



Metro Housing|Boston

Fiscal Year 2022 Legislative & Budget Priorities – July 2022

BUDGET PRIORITIES

FY23 Operational Budget

The House and Senate Conference Committee have yet to report out a compromise budget, missing the June 30 deadline. As reported by State House News:

And when the branches gaveled out Thursday for a four-day weekend, they also stifled any lingering chance of getting a finalized state budget to Gov. Charlie Baker before fiscal 2023 started Friday, once again missing a July 1 deadline that's the same every year and comes after five months of budget hearings and deliberations.

Legislative leaders have rarely met a deadline they could not circumvent, postpone or ignore. The approaching July 31 end of formal business for the two-year session is different, though, and success or failure for most top proposals will hinge on what happens by that date.

Below are the highlights of Metro Housing's priorities that we and other advocates are requesting from the Conference Committee.

MASSACHUSETTS RENTAL VOUCHER PROGRAM (MRVP) (7004-9024)

- Adopt \$154 million appropriation in Senate budget
- Adopt Senate language to establish a payment standard, cap tenant rent share at 30% of household income and include utilities in tenant rent payment

RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES IN TRANSITION (RAFT) (7004-9316)

- Adopt \$150 million total appropriation from Senate budget
- Adopt Senate language restoring the RAFT benefit cap to \$10,000/household for FY23, allowing receipt of MassHealth or DTA assistance as eligibility for RAFT for households to demonstrate below 50% AMI income
- Adopt House language to expand categories of households eligible for RAFT with incomes above 50% area median income (AMI) but below 60% AMI
- Consider adding language that would not require additional documentation, like notice to quit, utility shut off notice, summary process summons for accessing RAFT

HOUSING CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTERS (7004-3036)

- Adopt \$9.7 million appropriation in House budget
- Adopt language change in House budget that adds \$1.5 million for housing stabilization services under the eviction diversion initiative who face significant barriers to sustaining housing payments



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

<i>Legislation Title & Number</i>	<i>Sponsors/Committee</i>	<i>Description</i>
Ensure right to counsel in eviction proceedings S 2671, H 1724	Sen. DiDomenico Reps. Rogers and Day Sent for study in June 2022, effectively killing the bill for this session	Legislation would provide low-income tenants facing eviction with a right to an attorney, free legal assistance and full representation. This legislation does not fund the counsel positions.
MRVP Codification H. 1428 S. 898	Rep. Madaro/Sen. Lovely Referred to Senate Ways and Means	This legislation would strengthen the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) that currently serves almost 9,000 households. These bills would codify MRVP into state statute and make program improvements including reducing the tenant payment share, increasing administrative fees, requiring inspections, and improving data collection.
An Act to affirmatively further fair housing H.1441/S.861	Rep. Rogers and Santiago, Sen. Boncore Referred to Housing Committee	In simple terms AFFH means use of housing dollars to break residential segregation patterns that force civil rights protected classes into low opportunity areas. While that does not automatically translate into more housing for Metro Housing participants, it does mean increasing the chances for our clients to move into neighborhoods of higher opportunity. HUD, DHCD and MCAD define these opportunities as access to safe housing, good public schools, equitable access to public transportation, clean(er) environment, sustainable wage jobs, public infrastructure (stable sidewalks, traffic signals, roads) etc.
An act to reduce the financial barriers to renting homes S. 884	Sen. Eldridge Referred to Senate Ways & Means	Under current law, if the property owner uses a broker, the burden to pay the broker falls on the tenant. This bill will shift that burden to the property owner if a broker is used.
Housing Service Coordinators H. 1410	Rep. Honan Referred to House Ways & Means	Legislation creates – but does not fund – a Housing Service Coordinators program to assist residents in subsidized housing to help mediate disputes between landlords and tenants and coordinate economic self-sufficiency services.

<p>Housing Production H.1448 & S.781</p>	<p>Reps. Vargas and Honan</p>	<p>Incorporates housing production goals for lowest income households; permits accessory dwelling units; requires that all municipalities permit multi-family dwellings as of right in transportation-oriented developments</p>
<p>Fair Housing H.428/S.208 and H.358</p>	<p>Reps. Madaro and Gonzalez, Sen. Gomez Rep. Elugardo</p>	<p>Based on Suffolk University research, raises penalties against brokers who violate fair housing laws; makes fair housing referrals to BBREBS (Board of Registration of Real Estate Brokers and Salespeople) stricter and easier; increases fair housing training requirements. Prohibits a property owner broker from charging tenants a broker fee, unless the tenant has hired the broker; clarifies that the only up-front costs are first month, last month, security deposit, and key fees.</p>
<p>An Act promoting housing stability and homelessness prevention H.1436/S.874</p>	<p>Reps. Day and Rogers. Sen. DiDomenico</p>	<p>Recognizing the housing emergency exacerbated by COVID-19 and the severe public health risks associated with displacement, this legislation would prevent evictions and promote housing stability during the pandemic and over the long-term. The bills provide legal representation for tenants and owner-occupants with low incomes in eviction proceedings</p>

