

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Recommendations



Executive Summary

As we adapt, plan, and chart a way forward through the fog of uncertainty and stiffening economic headwinds, the Senate Committee on Ways and Means Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026) recommendations take a fiscally responsible approach. It strives to collectively manage increasing cost pressures and adjust to slower revenue growth, while we – in the Senate - remain vigilant about the growing threat of potential federal actions that represent a clear and present danger to the underlying health and well-being of our residents and the continued stability of our Commonwealth’s broader economy.

Reflecting the advocacy and priorities of each Senator, the Committee’s FY 2026 budget proposes to safeguard the state’s fiscal health, achieve long-term sustainability, and protect core services for our most vulnerable residents. Prioritizing prudent budget management, the Committee’s recommendations invest heavily in education, health and human services, housing, local aid, and transportation, ensuring we never forget our responsibility to care for, help, and support the people of this great Commonwealth during this incredibly turbulent and volatile time.

In accordance with the consensus revenue agreement reached in January, this responsible and prudent spending recommendation is based on a tax revenue estimate of \$41.214 billion for FY 2026, representing a 2.25 percent increase over the current Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 2025) benchmark. Ensuring state spending is responsibly aligned with the estimated level of tax revenue growth while meeting our fiduciary commitments, the Committee’s budget recommends a total of \$61.33 billion in spending, a \$3.61 billion increase over the FY 2025 General Appropriations Act (GAA) and \$647 million below the Governor’s FY 2026 budget proposal in House 1.

The Committee’s budget also includes \$1.95 billion in estimated revenues generated from the Fair Share surtax to support education and transportation initiatives, an increase of \$650 million in additional surtax funds available to invest over FY 2025. In addition, the Committee’s budget plan does not raise taxes on our residents, nor does it draw from the “Rainy-Day fund,” preserving readily available reserves for potential use in the event of a future economic downturn.

With these budget recommendations, our economic and fiscal foundation will remain firmly anchored as we navigate the increasing uncertainty without undermining the fiscal integrity of the Commonwealth.

Maximizing Fair Share Investments to Improve Education and Transportation

In accordance with the consensus revenue agreement reached in January, the FY 2026 budget includes \$1.95 billion in estimated revenues generated from the Fair Share surtax. This represents the third year in which the Committee's budget dedicates these revenues to fund a host of initiatives that will further reinforce two vital cornerstones of our state's economic foundation by boosting support for quality *public education* investments and bolstering the state's *transportation infrastructure*. These investments combine with \$1.28 billion in critical education and transportation projects recently funded in the Senate's Fair Share supplemental budget, supported by surtax collections that have exceeded expectations in recent years.

As we brace for future federal actions, there remains significant concern for additional economic uncertainty and ongoing market volatility, which could disproportionately impact high income earners who are subject to the Fair Share surtax. In line with our steadfast commitment to uphold fiscal responsibility, the Committee budget recommends depositing \$165 million of the \$1.95 billion currently projected to be collected in Fair Share surtax revenues into the Education and Transportation Reserve fund. With this prudent step, we are setting aside available resources as a downpayment to maintain our commitments to key public education programming and transportation infrastructure in the event there are significant changes to the economy because of future federal disruptions.

Notable Fair Share ***Education*** investments include:

- \$325 million for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grant program, which is matched with \$150 million in funds from the General Fund and the Early Education and Care Operational Grant Fund, for a total investment of \$475 million.
- \$265 million for Student Opportunity Act Expansion, as part of a \$460 million increase from FY 2025 to support the fifth year of the implementation of the Student Opportunity Act and provide \$150 in minimum per pupil aid.
- \$170 million for Universal Free School Meals.
- \$120 million for universal free community college across the Commonwealth, including non-credit tuition funding for those seeking to become EMTs and paramedics.
- \$100 million to maintain financial aid programs for in-state students attending state universities through MASSGrant Plus, which is in addition to the \$175.2M for scholarships funded through the General Fund.
- \$98 million for Child Care Supports, coupled with a \$192.8 million increase in the General Fund to maintain the current capacity and rates of the child care financial assistance program.
- \$50 million for school transportation reimbursement costs.
- \$14 million for State University SUCCESS Funding.

