 million for Supportive and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Childcare, providing critical services for families eligible for subsidized care and annualizes \$80M in rates to providers.
- \$475 million for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Stabilization Grants, which have proven successful at stabilizing the early education and care sector by supporting critical operational and workforce needs.
- \$45 million for center-based and family childcare rate supports.
- \$30 million for the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative to expand access to pre-kindergarten and preschool opportunities in underserved areas.
- \$20 million for Childcare Resource and Referral Centers to assist parents, childcare providers, employers, and community groups in navigating the state's early education and care landscape.
- \$17.5 million for grants to Head Start programs to maintain access to early education services for low-income families.
- \$5 million for grants to early education and care providers for childhood mental health consultation services.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Making lasting investments in our public K-12 education system, the Committee's budget sharpens the Senate's focus on students, families, and educators, and widens pathways to opportunity. It dedicates additional resources to support school districts across all locales – urban, suburban, regional, vocational–technical, and rural – addressing the needs of their student populations, while ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities as we move towards a more inclusive economic future.

Chapter 70/The Student Opportunity Act. Consistent with our ironclad commitment to fully implement the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) on schedule by FY 2027, we meet our obligations with this budget and fund Chapter 70 at its highest level ever at \$6.59 billion, an increase of \$603.6 million over FY 2023. With this increased level of investment, we fully fund the third year of the Student Opportunity Act and provide needed support for school districts across the Commonwealth to provide high-quality education.

School District Reimbursements. The Committee’s budget – once again – devotes state resources to support school districts with the costs of special education, charter school tuition, regional school transportation, and educating students in our rural communities. The Committee’s budget provides \$503.8 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker, reimbursing school districts for the high cost of educating students with disabilities at the statutorily required 75 per cent reimbursement rate. It also includes \$230.3 million to reimburse school districts at 100 per cent for costs incurred when students leave to attend charter schools, \$97.1 million for regional school transportation, representing a 90 per cent reimbursement rate, and a record \$15 million in funding for rural school aid.

- \$60 million for Adult Basic Education.
- \$47 million for Early College, Innovation Pathways, and other post-secondary programming to prepare students for success in multiple avenues in post-secondary life.
- \$28.9 million for the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) program.
- \$15 million for Rural School Aid.
- \$15 million for Early College Programs and \$12.6 million for Dual Enrollment, to provide high school students with the opportunity to take college courses prior to graduation.
- \$6 million for Social Emotional Learning Grants to help K-12 schools bolster social emotional learning supports for students, and \$1 million for the continuation of a pilot program to provide universal mental health screenings for K-12 students.
- \$5.8 million for Innovation Pathways to continue to connect students to trainings and post-secondary opportunities in the industry sector with a focus on STEM fields. This expansion of the program emphasizes the Committee’s priority to create equitable pathways for post-secondary opportunities for students across the Commonwealth.
- \$5 million for the 21st Century Education Trust Fund.
- \$2 million for the Genocide Education Trust Fund to educate middle and high school students on the history of genocide.

Higher Education

As a long-standing cornerstone of our Commonwealth’s economic foundation, our public higher education institutions continue to adapt, adjust, and confront challenges as we mold and shape a post-pandemic future for our state. To that end, this budget provides \$1.92 billion in investments

to center equity, expand pathways to affordable public higher education for all, and boosting supports for our state colleges and universities, who remain vital institutions here in our state.

- \$683.4 million for the University of Massachusetts, our world-class public research university system, including \$4M to increase student mental and behavioral health supports.
- \$348.5 million for the fifteen community colleges, including \$2 million for mental and behavioral health supports.
- \$337.4 million for the nine state universities, including \$2 million for mental and behavioral health support.
- \$175 million for the Scholarship Reserve.
- \$3 million for grants offered through the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative to support high school students with intellectual disabilities ages 18–22 with access to higher education opportunities and \$2 million for the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative Trust Fund to support our public higher education institutions ongoing efforts with implementing the 2022 law, ensuring increased access to inclusive learning opportunities for this diverse student population.

