

Massachusetts Gov. Baker announces plan to invest \$2.8 Billion in federal COVID-19 funding to support economic recovery

The Baker-Polito Administration today announced a plan to immediately put to use approximately \$2.815 billion of the Commonwealth's direct federal aid to support key priorities including housing and homeownership, economic development and local downtowns, job training and workforce development, health care, and infrastructure. The Administration's plan aims to jump-start the Commonwealth's economic recovery by investing in urgent priorities, with a particular focus on supporting populations hardest-hit by COVID-19, such as lower-wage workers and communities of color.

The plan is being filed as an amendment to "An Act Relative to Transferring Federal Funds to the Federal COVID-19 Response Fund," which was on the Governor's desk and is being returned to the Legislature.

"Our proposal will immediately invest \$2.8 billion toward key priorities that will help jump-start our economic recovery, with a particular focus on those hit hardest by COVID-19, such as communities of color," said Governor Charlie Baker. "With over four million people fully vaccinated, Massachusetts is getting back to normal and back to work, but it is critical that we act now to make these critical investments to keep our recovery moving. Our Administration appreciates the collaboration of the Legislature and local government in responding to the pandemic, and we all must work together to distribute funding quickly and efficiently to ensure those

hard-hit by the virus receive relief as quickly as possible.”

“It is critically important that this \$2.8 billion be put to use immediately to address issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and protect the competitive advantages which have allowed Massachusetts to grow and thrive,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “Supporting priorities such as housing, economic development, job training, and infrastructure will help power the Commonwealth into the post-COVID world and ensure Massachusetts remains a great place to live, work, and raise family.”

The plan was announced today at an event held at the Mount Washington Homes in Haverhill, a project supported by MassHousing’s Commonwealth Builder program, a program that promotes homeownership in low- and moderate-income communities, particularly communities of color. The Administration’s plan includes \$200 million for Commonwealth Builder and similar programs that aim to close the wealth gap faced by communities of color by connecting first-time homebuyers with homeownership opportunities.

In total, the plan devotes \$1 billion to funding homeownership and housing priorities, a significant investment to help increase housing production and reduce barriers to owning a home as part of the ongoing COVID-19 recovery effort. These new housing resources build upon over \$1.6 billion in separate federal funding that has already been allocated to entities throughout the Commonwealth for housing purposes since the start of the pandemic.

The \$2.815 billion is part of a total of approximately \$5.3 billion in direct aid to the Commonwealth from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. These discretionary funds are intended to support urgent COVID-19 response efforts, replace lost revenue, support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses, and address unequal public health and economic challenges in Massachusetts cities and towns

throughout the pandemic. ARPA is also providing a total of \$3.4 billion in direct aid for municipalities throughout Massachusetts, as well as substantial funding for key priorities including a total of \$1.1 billion for transit. With a focus on increasing capacity for child care and supporting parents as they return to work, the Administration is also proposing to distribute approximately \$760 million in additional federal funding to child care providers in Massachusetts over the coming years, and looks forward to working with key stakeholders on the usages of these funds.

The remaining \$2.3 billion in direct federal aid would stay in the Federal COVID-19 Response Fund, and the Administration looks forward to working closely with the Legislature to allocate these resources in a fiscally responsible and compliant manner.

“These substantial resources build upon the separate federal resources the Commonwealth has received throughout the course of the pandemic and strengthen our efforts to promote economic growth and vitality, aid disproportionately impacted communities, and get people back to work,” said Secretary of Administration and Finance Michael J. Heffernan. “We look forward to working with the Massachusetts Legislature to ensure this federal funding is effectively used in fiscally responsible ways to support Massachusetts communities, while complying with all relevant federal guidance.”

In addition to this discretionary funding, an additional \$35.2 billion in other ARPA funding has been directed to the Commonwealth to support additional areas of recovery including direct aid to municipalities, transportation, and child care. This includes approximately \$3.4 billion in direct aid to cities, towns, and counties throughout Massachusetts. The plan therefore includes language allowing a local match for numerous programs to better leverage municipal support, optimize the usage of all available revenue, and maximize the impact of this one-time federal funding.