- \$10 million for the CPPI Pre-K Initiative, matching \$17.6 million in funds from the General Fund, for a total of \$27.6 million to support a pathway to universal pre-kindergarten expansion, including in Gateway Cities and the Summer Step Up program.
- \$20 million for Early Literacy Initiatives and Programs.
- \$8 million for the Reimagining High School Initiative.
- \$5 million for School-based Mental Health Supports and Wraparound Services.

Notable Fair Share *Transportation* investments include:

- \$350 million, for a total of \$500 million in funding to support the operation of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA), including key initiatives like Low-Income Fare Relief, year-round ferry service and the MBTA Academy. Together with the supplemental budget recently released, the Committee is dedicating \$820 million in operating resources to fully fund MBTA’s operations for FY 2026.
- \$120 million to support Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) across the state, which together with the resources from General Fund funds provides a record \$214 million for RTAs. Fair Share funding includes:
 - \$66 million in direct operating support for Regional Transit Authorities
 - \$40 million to support complete fare free fixed-route access across all Regional Transit Authorities.
 - \$10 million to incentivize connections between regional transit routes and local economic hubs
 - \$4 million to support expanded mobility options for the elderly and people with disabilities.
- \$78 million for debt service for expanded new bond capacity for the Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF) for essential transportation project across the Commonwealth. By committing \$600 million to the CTF, the Committee budget will unlock additional bond capacity for critical transportation projects over the next ten years.
- \$52 million in operating support for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Education

The Senate Ways and Means Committee budget makes strong commitments to supporting each education sector and students of all ages by maintaining investments in high quality education to help reinforce a foundational cornerstone of our economy. The Committee’s budget fully funds the fifth year of the Student Opportunity Act, provides a historic funding commitment to the Department of Early Education and Care, following the passage of the EARLY ED Act, and stands by our public and private institutions of higher education amid this incredibly volatile time.

Early Education and Care

Building off the successful passage of last year’s EARLY ED Act, the Senate Ways and Means Committee budget supports a significant investment of \$1.7 billion to maintain accessibility and

affordability of our high-quality early education and care sector. With this level of funding, we are continuing to show strong support for our early education workforce, protect early education programming, and maintain access to affordable care across every region of the Commonwealth during this time of rising economic anxiety for many families.

- \$517.6 million for Income-Eligible Child Care and \$448.2 million for DCF and DTA Related Child Care, providing critical services for families eligible for subsidized care, in addition to \$98 million on Fair Share to maintain rate increases that are crucial to supporting the early education workforce.
- \$475 million for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) operational grant program for the third year in a row, supporting critical operational and workforce needs across the early education sector.
- \$44.9 million for EEC Quality Improvement Initiatives.
- \$27.6 million for the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative to maintain access to universal pre-kindergarten and preschool opportunities in underserved areas.
- \$20 million for Childcare Resource and Referral Centers to support parents, childcare providers, employers, and community groups in navigating the state’s early education and care landscape.
- \$20 million for grants to Head Start programs to promote school readiness for young children in low-income households.
- \$5 million for grants to early education and care providers for childhood mental health consultation services.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Supporting school districts across Massachusetts, whether it be urban, suburban, regional, vocational–technical, or rural, has been a long-standing hallmark of the Senate, and the Committee’s budget features our strong support for our schools and our students, dedicating significant funds to support our public K-12 education system and respond to the urgent fiscal challenges confronting our communities.

Chapter 70/The Student Opportunity Act. Consistent with our unyielding commitment to fully implement the Student Opportunity Act by FY 2027, we fund Chapter 70 at its highest level ever at \$7.3 billion, representing an increase of \$460 million over FY 2025. Aware of the significant financial challenges and constraints facing all school districts, the Committee’s budget also increases minimum aid for school districts to a historic level of \$150 per pupil, devoting an additional \$39.6 million in resources for FY 2026 to extend a much-needed helping hand to school districts confronting the increasing costs and feeling the weight of immense fiscal pressures that come with the responsibility of delivering high-quality public education to all students across the Commonwealth.