In State Tuition for High School Graduates. Recognizing equal access to opportunity is paramount, our Commonwealth and its public institutions of higher education strive to provide affordable pathways to undergraduate and advanced degrees to anyone who wishes to obtain them. We have long welcomed students regardless of their race, national origin, citizenship, or immigration status, believing that all persons, particularly those who face socioeconomic barriers to opportunity and advancement, can contribute to the economic, social, and civic fabric of their communities. To that end, the Committee’s budget makes clear that any student who attended a Massachusetts high school for at least 3 years and graduated or obtained the equivalent degree will be eligible to receive in-state tuition at our public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth.

Local and Regional Aid

The Committee’s budget – in addition to funding traditional accounts like Chapter 70 education aid – further demonstrates the Senate’s already strong commitment to a supporting a state-local partnership, dedicating meaningful resources that touch all regions and meet the needs of communities across the Commonwealth.

Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA). The Committee’s budget strengthens the state-local partnership and provides certainty for cities and towns, funding UGGA at \$1.27 billion, an increase of \$39.4 million over FY 2023. With this level of support, all 351 cities and towns will

receive an infusion of local aid resources, ensuring our constituents will have access to essential public services necessary to their continued well-being and quality of life.

Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs). RTAs are as an essential public good, providing services connecting commuters, students, seniors, and people with disabilities to health care, jobs, and other basic needs. To that end, the Committee’s budget provides a record \$194 million to support our regional public transportation system as a critical economic lifeline, including \$100 million dedicated from Fair Share resources to expand regional bus service, implement fare reduction, and fare free initiatives, and provide grants to support commuter operations. With this historic level of support, we are upholding our RTAs as a bridge to economic mobility and opportunity for many who live beyond metro Boston.

PILOT. In addition to traditional sources of local aid like Chapter 70 and UGGA, the Committee’s budget increases payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for state-owned land to \$51.5 million, a \$6.5 million increase over FY 2023, providing a valuable source of revenue to cities and towns to fund education and other essential public services.

Arts, Culture and Libraries. As a Commonwealth, we have always valued our arts, culture, and libraries as institutions vital to our communities and essential to our collective economic health. To ensure arts and culture remain vibrant, and access to the broad array of information, services, and programs that libraries provide is protected, the Committee’s budget includes \$46.6 million for libraries, including \$15.6 million for regional library local aid, \$17.6 million for municipal libraries and \$6.2 million for technology and automated resource networks, and \$25 million for the Massachusetts Cultural Council to support local arts, culture, and creative economy initiatives.

Health & Human Services

Access to health care is vitally important to our economic security and is a vital component of the Commonwealth’s efforts to shape a resilient post-pandemic future. To that end, this budget makes a range of investments to further reinforce and strengthen our state’s safety net and provide the resources to maintain and protect access to health and human services essential to the overall well-being of individuals with complex medical needs and disabilities, working families, and our most vulnerable populations.

MassHealth

The Committee’s budget funds MassHealth at a total of \$19.93 billion (\$8.0 billion net), providing over 2.3 million of our Commonwealth’s children, seniors, and low-income residents access to comprehensive health care coverage. The end of the federal Public Health Emergency marks a ramping down of the 6.2% enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (eFMAP)

throughout the 2023 calendar year and requires MassHealth to redetermine the eligibility of all MassHealth members over a 1-year period.

In light of these challenges, the Committee's budget fully funds MassHealth to support the continuation of services and supports. To assist with redetermination effort, the Committee budget provides for a \$5.1 million communications plan to ensure that disenrolled members have the information and resources necessary to transition to alternative health care coverage options.

- \$582 million for nursing facility Medicaid rates, including \$112 million in additional base rate payments to maintain competitive wages in the Commonwealth's nursing facility workforce.
- \$200 million for increased rates to Day Habitation and Adult Day Health providers so that more members with complex needs can return to pre-pandemic levels of care.
- \$80 million for targeted investments to expand access to high-quality in-patient and out-patient behavioral health care.
- \$14.3 million to expand access to the substance use disorder rate add-on for nursing facilities across the Commonwealth.
- \$5 million for the elimination of pharmacy copayments for all members and for the elimination of the asset limit for Medicare Savings Program (MSP) eligibility.

