



# ONE FAMILY INC. 2022 ADVOCACY AGENDA

## STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING AND ENDING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

# 1

Help families build income & assets to secure a home, and dismantle racist barriers to having a home

### → Provide one-on-one support focused on higher education achievement and career success

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Continued state budget funding for the One Family Scholars program
- Long-term policy objective: Establish a Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) line item in the state budget to provide coaching that promotes self-sufficiency and asset-building to anyone eligible for state or federal housing assistance or family shelter

#### Legislation:

- FY23 state budget request: \$430,000 for the One Family Scholars program to support program growth

### → Help families build assets

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Help low-income and moderate-income families build assets through policies such as:
  - Access to sustainable homeownership opportunities - especially for People of Color historically denied the opportunity to own a home,
  - Additional policies aimed at closing the racial wealth gap,
  - Enhancements to tax provisions such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and
  - Matched-savings programs

#### Legislation:

- EITC
  - S.1852, An Act providing a guaranteed minimum income to all Massachusetts families
  - S.1841/H.2871, An Act to increase family stabilization through the earned income tax credit
  - FY23 state budget request: \$1.5 million for VITA sites (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites) to help low-income and moderate-income families access the EITC
- Closing the racial homeownership and wealth gaps: S.887, Resolve establishing a task force to study racial disparities in home ownership and reducing the wealth gap
- Matched-savings
  - FY23 state budget request: \$300,000
  - S.662/H.1099, An Act relative to savings enabling prosperity
- Federal legislation: Resumption of monthly Child Tax Credit payments, as part of any reconciliation bill

## → End discrimination and disparities based on race, ethnicity, gender, & housing assistance status

### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Eliminate racial, ethnic and gender discrimination and disparities in rental housing and homeownership, college access and completion, and student debt and employment, and eliminate discrimination against people with housing vouchers
  - Support the Mass. Department of Education's Equity Agenda

### Legislation:

- S.2675, An act to end housing discrimination in the Commonwealth

## → Invest in public higher education:

### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Increase investment in public higher education, reversing the reduction in per-student investment that has occurred since 2001, and expand access to scholarships and college success supports

### Legislation:

- FY23 state budget request: \$161,993,300 for the Massachusetts State Scholarships account to support expansion of MassGrant Plus
- S.824/H.1325, An Act committing to higher education the resources to insure a strong and healthy public higher education system (CHERISH Act)

## → Support student-parents:

### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Eliminate homelessness, housing insecurity, and food insecurity among MA college students, including students raising a family, and make campuses more family-friendly for student-parents, who comprise one in five college students

### Legislation:

- S.2811/H.1368, An Act establishing the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Initiative

## → Eliminate the "Cliff Effect":

### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Eliminate the "Cliff Effect" – a sudden decrease or loss of public benefits due to a modest increase in income – because it discourages progress towards self-sufficiency

### Legislation:

- S.119/H.208, An Act concerning public assistance for working families and the creation of a pilot program to address the impacts of the cliff effect

## → Improve access to affordable childcare:

### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Ensure that all families, including families experiencing homelessness and housing instability and the families of student-parents, can access affordable and high-quality childcare, to support self-sufficiency and healthy child development

### Legislation:

- State legislation: S.362/H.605, An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth
- Federal legislation:
  - Reauthorize the CCAMPIS (Child Care Access Means Parents in School) program and increase funding
  - Increased investment in access to affordable childcare, as part of any reconciliation legislation

# 2

## Help families in economic distress keep their homes

### → Provide emergency rental assistance

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Help families remain in their homes by making sure emergency rental assistance is readily accessible to all households that need it

#### Legislation:

- FY23 state budget request: \$250 million for RAFT (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition); Set maximum benefit at \$10,000
- H.1385, An Act providing upstream homelessness prevention assistance to families, youth, and adults

### → Protect families from eviction

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Protect families from eviction through policies including free legal representation for any low-income or moderate-income family facing eviction

#### Legislation:

- S.874/H.1436, An Act promoting housing stability and homelessness prevention in Massachusetts (free legal representation/right to counsel in eviction cases)
- S.891/H.1434, An Act to prevent COVID-19 evictions and foreclosures and promote an equitable housing recovery ("The COVID-19 Housing Equity bill")

# 3

## Improve availability and affordability of homes

### → Invest in long-term housing supports

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Increase the availability of affordable homes, rental vouchers and other housing supports that provide housing stability while families work to increase their income and afford market-rate homes

#### Legislation:

- FY23 state budget requests: \$200 million for MVRP/Mass. Rental Voucher Program; \$92 million for public housing
- Federal legislation: Increased investment in housing vouchers and in creation of affordable homes, as part of any reconciliation bill

### → Reform affordable housing policies

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Ensure that all "affordable housing" is truly affordable for low-income and moderate-income families in the community where it's located

#### Legislation:

- H.301, An Act adjusting area median income based on zip code

# 4

## Help families experiencing homelessness get a home and achieve self-sufficiency

### → Increase investment in HomeBASE

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Help families exit homelessness through HomeBASE rental assistance

#### Legislation:

- FY23 budget request: \$57 million for HomeBASE; Allow at least 2 years of benefits

### → Ensure shelter placement in or near a family's home community

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Ensure families are placed into shelters within or near their home communities and provided transportation resources as needed, minimizing job loss and other barriers to self-sufficiency, and helping maintain access to health care

### → Provide self-sufficiency supports for families in shelter

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Build self-sufficiency supports into the Emergency Assistance shelter system that continue after shelter exit
- Provide families experiencing homelessness and housing instability information on employment and training resources including the MassHire Career Centers, and assist with transportation as needed to facilitate access to resources

# 5

## Additional homelessness prevention & self-sufficiency policies

### → End all forms of family homelessness

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- End family homelessness in all its forms, including families living “doubled-up”

### → Facilitate sealing eviction records

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Make it easier to seal eviction records when the eviction is not the result of violence or criminal behavior on the part of the defendant in the eviction case, so that an eviction court case isn't a long-term obstacle to renting an apartment

#### Legislation:

- S.921/H.1808, An Act promoting housing opportunity and mobility through eviction sealing

### → End withholding of college transcripts

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Require colleges to provide transcript copies to students upon request, without regard to students' outstanding bills

#### Legislation:

- S.2746/H.4552, An Act ensuring students' access to academic transcripts

### → Protect students against predatory practices by for-profit universities

#### Public policy supported by One Family:

- Establish a Student Tuition Recovery Fund to refund tuition and other costs to students harmed by for-profit schools that have closed, failed to provide promised services, or violated state law