Highlights of the plan include:

Housing

- \$300 million to support expanded homeownership opportunities, focused on first-time homebuyers who are residents of disproportionately impacted municipalities;
- \$200 million to support housing production through MassHousing's Commonwealth Builder Program and similar efforts, which aim to help communities of color build wealth by promoting home ownership among residents of disproportionately impacted municipalities;
- \$200 million to fund rental housing production and provide increased housing options to workers and residents of disproportionately impacted municipalities;
- \$300 million to finance the statewide production of senior and veteran housing. These new housing options would contain a supportive services component, and would be combined with other resources including Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, rental payments, and, in the case of veteran housing, VA health care.

Economic Development

- \$100 million for Downtown Development to concentrate economic growth activities, resources, and investments within local neighborhood areas in municipalities disproportionately impacted by COVID;
- \$250 million to support investments and regional collaboration aimed at invigorating downtowns throughout Massachusetts. These resources would provide grant funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities for a range of projects;
- \$100 million to support cultural facilities and tourism assets throughout Massachusetts;

Workforce Development

- \$240 million to fund a suite of job training programs and address skills gaps, to better position residents who want to be hired into jobs that businesses need filled. Areas of

investment include:

- \$150 million for workforce credentials for entry and mid-level wages;
- \$35 million to fund English for Speakers of Other Languages programs and Adult Basic Education;
- \$25 million for work readiness and essential skills programs.

Health Care

- \$50 million for fiscally stressed hospitals in disproportionately impacted municipalities as these hospitals have supported their communities significantly during the pandemic despite interruptions to their revenue streams;
- \$175 million for addiction treatment and related behavioral health services.

Infrastructure Investment

- \$400 million to fund grants for water and sewer infrastructure;
- \$300 million to improve culverts, dams, and other environmental infrastructure;
- \$100 million to enhance and modernize state park facilities;
- \$100 million to close the digital divide and increase broadband internet access, helping to promote workforce development and economic growth.

**Bristol Community College's
COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic;
Giving away \$20,000 in**

scholarships. FREE classes

Bristol Community College will be hosting a family-focused community event on Tuesday, June 22, from 2 to 6 p.m. to keep your family safe by receiving the COVID-19 vaccine – Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine available for ages 12 and up.

The family-focused event will feature incentives for everyone receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, including a \$25 Stop & Shop gift card and entry into drawings for a laptop computer, \$100 Stop & Shop gift cards and \$20,000 in scholarships and free classes from Bristol Community College.

Join Gazelle from FUN107 from 2 to 4 p.m. Everyone who attends can enjoy free giveaways, food, ice cream and more!

Bristol's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic kicks off the U.S. Department of Education and White House's COVID-19 College Vaccination Challenge, in partnership with Stop and Shop Pharmacy, on Tuesday, June 22, 2021, from 2 to 6 p.m., in the Commonwealth College Center (G building), on the Bristol Fall River Campus, for community members and families with children, ages 12 and up, to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccination clinic will be accepting walk-ins. Preregistration is encouraged at www.bristolcc.edu/vaxup.

"We are proud to support the U.S. Department of Education and White House's COVID-19 College Vaccination Challenge," said Laura L. Douglas, Ph.D., President, Bristol Community College. "We encourage our community to join us for this family event. COVID-19 vaccinations will be available to all individuals, ages 12 and up, and family members of all ages are welcome to attend."

Who can get vaccinated at the COVID-19 vaccination clinic?

All individuals ages 12 and up, who have not yet been

vaccinated.

How does it work?

Walk-ins are welcome at Bristol's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic at the Bristol Fall River Campus, 777 Elsbree Street, Fall River, MA 02720. No appointments are necessary.

Preregistration is encouraged at www.bristolcc.edu/vaxup.

The Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine will be administered by Stop & Shop Pharmacy, at Bristol's Fall River Campus, free of charge. Please present a valid ID and health insurance card.

Second Vaccine: Individuals receiving the Pfizer COVID-19 at Bristol's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic on Tuesday, June 22, 2021, will also be scheduled to receive their second dose of the vaccine.

For more information or to preregister for Bristol Community College's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic on Tuesday, June 22, please visit www.bristolcc.edu/vaxup.

Bristol's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic, on June 22, is the latest effort of the college's participation in the U.S. Department of Education and White House's COVID-19 College Vaccination Challenge, supporting President Biden's goal of administering at least one vaccine shot to at least 70 percent of adult Americans and to get to 160 million Americans being fully vaccinated by July 4. Participating colleges and universities in the challenge have committed to taking three key actions to help get their campus communities vaccinated: engaging every student, faculty and staff member; organizing their college communities; and delivering vaccine access for all.