Preventative Services. The Committee's budget codifies into law the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) preventive services provision. By enshrining the ACA protections into state law, insurance carriers across the Commonwealth will be required to provide coverage for preventive services without imposing cost-sharing. With this vital step, the Senate is protecting access to preventive health care services for millions of our residents, including screenings for cancer, diabetes, HIV, and depression, as well as preventive medications such as statins, immunizations, and PreP (pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV), and further protecting the rights and freedoms of our people to make their own health care choices without federal interference.

Mental Health

Last year, under the leadership of Senate President Spilka, the Senate led the way and championed the Mental Health ABC Act, reforming the way mental health care is delivered in Massachusetts to people who need it. Building off this landmark success, the Committee's budget strives to meet the moment and invests over \$1.3 billion to support a spectrum of mental health services and prevention programs for adults and children. This includes substantial investments in staffing, inpatient placements, and housing to provide a robust and effective continuum of care to the people of Massachusetts.

- \$597.7 million for Adult Support Services, including assisted outpatient programming and comprehensive care coordination among health care providers. This also includes the annualization of higher provider rates to raise wages for social services workers.
- \$316.3 million for DMH hospital and community-based services.
- \$192 million from the Behavioral Health Trust Fund, created with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to support staff recruitment and retention in the behavioral health field through various loan repayment, tuition assistance, and scholarship programs.
- \$119.3 million for children’s mental health services, including \$3.9 million for the Massachusetts Child Psychiatric Access Program (MCPAP) and MCPAP for Moms to address mental health needs of pregnant and postpartum women.
- \$27.6 million for Statewide Homeless Services, which includes \$4 million to expand Safe Haven housing in Western, Central, and Southeastern Massachusetts by providing an additional 42 beds.
- \$25 million for emergency department diversion initiatives for children, adolescents, and adults, an increase of \$15 million over the FY 2023 funding level.
- \$20 million to recapitalize the Behavioral Health, Access, Outreach and Support Trust Fund to support targeted behavioral health initiatives.
- \$19.2 million for student behavioral health services across the University of Massachusetts, state universities, community colleges, K-12 schools, and early education centers.
- \$16.8 million for the Forensic Services Program, which maintains \$1.5 million for mental health assessments and consultations in juvenile court clinics.
- \$16.5 million in the Department of Housing and Community Development and \$14.3 million in DMH line items for housing vouchers for DMH clients to transition into housing and community-based services, an \$11.3 million increase over the FY 2023 funding level.
- \$9 million to expand jail diversion initiatives to divert individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders from the criminal justice system and connect them with appropriate treatment.
- \$4.5 million for the Program for Assertive Community Treatment for Youth.

Public Health

Emerging from the pandemic stronger and more resilient, we recognize how important a strong public health infrastructure is to our state’s economy and shaping a resilient post-pandemic future. To that end, the Committee’s budget invests nearly \$1 billion in programs and services, reinforcing the Senate’s commitment to protect the public health and strengthen local public health services essential to supporting a high quality of life for our citizens. This includes considerable investments in reproductive healthcare, grants to local boards of health, and funding for school-based health centers.

- \$194.1 million in DPH hospital operations to meet higher staffing costs and ensure sick individuals receive the care they require.
- \$71.2 million for domestic violence prevention services.