School District Reimbursements. The Committee’s budget provides additional resources to support school districts with extraordinary costs of special education, charter school tuition, regional school transportation, and educating students in our rural communities. Consequently, the Committee’s budget allocates \$492 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker in addition to the \$190 million included in the Fair Share supplemental budget recently released by the Committee. Together, with the Fair Share supplemental funding, the Committee is recommending \$682 million to reimburse school districts for the high cost of educating students with disabilities. It also includes \$183 million to reimburse school districts for costs incurred when students leave to attend charter schools, \$103.7 million for regional school transportation from both General Fund and Fair Share resources, along with study language to address how to contain rising school transportation costs, and it includes \$16 million in funding for rural school aid.

- \$58.9 million for Adult Basic Education.
- \$29.9 million for the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) program.
- \$14.2 million for Early College Programs and \$13.1 million for Dual Enrollment, along with \$8 million for Reimagining High School, further empowering high school students to pursue opportunities by taking college courses prior to graduation.
- \$5.9 million for Social Emotional Learning Grants to help K-12 schools support social emotional learning programs and services for students.
- \$3 million for the Genocide Education Trust Fund to support ongoing efforts to educate middle and high school students on the historical significance of genocide.
- \$2.5 million for the Civics Education Trust Fund to maintain a statewide civic infrastructure, provide professional development to teachers, and ensure that every student can access high quality civics education.
- \$1 million for Hate Crimes Prevention Grants to support K-12 schools with the education and prevention of hate crimes and incidences of bias in public schools.

Higher Education

As a long-standing cornerstone of the Commonwealth’s economic foundation, our public higher education institutions are under constant duress brought forth by the actions of the current federal government. Recognizing the current upheaval, along with stiffening cost pressures, the Committee’s budget dedicates resources to maintain support and protect access to our public higher education system, consisting of 15 community colleges, 12 state universities, and the 5 campuses of the University of Massachusetts, our flagship state university system, all of which are incredibly vital to meeting the education and employment needs of our citizens, and critical to the core of our state’s resilient economic ecosystem.

- \$844.7 million for the University of Massachusetts, our world-class public research university system.
- \$405.7 million for the fifteen community colleges, including \$2 million for mental and behavioral health supports.

- \$399.8 million for the nine state universities, including \$2 million for mental and behavioral health support.
- \$175.2 million for the Massachusetts State Scholarship Reserve.
- \$120 million for full funding of the Commonwealth’s universal community college program — free of tuition and fees.
- \$30 million for the higher education wraparound services, including \$16 million in General Fund resources, to support wraparound services for students attending community colleges campuses because of Free Community College and \$14 million in Fair Share resources to support wraparound services for students attending state universities.
- \$5 million for the Massachusetts Inclusive Postsecondary Education Initiative (MAIPSE) to support high school students with intellectual disabilities ages 18–22 with increased access to higher education opportunities, including \$3 million for MAIPSE planning grants and \$2 million for the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative Trust Fund to fulfill the 2022 public higher education access law throughout our public higher education system.

Free Community College. For the second year, the Committee’s budget dedicates necessary resources to fully fund the Commonwealth’s universal community college program — free of tuition and fees. Maintaining last year’s success in fulfilling the Senate President’s vision, the Committee’s budget invests \$120 million to continue support for this vital educational access and workforce development initiative in a regionally equitable manner across the Commonwealth and includes funding to support efforts to address workforce shortages and training access to those looking for opportunities as paramedics and EMTs.

Local and Regional Aid

Highlighting the Senate’s enduring and unyielding commitment to a strong and productive state-local partnership, the Committee’s budget once again provides significant resources to support all our cities and towns, further ensuring that we protect the needs of every region, city, and town, and leave no corner of our Commonwealth behind during this incredibly volatile time.

Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA). To sustain this productive partnership, the Committee’s budget provides certainty for cities and towns, funding UGGA at \$1.337 billion, an increase of \$28.7 million over FY 2025. With this level of funding, cities and towns will receive funds to maintain public services as they collectively manage municipal budgets and confront increased fiscal constraints at a time when they’re experiencing limited growth in municipal revenues.