Bristol Community College is proud to join colleges and universities across the nation in committing to taking these three key actions to help get their campus communities vaccinated.

Vaccines available this weekend in New Bedford, with no appointment needed

COVID-19 vaccination clinics are planned for this weekend in New Bedford.

No appointment is needed at the walk-up clinics. All New Bedford residents receiving their first dose will receive a \$20 Dunkin' gift card.

* NAACP of Greater New Bedford, 95 Cedar Street – Saturday, June 19 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

* Fort Taber Park, South Rodney French Boulevard – Sunday, June 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The New Bedford Health Department's site at Andrea McCoy Recreation Center will be open on Monday, June 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for walk-in vaccinations.

Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) will provide financial assistance

for COVID-19-related funeral expenses

Did you pay funeral costs after losing someone due to COVID-19?

The FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency is accepting applications for the Funeral Assistance Program. The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) will provide financial assistance for COVID-19-related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020.

Applications for Funeral Assistance will be accepted beginning on Monday, April 12, 2021, through a dedicated call center as described below. COVID-19 Funeral Assistance will assist with expenses for funeral services and interment or cremation. At this time, there is no deadline to apply for COVID-19 Funeral Assistance.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for FEMA's funeral assistance benefit, you must meet these conditions:

- The death must have occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.
- The death certificate must indicate the death was attributed to COVID-19.
- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after January 20, 2020.
- There is no requirement for the deceased person to have been a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien.
- The program is open to all who qualify, regardless of their income.

To apply, call 844-684-6333 | TTY: 800-462-7585
9 A.M. – 9 P.M. Eastern Time, Mon-Fri

There is no deadline to apply.

See full details here.

Did you pay funeral costs after losing someone due to COVID-19?

We may be able to help with funeral assistance.



**Learn more at [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov)
or call (844) 684-6333
to get started.**

Acushnet Fire Chief: “We made it through COVID. Life is starting to bounce back!”

“A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF:

“At long last, the State of Emergency imposed by the Governor in March of last year is over! It has been a very long, stressful, sad journey. But while numbers regarding vaccine distribution and positive percentage rates will still be kicked around, the worst appears to be over.

“Acushnet, we made it through!

"We began offering Covid testing last fall. From weekly testing of teachers and staff at the school (which ends this week) to large-scale testing clinics in the cold to setting up the trailer over at the Council on Aging we end the state of emergency having conducted 10,041 tests.

"Over 10,000 nostrils swabbed!

"Let me be clear, we didn't test a total of 10,000 people, many people tested weekly for months. But if you would have asked any of us last fall if we would have swabbed that many nostrils, no one would have taken that bet. 10,000 is the population of Acushnet after all.

"Recently, we have tracked a sharp decline in the number of folks who visit the trailer on Fridays and Saturdays. The demand for testing has dropped considerably from the day before Thanksgiving when we performed over 900 rapid tests at the school. It is time for us to scale back a bit but also to offer an alternative.

"Beginning this week, we will no longer conduct testing on Fridays. This coming Saturday, June 19th Acushnet residents are welcome to participate at the Fairhaven testing clinic located at 150 Sconticut Neck Road (the Emergency Management building on the right a little after the 99 Restaurant) beginning at 10am. There is no cost to this testing.

"The following Saturday, June 26th from 9am–noon Acushnet and Fairhaven residents are welcome to be tested at the trailer behind the Council on Aging. That will begin the process of alternating locations moving forward.

"Life is starting to bounce back. Enjoy!"-Chief Kevin Gallagher.

Bring your family to Bristol Community College's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic; Giving away \$20,000 in scholarships and free classes

Bristol Community College will be hosting a family-focused community event on Tuesday, June 22, from 2 to 6 p.m. to keep your family safe by receiving the COVID-19 vaccine – Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine available for ages 12 and up.

The family-focused event will feature incentives for everyone receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, including a \$25 Stop & Shop gift card and entry into drawings for a laptop computer, \$100 Stop & Shop gift cards and \$20,000 in scholarships and free classes from Bristol Community College.

Join Gazelle from FUN107 from 2 to 4 p.m. Everyone who attends can enjoy free giveaways, food, ice cream and more!