- \$42.9 million for early intervention services, to ensure supports are accessible and available to infants and young toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities, including funds to support health equity initiatives.
- \$33.8 million for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.
- \$22.9 million for school-based health programming and services.
- \$21.5 million for family and adolescent health, including \$9.2 million for comprehensive family planning services and \$6.7 million to enhance federal Title X family planning funding.
- \$15 million for grants to support local and regional boards of health.
- \$12.6 million for the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative, \$7.2 million for Youth At-Risk matching grants and \$5 million for youth violence prevention grants.
- \$10.5 million for maternal and child health, including \$9.9 million for pediatric palliative care services for terminally ill children and their families.
- \$7.9 million for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) and pediatric SANE programs, providing safe and integrated services to protect children from abuse.
- \$7.1 million for suicide prevention and intervention, with an additional \$1.4 million for Samaritans Inc. and \$1.1 million for the Call2Talk suicide prevention hotline.
- \$2.7 million for the Childhood Lead Poisoning and Prevention Trust Fund.
- \$2 million for grants for improvements in reproductive health access, infrastructure, and safety.

Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Now more than ever, services need strategic investment and community-based substance abuse treatment and intervention services must remain a priority as work towards a more resilient future. Continuing our commitment to ensuring access to treatment, the Committee’s budget ensures that the gains of recent years to preserve access to care are not lost, investing \$213.3 million to support individuals in need and their families through the continuum of substance use disorder treatment and intervention services.

- \$12.5 million for the expansion of low threshold housing to support over 400 previously homeless individuals affected by substance use disorder across the Commonwealth.
- \$10 million for additional family supportive housing programs in the Commonwealth to ensure families struggling with opioid use disorder have the shelter and care they need.
- \$7 million for ten new recovery centers to enhance geographic access to services.
- \$7 million for investments to address shortages in the addiction treatment workforce through outreach and recruitment efforts and support for continuing education.
- \$5 million for investments in the substance use disorder workforce, including training on medication management, medication-assisted treatment, and treatment of co-occurring disorders.
- \$3 million for the Massachusetts Access to Recovery to help individuals with opioid use disorder reenter the workforce.
- \$3 million for multi-disciplinary, team-based substance use treatment.
- \$3 million for technical assistance to providers working in communities of color to support equitable access to recovery in Massachusetts.

- \$2 million for case management and residential rehabilitation services to help individuals transition between levels of treatment and find support through each step of recovery.
- \$2 million for workforce recruitment in collaboration with educational institutions and vocational-technical high schools.
- \$1.5 million to ensure deaf and hard of hearing individuals and deaf-blind individuals have access to tailored substance use disorder services.
- \$1.5 million for transportation services for people to access substance use treatment.
- \$100,000 to improve early intervention programming and care for newborns diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome.

People with Disabilities

The Committee’s budget invests over \$2.9 billion across a range of services and focused supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This level of support protects equal and fair access to opportunities for these individuals, who meaningfully contribute to our Commonwealth, and ensures services essential to their overall safety, health and success are maintained. This recommendation includes the annualization of higher provider rates to combat staffing shortages and ensure the availability of high-quality long-term care, interpreter services, and day programming for people with disabilities in Massachusetts.

- More than \$243 million for the DDS Community Day and Work Program, including \$3 million to support one-to-one staff supports for participants most in need.
- \$98 million for DDS to support respite and family services.
- More than \$121 million to fully fund a historically large Turning 22 class, which will provide services to help over 1,400 young people with disabilities transition to adulthood.
- \$52.5 million for specialized services for adults with autism, which will provide services to an additional 200 adults in FY 2024.
- \$33.5 million for DDS Transportation services to ensure individuals can access services despite ongoing staffing shortages.
- \$29.3 million for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind services.
- \$27.9 million for head injury treatment services.
- \$25.8 million for the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s vocational rehabilitation services.
- \$15.9 million for the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which includes funding for a 24-hour emergency interpreter services program.
- \$11.1 million for the Disabled Persons Protection Commission, including funding to support the caregiver abuse registry mandated by Nicky’s Law.
- \$10.9 million for services for children with autism including \$5.5 million for the Children’s Autism Medicaid Waiver.
- \$8 million for the 11 independent living centers across the state providing networks of support to help individuals of all abilities access opportunities and build community.