Special Commission on UGGA. The Committee’s budget establishes a special commission to study the distribution method used to allocate UGGA to municipalities, evaluate the effectiveness and equity of the method and make recommendations to maximize the equity of the distribution for our communities.

Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs). As an essential public service, our RTAs connect cities, towns, and regions, providing a crucial connection for commuters, students, seniors, and people with disabilities. Doubling down on our commitment to regional equity, the Committee’s budget provides \$214 million to support our regional public transit system, including \$120 million from Fair Share funds, to maintain and continue expansions to regional bus service, sustain systemwide fare free transit service, and support RTA commuter operations.

Codifying RTA Fare Free. The Committee’s budget includes provisions codifying fare free RTA service, requiring all RTAs to eliminate passenger fares for fixed route and ADA required paratransit service.

PILOT. Supplementing conventional sources of local aid, the Committee’s budget increases resources for payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for state-owned land to impacted municipalities, providing \$54.5 million in additional revenue to help ease the budgets of cities and towns, ensuring they can fund essential local services.

Arts, Culture and Libraries. Across Massachusetts, our arts, culture, and libraries are institutions that remain core to the fabric of our communities during this incredibly turbulent and uncertain economic time. Ensuring that arts and culture programs are sustained locally, while maintaining access to a range of information, services, and programs that local libraries provide, the Committee’s budget includes \$52.4 million for libraries, including \$19 million for regional library local aid, \$20 million for municipal libraries and \$6.2 million for technology and automated resource networks, and \$26 million for the Massachusetts Cultural Council to support local creative initiatives.

Health & Human Services

Protecting access to high-quality health care and human services, the Committee’s budget makes a range of investments to further maintain our state’s safety net, protect core services, and ensure care, help, and support for our most vulnerable citizens is not disrupted during this incredibly uncertain and volatile time. Additionally, to address the Commonwealth’s ongoing health and human services workforce challenges, the Committee budget invests in direct-care providers across the continuum of care by increasing Chapter 257 service rates with \$207 million in FY 2026. Subsequently, recognizing the growing costs of the state’s Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program, the Committee’s budget extends the PCA task force created in FY 2025 to report on long-term sustainability including recommending cost-growth targets and requiring the Executive Office of Health Human Services to create a plan and timeline to implement the recommendations.

These important investments and reforms underscore the Committee’s strong commitment to ensuring accessible, sustainable, and quality health and human services for Massachusetts residents despite the current federal uncertainty.

MassHealth

The Committee's budget funds MassHealth, the state's Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), at a total of \$22.41 billion (\$8.48 billion net), a gross increase of \$2.34 billion (11.7%) over the FY 2025 funding level. Amid uncertainty in Washington, the Committee's budget maintains access to comprehensive health care coverage for over 2 million of our Commonwealth's residents. MassHealth covers more than 1 in 4 residents, nearly half of all children and 7 out of every 10 nursing facility residents.

- \$1.73 billion to support the Personal Care Attendant program and the historic collective bargaining agreement which raised the wage scale to \$25 an hour.
- \$582.1 million for nursing facility base Medicaid rates, including the continuation of an additional \$112 million in expanded base rates to maintain competitive wages in the Commonwealth's nursing facility workforce.
- \$102 million for nursing facility enhanced Medicaid rates to begin the implementation of last session's Long-Term Care Act, Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024.
- \$13.8 million to expand the state's primary care investment strategy through enhanced primary care sub-capitation rates.
- \$5.3 million to enhance access to outpatient behavioral health and addiction services.

Mental Health

Throughout the course of Senate President Spilka's tenure, the Senate has been a leader on expanding and protecting access to behavioral and mental health care. As we sustain our efforts to maintain the landmark success of the 2022 Mental Health ABC Act, the Committee's budget safeguards the delivery of mental health care and services in an accessible and equitable manner, protecting over \$1.3 billion in a wide range of investments in mental health services and prevention programs vital to the overall health and well-being of adults and children in need.