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The vaccination clinic will be accepting walk-ins. Preregistration is encouraged at www.bristolcc.edu/VaxUp

beginning Saturday, June 12.

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Who can get vaccinated at the COVID-19 vaccination clinic?

All individuals ages 12 and up, who have not yet been vaccinated.

How does it work?

Walk-ins are welcome at Bristol's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic at the Bristol Fall River Campus, 777 Elsbree Street, Fall River, MA 02720. No appointments are necessary.

Preregistration is encouraged at www.bristolcc.edu/VaxUp beginning Saturday, June 12.

The Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine will be administered by Stop & Shop Pharmacy, at Bristol's Fall River Campus, free of charge. Please present a valid ID and health insurance card.

Second Vaccine: Individuals receiving the Pfizer COVID-19 at Bristol's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic on Tuesday, June 22, 2021, will also be scheduled to receive their second dose of the vaccine.

For more information or to preregister for Bristol Community College's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic on Tuesday, June 22, please visit www.bristolcc.edu/VaxUp.

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administering at least one vaccine shot to at least 70 percent of adult Americans and to get to 160 million Americans being fully vaccinated by July 4. Participating colleges and universities in the challenge have committed to taking three key actions to help get their campus communities vaccinated: engaging every student, faculty and staff member; organizing their college communities; and delivering vaccine access for all.

Bristol Community College is proud to join colleges and universities across the nation in committing to taking these three key actions to help get their campus communities vaccinated.

Vaccines available this week in New Bedford with no appointment needed

COVID-19 vaccination clinics are planned for this week and weekend in New Bedford.

No appointment is needed at the walk-up clinics. All New Bedford residents receiving their first dose will receive a \$20 Dunkin' gift card. Coast New England Federal Credit Union Parking Lot, 93 Union Street – Thursday, June 10 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- Brittany Global Technologies, 1357 East Rodney French Boulevard – Friday, June 11 from 12 noon to 4:00 p.m., operated by Southcoast Health.
- Price Rite (South End), 39 South Street (Corner of Route 18)

– Saturday, June 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., operated by CIC Health with the New Bedford Health Department. The first 20 New Bedford residents getting their first dose will receive a \$50 Price Rite gift card.

- Riverside Park, Belleville Avenue – Sunday, June 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., operated by CIC Health with the New Bedford Health Department.

The New Bedford Health Department's site at Andrea McCoy Recreation Center will be open on Monday, June 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for walk-in vaccinations.

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School holds “Hollywood Night” in lieu of prom

“On Friday, May 28th, an AMC Hollywood Night was held for the Class of 2021 instead of a prom.

Due to CDC guidelines and restrictions, a traditional prom would not be feasible due to the size of the senior class. Students voted on an AMC Hollywood Night rather than a prom.”- Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School.

All photo by Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School:



See the entire photo set [here](#).

Vaccines available this weekend at Seabra, Madeira Field, and Buttonwood Park, no appointment needed

New Bedford, Massachusetts—COVID-19 vaccination clinics are planned for this weekend in New Bedford.

No appointment is needed at the walk-up clinics. All New Bedford residents receiving their first dose will receive a

\$20 Dunkin' gift card. Pfizer vaccines will be given at the Seabra and Buttonwood Park locations. JNJ Vaccine will be given at the Southcoast / Madeira field location.

-Seabra Foods, 41 Rockdale Avenue –Saturday, June 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., operated by CIC Health with the New Bedford Health Department.

The first 20 New Bedford residents getting their first dose will receive a \$50 Seabra gift card.

-Madeira Field, 88 Tinkham Street –Saturday, June 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., operated by Southcoast Health.

-Buttonwood Park (near Lawler Branch Library) –Sunday, June 6 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., operated by CIC Health with the New Bedford Health Department. The New Bedford Health Department's site at Andrea McCoy Recreation Center will be open on Monday, June 7 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for walk-in vaccination

Massachusetts Department of Public Health offers summer safety guidance

With summer weather approaching, and as COVID-19 related restrictions on daily activities begin to lift, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) reminds residents to take recommended precautions to keep young children safe this summer.