Elder Affairs

As we emerge stronger and build anew in our Commonwealth, we continue to do all that we can to support our growing elder population. To that end, the Committee's budget dedicates resources to bolster several programs and services that focus on ensuring our elders receive the and home care in the community to support their overall health and wellness.

- \$303.1 million in total for the elder home care program and case management, providing critical health and social services to help seniors remain in their homes.
- \$213.8 million for home care purchased services to assist ASAPs and home care contractors in providing services to elders.
- \$35.6 million for the Protective Services Program to prevent elder abuse and neglect.
- \$26.3 million for grants to local Councils on Aging to increase assistance per elder to \$14 from \$12 in FY 2023 and a proportional increase to the Service Incentive Program (SIG).
- \$11.9 million for Meals on Wheels and other nutrition programs for seniors.
- \$9.5 million to expand the Supportive Senior Housing Program to 10 additional sites throughout the Commonwealth.
- \$5 million for the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to improve and modernize Assisted Living Residence regulations and certification operations and to offer increased supports to residents navigating the aging services network.
- \$2.5 million for Geriatric Mental Health Services.
- \$2 million for the Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone (SHINE) Program to assist all residents on Medicare with insurance information and counseling.

Veterans' Services

As a shining example of the Senate's lasting commitment to our veterans and their families, the Committee's budget furthers its support for these brave men and women who have served our nation so valiantly to protect our way of life and our liberty. Maintaining our Commonwealth's leadership in veteran's affairs, our budget makes meaningful investments to meet the everchanging needs of our veteran population. In addition to maintaining existing supports for our veterans, the Committee's budget provides an additional \$7.1M to the Department of Veterans' Services to support its expansion to a secretariat-level Executive Office. These new funds will provide the necessary personnel, infrastructure, and oversight to conduct this expansion, and will ultimately allow the Commonwealth to be more responsive to the needs of the men and women who have served our nation.

- \$7.8 million for the Department of Veterans' Services, including funds to expand the staff as the department prepares to expand to the secretariat-level.
- \$750,000 to establish the new Office of the Veteran Advocate, to provide critical oversight to veteran-serving agencies and offer an independent voice for veterans in state government.

- \$68.2 million for veterans' benefits provided by municipalities, including cash, fuel and rent assistance, employment training and placement and health benefits.
- \$49.3 million for the Chelsea Soldiers' Home, including funds to finalize preparations of the new Community Living Center.
- \$28.7 million for the Holyoke Soldiers' Home.
- \$9.5 million for Veterans' Outreach Centers providing peer counseling, employment skills building and job search assistance, substance use disorder counseling and other services.
- \$2 million for veterans' mental and behavioral health services through the Home Base program.
- \$628,545 for outreach and services targeted to women veterans.

Support for Children and Working Families

In a post-pandemic world, Massachusetts like the rest of the nation still grapples with unprecedented economic and social challenges. From high inflation and the risk of a recession to persistent labor force shortages in the social services field, the brunt of these challenges is borne by children and working families. As such, the Committee's budget continues our commitment to supporting those most in-need and redoubles our efforts to ensure that every family in the Commonwealth can escape cycles of social instability and generational poverty.

TAFDC/EAEDC Benefits. The Committee's budget continues to prioritize direct assistance to working families by once again funding a 10 per cent expansion to Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) benefit levels compared to June 2023. In recent years, the Senate has led the way in expanding these benefits which offer immediate relief to individuals and provide direct economic stimulus to our communities. However, recent inflationary pressures and the ongoing threat of a recession mean that benefit recipients continue to find themselves in an economically precarious position. This increase signals - regardless of the economic forecast - the Commonwealth will not waver on its commitment to support working families.

School Clothing Allowance. The Committee recognizes the challenges associated with raising a child in a high-cost state, especially for low-income families. In response, our budget provides a \$450 per child clothing allowance for TAFDC-recipient families. This represents a \$50 increase over benefit levels provided in FY 2023. This expansion offers much needed assistance to recipient families for this important annual expense, and ensures that every child in Massachusetts has new, weather-appropriate clothing for the fall and winter.