- \$690 million for Adult Support Services, including \$15.5 million to support jail diversion initiatives to divert individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders from the criminal justice system and connect them with appropriate treatment.
- \$386.4 million for DMH hospital and community-based services, including full operational funding for Pocasset Mental Health Center.
- \$131.6 million for children's mental health services, including:
 - Fully funding intensive residential treatment programs (IRTP) and clinically intensive residential treatment programs (CIRT),
 - Fully funding flexible support services,
 - \$4.5M to fully fund a program to provide assertive community treatment for youth (PACT-Y).
- \$29.7 million for Statewide Homeless Services, including for the maintenance of new safe-haven housing sites.

- \$25 million for emergency department diversion initiatives for children, adolescents, and adults.
- \$20 million for the Behavioral Health, Access, Outreach and Support Trust Fund to support a variety of behavioral health initiatives.
- \$5 million for workforce support for Community Health Centers, including loan forgiveness.

Public Health

Undoubtedly, the Senate’s commitment to supporting our state’s public health infrastructure and maintaining the quality of life for our residents continues to remain vital during this volatile time. To that end, the Committee’s budget makes significant investments to further protect public health programs and services that support wellness, combat illness and promote healthier communities across the Commonwealth, regardless of race, income or zip code.

- \$237.7 million for DPH hospital operations, including \$31 million to fund the operations of the Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children for FY 2026.
- \$179.6 million for the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS), including \$1.5 million in new funding to develop the state’s recovery coach workforce. This investment will support key initiatives from last session’s Substance Use Disorder and Recovery Coach Licensure Act – Chapter 285 of the Acts of 2024.
- \$79.9 million for domestic violence prevention services.
- \$39.3 million for early intervention services, ensuring supports are accessible and available to infants and young toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities.
- \$31.8 million for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.
- \$29.3 million for the State Lab and Disease Unit.
- \$26.3 million for family and adolescent reproductive health, including \$11.2 million for comprehensive family planning services and \$6.7 million to enhance federal Title X family planning funding.
- \$22.6 million for school-based health programming and services.
- \$14.3 million for suicide prevention and intervention, with an additional \$1 million for Samaritans Inc. and \$1.1 million for the Call-2-Talk suicide prevention hotline. This investment will fully fund 988, the 24/7 suicide and crisis lifeline.
- \$13.9 million for maternal and child health, including \$10.4 million for pediatric palliative care services for terminally ill children and language to ensure that children up to age 22 can continue to be served through the program.
- \$12.6 million for the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative, \$7.2 million for Youth At-Risk matching grants and \$4 million for youth violence prevention grants.
- \$9.2 million for grants to support local and regional boards of health.
- \$8.3 million for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) and pediatric SANE programs, providing safe and integrated services to protect children from abuse.
- \$2.7 million for the Childhood Lead Poisoning and Prevention Trust Fund.
- \$2 million for grants to maintain improvements in reproductive health access, infrastructure, and safety.

People with Disabilities

Protecting equal access to opportunities and dignity for people with disabilities is more critically important now than ever before as we face a federal government hellbent on dismantling the disability community. As such, the Committee's budget invests over \$3.2 billion into a diverse array of services and programs for people with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities, ensuring Massachusetts remains a more equitable, accessible, and inclusive place for people with disabilities in the face of ongoing uncertainty and mounting federal threats.

- \$2.02 billion for DDS Community Residential Services.
- \$362 million for State Operated Residential Services.
- \$287.4 million for the DDS Community Day and Work Program.
- \$124 million for DDS to support respite and family services.
- \$110.7 million for the Turning 22 program, which provides services to help young people with disabilities transition to adulthood. This level of funding will support the largest class in the history of the program.
- \$78 million for specialized services for adults with autism.
- \$47.2 million for DDS Transportation services to ensure individuals can access services despite ongoing staffing shortages.
- \$33.1 million for head injury treatment services.
- \$31.9 million for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind services.
- \$28.8 million for the MassAbility's vocational rehabilitation services.
- \$12.8 million for the Disabled Persons Protection Commission, including funding to support the caregiver abuse registry mandated by Nicky's Law.
- \$10.6 million for the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- \$8 million for services for children with autism including \$5.5 million for the Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver.
- \$8 million for the eleven independent living centers across the state providing networks of support to help individuals of all abilities access opportunities and build community.

