

# Massachusetts Gov. Healey's \$389 million supplemental budget includes shelters, child care, food security

*New law provides needed funding for shelters, food security and child care, while also extending several COVID-era programs and policies.*

“Governor Maura T. Healey signed a \$388.7 million supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2023 that provides critical and timely resources to the state’s family shelter system to meet surging demand, ensures that Massachusetts can continue to offer all children free school meals through the end of the academic year.

The budget also allocates \$68 million to continue Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grants to stabilize the state’s child care providers through the end of the fiscal year, and \$130 million to create an offramp from the federal extra Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a benefit that the federal government began providing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the direct spending, the bill signed by the Governor authorizes more than \$740 million in borrowing to prevent interruptions to core state capital programs that support housing and economic development across the Commonwealth, and to remain competitive in the pursuit of federal grants. This includes \$400 million for MassWorks, \$104 million for the Clean Water Trust and \$125 million for matching grants to be competitive for federal dollars available through the CHIPS and Science Act.

“I’m proud that the first major bill signed into law by our

administration dedicates crucial resources to help Massachusetts families access safe and secure housing, keep food on the table, and pay for child care. Additionally, this bill supports our health care workforce, crucial housing and economic development programs like MassWorks, and our efforts to compete for federal funding,” said Governor Healey. “We’re grateful to Senate President Spilka, Speaker Mariano, the Legislature and advocates for their swift work and partnership to meet these urgent needs.”

“This supplemental budget injects urgently needed funds into programs that support Massachusetts families and drive housing and economic development across our state. It also takes important steps to educate the public on their options around reproductive health care, extends accessibility and flexibility for public meetings, protects access to clean water and bolsters broadband infrastructure,” said Lieutenant Governor Driscoll. “We’re proud to have strong partners in this work and look forward to our continued efforts to move Massachusetts forward.”

The supplemental budget passed by the Legislature and signed today combines many of the priorities Governor Healey outlined in three separate bills filed over her first few months in office.

With the shelter system currently at capacity, this timely appropriation will inject \$85 million into the state’s Emergency Assistance Family Shelters to meet the demand of a growing number of families, immigrants and refugees facing homelessness. This includes investments in housing infrastructure and the shelter provider workforce that helps to stabilize and rehouse families. At least \$21.9 million will also be available to support schools through the end of the 2023-2024 school year to support communities experiencing a large influx of families with school-aged children due to state shelter placements.

The \$130 million for SNAP will bridge the abrupt end of the enhanced federal COVID benefit for more than 630,000 Massachusetts families by providing a supplemental SNAP allotment to recipients equal to 40 percent of the previous federal benefit for three months. Another \$2 million would be dedicated to reimbursing certain victims of SNAP benefit theft, also known as “skimming.”

**Additional investments include:**

- \$15.7 million for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition
- \$1.25 million for family and reproductive health services, including a \$1 million public awareness campaign focused on the dangers of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers
- \$2 million to support the 114th National NAACP Conference in Boston

The bill signed into law today also addresses many of the most immediate capital needs identified by the Healey-Driscoll administration in January, including the MassWorks program, which is the largest and most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur community development and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.

It authorizes funding for the Clean Water Trust to finance communities’ efforts to improve water infrastructure and improve local water quality; \$34 million to help revitalize underutilized properties; and \$9.3 million for broadband infrastructure, particularly in central and western Massachusetts communities.

The matching grant funding in the budget, including \$200 million for the CHIPS and Science Act and \$30 million to allow the Commonwealth to compete for community broadband dollars

funded at the federal level through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, will ensure that Massachusetts can compete for every dollar available at the federal level.

“I am grateful to our partners in the Legislature, and my colleagues in the Cabinet, for working together expeditiously to get this critical budget to Governor Healey for her signature in a timely fashion,” Secretary for Administration and Finance Matthew J. Gorzkowicz said. “This funding will not only ensure that our shelters and other food security safety net programs can meet the demand of vulnerable residents, but also puts Massachusetts in a strong position to compete for federal dollars that will benefit communities across the Commonwealth.”

With the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency on the horizon in May, this new law will extend three Public Health Orders issued in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic to temporarily extend staffing flexibilities for advanced life support ambulances and freestanding dialysis providers, and continue flexibilities for the administration of prescription medications to clients of state agencies who reside in community settings.

It also extends for two years through March 31, 2025 allowances for public bodies, including Town Meetings, to meet remotely and for one year the expedited permitting of outdoor dining and the sale of beer, wine and cocktails to go.

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### **Statements of Support:**

#### **Mark Dejoie, CEO, Centerboard**

“We are thankful to the Healey-Driscoll Administration for the substantial funding for shelter expansion. Many Commonwealth families are struggling right now, and this will help provide them with more resources and a safe place to go. We thank the

Healey-Driscoll Administration for increasing the access to these resources and looking out for our families.”

**Jennifer Lemmerman, Vice President of Public Policy, Project Bread**

“As the statewide anti-hunger organization focused on expanding access to programs like school meals and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Project Bread celebrates today’s signing of a supplemental budget that will ensure that all students, including the 80,000 additional students now eating lunch every day across our state, will continue to have access to free school meals for the remainder of the school year. We also share in the relief that families across the state will feel as a glidepath is provided through this budget to ease the disruption caused by the abrupt termination of federal pandemic SNAP benefits. At Project Bread, we work with individuals every day who are struggling to meet the most basic of human needs – food. Today, over 20% of families in Massachusetts – and over 30% of Black and Latino families – are food insecure. SNAP and school meals have been effective in not only alleviating, but also preventing hunger in Massachusetts. We applaud Governor Healey for leading on solutions that can meet the scale of the need and provide these families with comprehensive and sustainable solutions.”

**Catherine D’Amato, President and CEO, The Greater Boston Food Bank**

“At a time when the cost of living, food and utilities are at an all-time high, food insecurity and demand at our nearly 600 partners across Eastern Massachusetts are rising and every measure to soften the blow to our communities will help. We are grateful to the Governor’s commitment to ending hunger in our Commonwealth. Providing a glide path for SNAP recipients losing critical nutrition benefits and ensuring school meals for all continues in this school year will help to offset the

overall impact of individuals and households who are struggling with food access.”

**Georgia Katsoulomitis, Executive Director, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute**

“We are grateful to the Healey-Driscoll Administration for leading the nation in providing state dollars to mitigate the harm of federal cuts to food assistance. This will help 1 in 7 Massachusetts residents who struggle to put food on the table. We are proud to partner with the Administration in tackling hunger and poverty in the Commonwealth.”

**Geoffrey C. Beckwith, Executive Director & CEO, Massachusetts Municipal Association**

“On behalf of cities and towns across the state, we applaud Governor Healey and the Massachusetts Legislature for enacting this outstanding bill. This measure invests \$400 million into local economies through the MassWorks grant program, injects \$104 million in the Clean Water Trust to improve local water systems throughout the state, and extends the extremely effective option to conduct public meetings virtually, making it easier for the public to access and see local government in action. This bill supports cities and towns at every level and we are grateful to the Healey-Driscoll Administration and all our lawmakers.” “