- \$444.7 million for Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and \$201.4 million for Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) to provide the necessary support as caseloads increase, and continue the Deep Poverty increases.

- \$294.6 million for DCF Social Workers, supporting the Department’s ongoing efforts to reduce caseloads for social workers.
- \$88.8 million for DCF family support and stabilization services.
- \$35 million for Emergency Food Assistance to ensure that citizens in need can navigate the historic levels of food insecurity caused by COVID-19.
- \$33.8 million for Family Resource Centers to grow and improve the mental health resources and programming available to families, including \$3 million for the Juvenile Court Mental Health Advocacy Project administered by Health Law Advocates, Inc.
- \$13 million for the Healthy Incentives Program, including \$8 million in funds carried forward from FY 2023, to ensure continued access to healthy food options for 90,000 SNAP households and support for local farmers.
- \$19.7 million for the DTA Employment Services Program to help low-income people move toward economic independence, including \$3 million for programs operated by the Office of Refugees and Immigrants and \$200,000 for the DTA Works Internship Program.
- \$10 million in grants to rest homes caring for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and EAEDC recipients.
- \$9.5 million for DCF Lead Agencies to connect children with community-based services.
- \$5 million for the Secure Jobs Connect program, providing job placement resources and assistance for homeless individuals.
- \$4.6 million for the Office of the Child Advocate, including \$300,000 for the Transition Age Youth Pilot to provide housing support for children aging out of DCF care.
- \$3.8 million for the Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma, providing trauma-informed training to professionals and organizations that work with children.
- \$5 million for Children Advocacy Centers, including \$1.1 million for the Massachusetts Children’s Alliance, to improve the critical supports available to children that have been neglected or sexually abused.
- \$3.3 million for an expansion of the annual child’s clothing allowance to \$450 per child, to allow TAFDC-recipient families to purchase clothes for the upcoming school year.
- \$1.6 million for Project Bread to support the Child Nutrition Outreach Program (CNOP) and the FoodSource Hotline.
- \$975,000 for the Foster Care Parents Campaign to recruit and support foster families.
- \$500,000 to provide Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients with support for employment-related costs, such as transportation and professional clothing.

Housing

As we put forward our plans to move towards a more inclusive Commonwealth, we know our residents need access to an affordable home. To ensure stability and security, we need to cultivate an economic ecosystem that centers access to housing in all corners. To that end, the Committee’s

budget invests over \$1.06 billion, dedicating resources for housing stability, residential assistance, and homelessness assistance programs, ensuring we continue to assist families and individuals in need with stable housing options.

- \$324.1 million for Emergency Assistance Family Shelters.
- \$200 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program, including \$20.4 million in funds carried forward from FY 2023.
 - This investment will not only create more than 750 new vouchers, but also allows the program to move to a payment standard with a benefit of 110% of the federal small-area fair market rental price. These changes will work in tandem to ensure that those served will have significantly broadened housing options and a larger benefit, creating more potent vouchers that encourage household economic growth and more dispersed leasing.
- \$195 million for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition.
 - This will provide much needed relief to low-income residents in the Commonwealth struggling to maintain their housing. This will also make sure the benefit from RAFT remains \$7,000 over one year.
- \$110.8 million for assistance for homeless individuals.
- \$107 million for assistance to local housing authorities.
- \$39.6 million for the HomeBASE program.
 - This funding level will provide \$10 million to administering agencies to resolve a housing crisis not fully addressed by HomeBASE program benefits program,
- \$26 million for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) providing rental assistance to people with disabilities, including \$9.1 million in funds carried forward from FY 2023.
 - This funding increase will create 250 new vouchers and will pair with \$2.5 million for grants to improve or create accessible housing units. Both programs will also benefit from the inclusion of project-based vouchers in AHVP, which will stimulate the building of new deeply affordable and accessible homes.
- \$11 million for assistance for unaccompanied homeless youth.
- \$8.8 million for the Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs).
- \$7.6 million for sponsored-based supportive permanent housing.
- \$6.4 million for the Home and Healthy for Good re-housing and supportive services program, including \$250,000 for homeless LGBTQ youth.
- \$5 million for Resident Service Coordinators at local housing authorities.
- \$3.8 million for the Housing Assistance for Re-Entry Transition program, including \$1.8M in funds carried over from FY 2023.
 - This funding will help grow a program that provides rental subsidies for participants in re-entry programs aimed at reducing recidivism.
- \$3 million for the Office of Public Collaboration to support housing dispute mediation efforts across the Commonwealth.
- \$2 million for the Tenancy Preservation Program.