Aging and Independence

Recognizing that we must continue to support our increasingly aging population despite existing federal uncertainty, the Committee's budget dedicates meaningful resources to reinforce and sustain support for several programs and services that focus on the health and wellness of our aging residents, further supporting their right to live independently and remain in their homes within the community.

- \$389.4 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.
- \$49.6 million for the Protective Services Program to prevent elder abuse and neglect.
- \$29.5 million for grants to local Councils on Aging to increase assistance per elder to \$16 from \$15 in FY 2025.
- \$12.7 million for Meals on Wheels and other nutrition programs for seniors.
- \$11.6 million for the Supportive Senior Housing Program to support 61 sites throughout the Commonwealth.

- \$6 million for the Executive Office of Aging and Independence.
- \$2.5 million for Geriatric Mental Health Services.

Protecting Children and Working Families

As we brace for future federal actions and move forward in the face of stiff economic headwinds, the Committee’s budget takes steps to provide direct assistance and maintain support for our most vulnerable citizens and working families. As such, this budget sustains our past progresses and protects investments in child assistance, food security, and economic security initiatives.

TAFDC/EAEDC Benefits. The Committee’s budget annualizes a 10 percent increase from FY 2025 for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC), which maintains crucial benefits for individuals and working families experiencing deep poverty. This annualization signals that the Senate will continue to uphold its commitment to support working families, amidst the ongoing uncertainty.

School Clothing Allowance. The Committee’s budget once again recognizes the challenges associated with raising a child in a high-cost state, especially for low-income families. In response, our budget provides funding to support a \$500 per child clothing allowance, ensuring vital economic assistance to families and every child seeking weather-appropriate clothing for the upcoming school year.

Food Security and Child Nutrition. The Committee’s budget dedicates over \$82 million in funding to support a variety of vitally important food security and child nutrition initiatives including \$42 million for Emergency Food Assistance to sustain our efforts in addressing food insecurity, and \$25.4 million for the Health Incentives Program (HIP) to ensure access to healthy food options and support restoration of a \$40 monthly benefit for SNAP households. In addition, our budget also invests \$15.5 million for the Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program. With this level of investment, the Senate’s commitment to addressing food insecurity challenges facing our residents, our children, and our families while maintaining support for efforts to protect access to basic food needs that households deserve.

- \$467 million for Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and \$209 million for Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) to provide the necessary support as caseloads increase, which continues the Deep Poverty increases implemented in the FY 2025 GAA.
- \$347.7 million for services for DCF-involved children and families.
- \$327.1 million for DCF Social Workers.
- \$143 million for DTA Caseworkers
- \$125.5 million for DCF family support and stabilization services for the purpose of preserving family unity and preventing the placement of children into foster families or congregate care facilities.
- \$42 million for Emergency Food Assistance to address food insecurity and the rising cost of food.

- \$35 million for Family Resource Centers to provide mental health resources and programming available to families
- \$25.4 million for the Healthy Incentives Program to restore a \$40/monthly stipend for access to healthy food options for SNAP households and ensuring support for locally farmed foods.
- \$20.6 million for the DTA Employment Services Program to help low-income people move toward economic independence.
- \$15.5 million for the Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program.
- \$11.1 million for DCF Lead Agencies to connect children with community-based services.
- \$5.5 million for Children Advocacy Centers to maintain supportive services available to children that have been neglected or sexually abused.
- \$5 million for the Secure Jobs Connect program, providing job placement resources and assistance for homeless individuals.
- \$3.9 million for the Office of the Child Advocate.
- \$3.8 million for the Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma, providing trauma-informed training to professionals and organizations that work with children.
- \$1.6 million for Project Bread.

Veterans' Services

In the face of challenging fiscal circumstances, the Senate continues to faithfully uphold its commitment to support the brave men and women who have served our nation honorably to protect our liberty and our way of life. Last year, the Legislature passed the historic HERO Act, which included comprehensive reforms that increased benefits and modernized services for veterans residing in Massachusetts. The Committee's budget recommendations for the Executive Office of Veterans' Services continue the Senate's faithful support for our veteran population.

