



One Family fiscal year 2021 (FY21) state budget priorities

One Family State Budget Advocacy Priority	Budget line item or section	What's in the budget passed by the Massachusetts Legislature and signed by Governor Baker	Notes
The One Family Scholars program	7070-0065	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$330,000 (same funding level as in FY20, as requested by One Family)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The One Family Scholars program is supported through a combination of philanthropic contributions and state funds.</li> </ul>
RAFT (Residential Assistance to Families in Transition)	7004-9316	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$54.7 million – nearly double the FY20 funding level (in addition to federal funds previously designated for rental assistance by the Baker Administration)</li> <li>• \$10,000 maximum benefit amount until end of COVID-19 emergency (vs. pre-pandemic limit of \$4,000)</li> <li>• During the COVID-19 emergency HomeBASE benefits will not count towards the \$10,000 RAFT benefit cap, allowing households to combine and maximize benefits</li> <li>• Eliminates language that had limited the benefit amount to lesser of the arrearage amount or four times the monthly rent</li> <li>• Line item includes language intended to simplify the application and the application process – Effort to address an overly burdensome application/application process and to help eliminate a big backlog of unprocessed RAFT applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the Commonwealth's primary homelessness prevention tool for households with a rental or mortgage arrearage – helps families keep their home.</li> <li>• Families struggling to keep up with rent or mortgage payments can identify the regional agency covering their area and apply online by starting at this website: <a href="https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/raa.aspx">https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/raa.aspx</a></li> <li>• Several cities and towns in Massachusetts also operate local emergency housing assistance programs. Information available at <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1370AuhG6Ktms2tshEmFNN1cOqXQt-g5bcpAnPox7ZcA/edit#gid=0">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1370AuhG6Ktms2tshEmFNN1cOqXQt-g5bcpAnPox7ZcA/edit#gid=0</a></li> </ul>
Eviction protections	Outside sections 79 & 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires landlords seeking to initiate the eviction process during the COVID-19 emergency to provide a special version of the “notice to quit” that states “THIS NOTICE TO QUIT IS NOT AN EVICTION. YOU DO NOT NEED TO IMMEDIATELY LEAVE YOUR UNIT. YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A LEGAL PROCEEDING IN WHICH YOU CAN DEFEND AGAINST THE EVICTION. ONLY A COURT ORDER CAN FORCE YOU TO LEAVE YOUR UNIT.”</li> <li>• Requires landlords to send a computer file copy of the notice to quit to the Dept. of Housing and Community Development's parent agency, so that DHCD knows which households are at risk for eviction and help them access housing assistance</li> <li>• Pauses court eviction proceedings while an application for rental assistance is pending</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-income households facing eviction can seek legal assistance by starting at this website: <a href="https://evictionlegalhelp.org/find-legal-help/#toggle-id-1">https://evictionlegalhelp.org/find-legal-help/#toggle-id-1</a></li> </ul>
Housing Consumer Education Centers	7004-3036	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$4.75 million – Substantial (27%) increase vs. the FY20 funding level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The regionally-based Housing Consumer Education Centers administer RAFT and other forms of housing assistance.</li> <li>• The additional funding will allow the HCECs to hire additional staff to process rental assistance applications, which will hopefully reduce or eliminate a big backlog of unprocessed RAFT applications.</li> </ul>

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Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites	1201-0100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$820,000 – Large increase (over 4x the FY20 amount)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers at VITA sites help low and moderate-income taxpayers file their tax return free of charge, so that they can receive money in the form of the federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to help pay for basic needs.</li> <li>• VITA site locator: <a href="https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/">https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/</a></li> </ul>
MRVP (Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program)	7004-9024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$135 million – significant (16%) increase vs. the FY20 funding level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the state-funded counterpart to the federal “Section 8” housing voucher program.</li> <li>• Families who wish to apply for MRVP, a Section 8 voucher, or other forms of housing assistance can identify the regional agency serving their community at <a href="https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/">https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/</a></li> <li>• Covers rent exceeding 30-40% of household income.</li> <li>• Additional funding should allow the Mass. Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to increase the payment received by the landlord to a level closer to fair market rate.</li> <li>• Some of the additional funding could also be used to increase the number of vouchers issued, but in the past DHCD has been reluctant to issue new vouchers.</li> </ul>
Public housing	7004-9005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$80 million – Significant (11%) increase vs. the FY20 funding level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This funding is used by local public housing authorities to pay for operating expenses.</li> </ul>
HomeBASE	7004-0108	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$29 million – Significant (12%) increase vs. the FY20 funding level</li> <li>• During the COVID-19 emergency RAFT benefits will not count towards the \$10,000 HomeBASE benefits cap, allowing households to combine and maximize benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a program for homeless families with very low incomes (115% of Federal Poverty Guidelines or less) who are eligible for Emergency Assistance homeless shelter.</li> <li>• HomeBASE is typically used to help families living in a shelter to get housing.</li> <li>• In some cases HomeBASE is used for ‘diversion’ – to pay for a family’s rent so that they don’t have to enter a shelter.</li> <li>• Families living in shelter can access HomeBASE through their shelter.</li> <li>• Other families can access HomeBASE by calling (866) 584-0653</li> </ul>
Waiver of parent co-pay for subsidized child care	3000-1044	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$40 million (new item)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of access to affordable child care is a major impediment to college and career success for low and moderate-income parents. Waiving the parent co-pay will eliminate one barrier that limits access to affordable child care in Massachusetts.</li> <li>• Families with household income of 50% of State Median Income or less (or 85% of State Median Income or less if they or their child has a documented disability or special need), can apply for subsidized child care through Mass 211 by dialing 2-1-1.</li> </ul>
Increase in public assistance/TAFDC/welfare monthly payments	4403-2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% increase in monthly benefits beginning January 2021</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a modest but long-overdue increase in benefits received by some of the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable families – <i>the first increase in over 20 years.</i></li> </ul>