Economic Development and Workforce Training

The economic and workforce development needs of every community, every region and every employer were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has spared no one. As we emerge stronger, and more resilient, workforce shortages are threatening to undercut the long-term economic health of our Commonwealth. As such, building up a post-pandemic workforce is an urgent action item on our to do list. To that end, the Committee's budget strategically invests to support workers critical to our economic competitiveness and expands pathways of opportunity for our residents and employers who call Massachusetts home.

- \$20 million for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, which will pair with \$27.1M in FY 2022 ARPA funding to connect unemployed and under-employed workers with higher paying jobs.
- \$16.2 million for summer jobs and work-readiness training for at-risk youth through the YouthWorks program.
 - This is in addition to \$25M in funding from the FY 2022 ARPA bill and will continue to support both summer and after school jobs for children in at risk communities to receive career training.
- \$15.4 million for Career Technical Institutes to increase our skilled worker population and provide residents access to career technical training opportunities.
- \$15 million to fully fund a program that provides aid to communities most disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system.
- \$7.5 million for Small Business Technical Assistance grants.
- \$6 million for One-Stop Career Centers, which will combine with \$18M in remaining funding from the FY 2022 ARPA bill to support the State's assistance to the career centers.
- \$5 million for grants to community foundations to provide emergency economic relief to historically underserved populations across the Commonwealth.
- \$2.5 million for the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative Innovation Institute.
- \$2.5 million for the Advanced Manufacturing Program.
- \$2.5 million for the Massachusetts Cybersecurity Innovation Fund, including \$1.5 million to continue partnerships with community colleges and state universities to provide cybersecurity workforce training to students and cybersecurity services to municipalities, non-profits, and small businesses.
- \$2 million for the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership.
- \$2 million for Regional Economic Development Organizations.
- \$1.8 million for microlending grants to support small businesses.
- \$1 million for employment programs for young adults with disabilities.

Climate and Environment

Fighting the threat of climate change, protecting our environment, ensuring clean air and water, preserving our natural resources, supporting our agricultural sector, and securing our clean energy future remain a critical priority for the Senate. To that end, the Committee's budget remains consistent with our track record on combating climate change and protecting our environment, investing over \$470.5 million, ensuring state resources meet the moment and deliver on our commitments to fighting climate change and protecting our precious environmental resources.

- \$148.7 million for the Department of Conservation and Recreation to support the Commonwealth's state parks system and the need for socially distant outdoor leisure.
- \$83.5 million for the Department of Environmental Protection to steward the Commonwealth's air, land, and waterways.
- \$47.8 million for the Department of Agricultural Resources to promote the Commonwealth's food security and local food economy.
- \$25 million for a transfer to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to support investments in clean transportation, building retrofitting and the green economy workforce.
- \$22.7 million for the Department of Public Utilities to ensure proper pipeline and utility safety.
- \$10 million for climate change adaptation and preparedness programs to enhance resilience and to address the mounting threat of climate change.
- \$5 million for the Division of Ecological Restoration to protect the Commonwealth's rivers, wetlands, and watersheds.
- \$8.3 million for the Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Bureau, which includes \$2.3 million to establish a unit to collect data, promote research, and analyze the effects of climate change on public health.