Prevent Tick Bites

Ticks can make you sick when they bite. They are most commonly

found in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas. Ticks only attach when you come into direct contact with them – they cannot jump or fly. Follow these steps to help protect yourself from tick bites:

- Check yourself for ticks once a day – it's the single most important thing you can do.
- Use repellents that contain DEET on your exposed skin and those that contain permethrin on your clothes.
- When walking or hiking, stick to main pathways and the center of trails if you can. Brushing against tall grass and bushes will increase your exposure to ticks.

Weather permitting, wear long-sleeved, light-colored shirts and long pants tucked into socks. This will help keep ticks away from your skin and make it easier to spot ticks on your clothing.

Because dogs and horses are particularly susceptible, talk to your veterinarian about the best ways to protect your animals from tick-borne disease.

Prevent Mosquito Bites

The 2019 and 2020 mosquito seasons were active for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in Massachusetts. This mosquito-borne illness appears generally in 2- to 3-year cycles, traditionally peaking during August. The presence of EEE last year, a relatively mild winter, and historical patterns suggest an active season this year.

While the risk for human infection of EEE or West Nile Virus won't happen until later this summer, people have an important role to play in protecting themselves from these illnesses which can be very serious. To prepare for mosquito season:

- Drain standing water in and around your house or yard to prevent mosquito breeding.
- Repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of your home.

- Use a mosquito repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient according to the directions.
- Wear clothing to reduce exposed skin when weather permits.

For more information about preventing mosquito and tickborne illness, visit www.mass.gov/mosquitoesandticks.

Water and Pool Safety

Drowning is a leading cause of death among young children, both nationally and in Massachusetts, with backyard pools posing the highest risk for children under the age of 5. To help prevent water-related injury and drowning:

- Children should be supervised in and around water at all times.
- Whenever infants and toddlers are in or around water, including the bathtub, an adult should be within an arm's length at all times providing "touch supervision."
- Completely separate the house and play area of the yard from the pool area with a fence. Consider automatic door locks or alarms to prevent access.
- Remove floats, balls, and other toys from the pool after use so that children are not tempted to reach for them. After the children are done swimming, secure the pool so they cannot get back in.
- Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a phone near the pool.
- For children who cannot swim, use a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket. DPH, in cooperation with the USCG, has created a fit test video that can assist with proper fit testing of life jackets: <https://youtu.be/1I3VZf-NqPc>.
- Do not use toys such as "water wings" or "noodles" in place of life jackets. These are not designed to keep swimmers safe.

In public swimming areas:

- Select swimming sites that have lifeguards whenever possible, and swim only in designated swimming areas.

- Always swim with a buddy.
- Look for signage at beaches. DPH collects beach water quality data and notifies the public about bacteria levels to minimize swimming-associated illness and injury.

Window Safety

Falls are the leading cause of injury to children and falls from windows involving young children are especially serious. Window falls are preventable. Screens are not strong enough to protect children from falling out of windows. To prevent window falls, parents and caregivers should:

- Keep furniture – and anything a child can climb on – away from windows.
- Open windows from the top, not the bottom, when possible and lock all unopened doors and windows.
- Be sure children are always supervised.
- Install quick-release window guards which can be found in most hardware stores.

To learn more about childhood injury prevention, visit the DPH injury prevention and control program website.

Additional tips on preventing falls among children can be found on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fall prevention website.

Car Safety

The inside of a vehicle can be a very dangerous place for children left inside. In the summer months in New England, the temperature in a closed car can rise quickly and the vehicle can become a deadly place for a child, left even for just a moment.

To keep young children safe in and around cars:

- Never leave children alone in a parked vehicle, even when they are asleep or restrained, and even if the windows are

open.

- Always check inside the vehicle – front and back – before locking the door and walking away.
- If a child is missing, check your vehicle first, including the trunk.
- Do things to remind yourself that a child is in the vehicle, such as placing your purse or briefcase in the back seat so you will check the back seat when you leave the vehicle.
- Always lock your car and keep the keys out of children's reach.
- Ensure adequate supervision when children are playing in areas near parked motor vehicles.

If you see a child alone in a hot vehicle, call the police. If they are in distress due to heat, get them out as quickly as possible and call 911 immediately.

Remember, all children ages 12 and under should ride in the back seat, properly restrained, even during quick errand trips. Infants and toddlers should remain in rear-facing car seats until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat manufacturer. At a minimum, children should ride rear-facing until they are at least one year old and weigh at least 20 pounds. You can find more information on child passenger safety on the DPH website.