This includes funding support for the core services under the Executive Office, including veteran outreach centers, shelters for homeless veterans, and veterans' benefits, as well continued support for the Chelsea and Holyoke Soldiers' Homes. These funds ensure that the Commonwealth will continue to lead the way in meeting the everyday needs of the men and women who have served our nation selflessly with honor.

- \$81.8 million for veterans' benefits provided by municipalities, including cash, fuel and rent assistance, employment training and placement and health benefits, as enacted in the HERO Act.
- \$46.5 million for Chelsea Soldiers' Home.
- \$31.1 million for Holyoke Soldiers' Home.
- \$12.4 million for the Executive Office of Veterans' Services Administration.
- \$9.7 million for Veterans' Outreach Centers providing peer counseling, employment skills building and job search assistance, substance use disorder counseling and other services.
- \$4 million for critical transitional and housing assistance for homeless veterans.

- \$2.5 million for veterans’ mental and behavioral health services through the Home Base program.
- \$728,882 for outreach and services targeted to women veterans.

Housing

As we shape a more fiscally sustainable path for the Commonwealth, increasing affordable housing opportunities and addressing housing challenges remain at the forefront of the Senate’s agenda. Last year, the Senate was proud to make a historic investment in housing production by enacting the Affordable Homes Act, which provides over \$5 billion in capital authorization to bolster affordable housing development and access across Massachusetts.

As such, the Committee’s budget further compliments last year’s successful efforts and invests over \$1.16 billion, dedicating resources for housing stability, residential assistance, emergency shelter services, and homelessness assistance programs, deploying a humane, responsible, and sustainable approach to supporting families and individuals in need with affordable, safe, and secure housing options.

- \$275 million for Emergency Assistance Family Shelters.
- \$253 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program to support the rising costs of maintaining existing leases.
- \$225 million for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition to maintain the maximum benefit of \$7,000 per year and prevent evictions and homelessness upstream.
- \$116 million for local housing authorities.
- \$110.7 million for assistance for homeless individual shelters.
- \$57.3 million for the HomeBASE program to support sustainable exits from shelter.
- \$27.7 million for Homeless Programs Administration to support continued exits from the Emergency Shelter System.
- \$19.5 million for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), providing rental assistance to people with disabilities.
- \$15.6 million for the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.
- \$10.5 million for assistance for unaccompanied homeless youth.
- \$10 million for sponsored-based supportive permanent housing to support 16 new housing units and case management services for vulnerable individuals.
- \$8.9 million for the Home and Healthy for Good re-housing and supportive services program, including funding to support homeless LGBTQ youth.
- \$6.5 million in continued support for Resident Service Coordinators to help residents maintain stable tenancies at local housing authorities, which are required to provide households with the services they need.

Residential Broker Fees. The Committee’s budget includes a provision that the Senate has consistently led on requiring that a broker’s fee charged in connection with a residential rental property be paid by the contracting agent, ensuring that buyers are not burdened with unexpected and extraordinary costs.

Supporting Economic and Workforce Development

The Senate recognizes that the economic and workforce development needs of every community, every region, and every employer are intrinsically connected to supporting the Commonwealth's long-term economic health and success. On the heels of last year's successful passage of the Mass Leads Act, which infused nearly \$4 billion into the Commonwealth's economy while making a host of wide-ranging policy changes to make Massachusetts more competitive, the Committee's budget maintains investments in programs that support workforce opportunities for residents, advance the competitiveness of our employers, and ensure economic and workforce development remain a core element as we shape a forward-looking future for our Commonwealth.

- \$15.2 million for summer jobs and work-readiness training for at-risk youth through the YouthWorks program.
- \$15 million, including \$7.5 million included in the Workforce Investment Trust Fund for investments to empower and support communities most disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system.
- \$9 million for Career Technical Institutes to increase our skilled worker population and provide residents with access to career technical training opportunities.
- \$8.3 million for One-Stop MassHire Career Centers.
- \$5 million for Small Business Technical Assistance grants.
- \$4.8 million for Innovation Pathways to encourage career workforce opportunities in high demand industries, with dollars available in Fair Share.
- \$2.5 million for the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative Innovation Institute.
- \$2.45 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.
- \$1.2 million for the Center for Advanced Manufacturing.
- \$1 million for Regional Economic Development Organizations.
- \$1 million for employment programs for young adults with disabilities.