Judiciary – Racial Justice and Reinvestment

Judiciary

Recognizing that fair and equal treatment under the law is an immovable bedrock of our democracy, the Committee's budget strives to advance positive change throughout the Commonwealth's justice system. It supports and invests in programs that aim to support equal justice and fair treatment through the protection of due process, while further ensuring individuals are provided access to opportunities to re-enter society as law-abiding citizens.

- \$873.1 million for the Trial Court system, including \$1.7 million for the addition of eight circuit judges to the Probate and Family Court, \$2.2 million for the addition of Court Service Center Resources to serve all residents of the Commonwealth, and funding for other critical initiatives improving access to justice.

- \$330.2 million for the Committee for Public Counsel Services.
 - This appropriation level provides full funding to onboard a fall class of twenty-five adult criminal defenders and children & family law attorneys, ensuring that access to quality legal representation remains a priority across the Commonwealth.
- \$181.8 million for the Office of Probation.
- \$49 million for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation.
- \$3 million for Prisoners' Legal Services.
- \$3.1 million for the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee.

Justice Reinvestment and Recidivism Reduction

As a reflection of the Senate's commitment to increasing accountability and transparency in law enforcement and our criminal justice system, the Committee's budget dedicates over \$220 million in resources to support programs and services across the entire criminal justice system, including investments for community-based efforts to help reduce recidivism and uplift populations disproportionately impacted.

- \$170.5 million for District Attorney's offices across the state.
- \$14.1 million for a grant program to provide community-based residential re-entry services.
- \$9.3 million for the POST Commission, four other small police reform related commissions, and a police reform reserve.
- \$6 million for the continuation of an emerging adult reentry program to help reduce recidivism among our younger resident populations.
- \$5.1 million to expand a pilot collaboration between MassHealth, the Judiciary, DOC, and the Sheriffs to provide behavioral health support to justice-involved individuals in their communities.
- \$4.9 million for expanded behavioral health treatment at DOC facilities.
- \$3.5 million for a matching funds grant program to assist communities making public health-oriented adjustments to their public safety systems, including targeted reforms such as jail diversion programs, de-escalation training, and hiring behavioral health staff.
- \$2.3 million to expand a transitional youth early intervention probation pilot to provide recidivism reduction programming to high-risk or high-need youth.
- \$2.1 million for DOC's recidivism reduction programming.
- \$2 million for a Safe Neighborhood Initiative, modelled after the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods, to develop comprehensive solutions that reduce crime and protect communities in response to emerging statewide violent trends.
- \$2 million to support the Ralph Gants Reentry Services Program.
- \$1.5 million for the operation of the School of Reentry program at Boston's Pre-Release Center to provide incarcerated individuals with an opportunity to maximize the end of their

incarceration periods in an environment that encourages academic, personal, and professional development.

- \$499,950 for diversion programs in the district attorneys' offices.
- \$345,000 to expand behavioral health programs at houses of correction.
- \$199,490 for the Massachusetts Community Justice Project to enhance collaboration among local partners and divert individuals living with mental health or addiction from the criminal justice system.

Public Safety

We recognize that our first responders, local police and fire departments go above and beyond to serve our communities, putting their lives on the line every time they go to work and answer a call. To that end, the Committee's budget provides for an array of investments to support those who protect the public safety across our Commonwealth.

- \$710.1 million for the Sheriffs' offices across the state.
- \$480.8 million for the State Police.
- \$39 million for the Department of Fire Services, including \$2 million for the Student Awareness Fire Education program and \$1.6 million for Critical Incident Stress Management programs.
- \$22.8 million for the Massachusetts Alcohol and Substance Abuse Center to provide education, treatment and re-entry planning for people who are incarcerated and civilly committed males.
- \$20.2 million for the Municipal Police Training Committee, including funding to continue supporting the implementation of police training requirements as established in the 2020 police reform legislation.
- \$12.3 million for the Shannon Grants gang violence prevention and intervention program.
- \$5 million for Municipal Public Safety Staffing grants.
- \$4 million for the Non-Profit Security Grants, including \$300,000 to support security personnel at non-profits vulnerable to acts of violence.