Climate and Environment

The omnipresent threat of climate change is increasingly touching the lives of our communities and our residents, while protecting the environment, preserving natural resources, supporting our farmers, and advancing clean energy remain critically important priorities for the Senate. To that end, the Committee's budget invests \$470.3 million to deliver on our commitments to protect our prized environmental resources, ensure clean air and water, and take the necessary steps to tackle the looming threat of climate change.

- \$162.1 million for the Department of Conservation and Recreation to support the Commonwealth's state parks system

- \$85.3 million for the Department of Environmental Protection to steward the Commonwealth’s air, land, and waterways.
- \$54.9 million for the Department of Agricultural Resources to promote the Commonwealth’s food security and local food economy.
- \$28.6 million for the Department of Public Utilities to ensure proper pipeline and utility safety, including \$4 million for the new Energy Facilities Siting Division that will work to implement key provisions of climate legislation passed last year.
- \$8.2 million for the Department of Energy Resources to strengthen and implement clean energy policy in the Commonwealth, including \$1 million to support the implementation new climate legislation enacted last legislative session.
- \$5.3 million for the Division of Ecological Restoration to protect the Commonwealth’s rivers, wetlands, and watersheds.
- \$5.1 million for climate change adaptation and preparedness programs to enhance resilience and to address the mounting threat of climate change.
- \$5 million for a transfer to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to support investments in the Green Economy Workforce.
- \$2.8 million for culverts and small bridges technical assistance grants.

Public Safety and Judiciary – Keeping Massachusetts Communities Safe

Judiciary

The Senate has always defended and upheld fair and equal treatment under the law as a permanent bedrock of the Commonwealth, ensuring the right to due process remains rightly and staunchly protected in this moment of growing federal uncertainty. To that end, the Committee’s budget invests over \$1.38 billion in programs that value equal justice, prioritize fair and impartial treatment, and maintain integrity, while supporting individuals with the opportunities to re-enter society as law-abiding citizens contributing to the greater good of the Commonwealth.

- \$967.8 million for the Trial Court system.
- \$322.1 million for the Committee for Public Counsel Services.
- \$197.3 million for the Office of Probation.
- \$51 million for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation.
- \$3.3 million for the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee.
- \$3.3 million for Prisoners’ Legal Services.

Public Safety, Justice Reinvestment, and Recidivism Reduction

Reflective of the Senate’s ongoing commitment to greater accountability, equity, and transparency throughout law enforcement and the criminal justice system, the Committee’s budget allocates significant funds to support community programs and services across the entire criminal justice system and public safety apparatus that aim to keep Massachusetts safe and secure, including funding to sustain efforts to reduce recidivism, enhance gang violence prevention and intervention

initiatives, and support our first responders, police, and fire personnel who serve to protect our communities and our Commonwealth.

- \$745.2 million for Sheriff's offices across the state.
- \$558.4 million for the Department of State Police.
- \$181.3 million for District Attorney's offices across the state, including \$7.8 million for the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association.
- \$46.7 million for the Department of Fire Services, including \$2 million for the Student Awareness Fire Education program and \$2 million for the Critical Incident Stress Management program.
- \$24.4 million for the Municipal Police Training Committee.
- \$24.5 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.
- \$16.1 million for a grant program to provide community-based residential re-entry services.
- \$12.8 million for the Shannon Grants gang violence prevention and intervention program.
- \$9.5 million for the POST Commission and four other small police reform related commissions.
- \$7.0 million for the continuation of an emerging adult reentry program to help reduce recidivism among our younger resident populations.
- \$6.0 million for Municipal Public Safety and Emergency Staffing grants.
- \$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.
- \$5 million for the Non-Profit Security Grants, including \$300,000 to maintain and support security personnel at non-profits vulnerable to acts of violence.
- \$2.3 million to expand a transitional youth early intervention probation pilot to provide recidivism reduction programming to high-risk or high-need youth.
- \$1 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.
- \$1 million for a matching funds grant program to assist communities with 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.