

2013 Legislative Session and Budget Overview

The Governor's following housing investments were included in the FY 14-15 biennial budget:

- **Affordable Housing.** Authorizes \$136 million in capital funding over the biennium (\$68 million in each year) to develop or rehabilitate affordable housing across the state and increase the affordable housing options for workers, young professionals, and low-income families.
- **Public Housing Revitalization.** Authorizes \$60 million in bonding (\$30 million in each year) as years two and three of a ten year commitment of \$300 million to preserve and upgrade this housing, bringing deteriorated and vacant units back on line. Funding is supported with an annualized \$3 million for 300 new RAPs to ensure an adequate ongoing revenue stream to prevent future deterioration.
- **Supportive Housing.** Authorizes \$20 million to develop 100 new units of supportive housing with an annualized \$1 million for rental assistance subsidies and \$1 million for services. Supportive housing is a successful and cost-effective approach to addressing homelessness by creating permanent affordable housing with services.
- **Incentive Housing Zones.** Authorizes \$1 million for financial incentive payments to help municipalities plan for and create mixed-income housing that is critical to attracting and retaining young professionals, working families, retirees, and people in public service jobs.
- **Transfer of programs into the new Department of Housing.** Implements the creation of the new Department of Housing, which was established in legislation last year, by statutorily transferring programs and responsibilities from DECD, DSS, DMHAS, and OPM. (General Fund: \$103.2 million in FY 14 and \$108.5 million in FY 15)
- **Rapid Re-Housing.** The Governor's proposal added \$500,000 (\$250,000 each year) for housing relocation and stabilization services and short-term financial assistance to help families that are homeless move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability. The General Assembly included funding in the final FY 14-15 budget, but repurposed it exclusively for rapid re-housing activities and homeless prevention in Southeastern Connecticut, through the Norwich/New London Continuum of Care.

One additional housing initiative was funded in the final FY 14-15 budget:

- **DCF Family Reunification RAPS.** Transfers \$1 million (\$500,000 each year) from DCF to the new Department of Housing to support 50 new RAPs for DCF families seeking to be reunified with their children in the care and custody of DCF.

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Governor's Bills:

SB 845 (PA 13-65): *AA Increasing Access to Affordable Housing* – Signed by the Governor 6/3/13

Allows CHFA to continue its significant contributions to the creation of affordable housing opportunities for both families and individuals in the state by increasing, from \$1.5 billion to \$2.25 billion, the aggregate amount of mortgage purchases and loans it can make that are not insured or guaranteed by certain state and federal entities.

HB 6705 (PA 13-234): *AA Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Housing, Human Services, and Public Health* – Signed by the Governor 6/19/13

Implements the budget by transferring housing programs and responsibilities from other agencies to the new Department of Housing. The following general fund programs are transferred to the Department of Housing:

- *DECD*: Elderly Rental Registry and Counselors; Fair Housing; Subsidized Assisted Living Demonstration; Congregate Facilities Operation Costs; Housing Assistance and Counseling Program; and Elderly Congregate Rent Subsidy
- *DSS*: Emergency Shelter for Homeless; Residences for Person with AIDS; Transitional Living; Rental Assistance Program; Special Projects; Housing / Mediation Services; Rent Bank; and Security Deposit Program
- *OPM*: Tax Relief for Elderly Renters - Renters' Rebate Program and Main Street Investment Fund

HB 6355 (PA 13-136): *AAC Homeowner Protection Rights* – Signed by the Governor 6/18/13

Increases protections for homeowners facing mortgage delinquency or who are in foreclosure by refining the mediation process and making it more efficient for borrowers and lenders. Requires all parties participating in the Foreclosure Mediation Program to mediate in good faith and establishes a reporting requirement to track the actions and behaviors of the parties during this process - failure to meet the standards will subject banks to financial and legal sanctions. Creates a fast track foreclosure process to let the banks take ownership and sell properties when a homeowner has abandoned the property.

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Other Housing Bills:

HB 6574 (SA 13-3): *AA Establishing a Task Force to Consider Impediments to Fair Housing Choice* – Signed by the Governor 5/28/2013

Creates a task force to consider legislative solutions to address impediments to fair housing choice. The task force will be required to submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Planning and Development and Housing Committees by February 5, 2014.

SB 114 (PA 13-35): *AA Prohibiting Residential Landlords from Requiring Tenants to Pay Rent by Electronic Funds Transfer* – Signed by the Governor 5/28/13

For residential rental agreements or leases executed on or after 10/1/13, landlords are prohibited from requiring that rent or security deposits be paid by electronic funds transfer

HB 5970 (PA 13- 36): *AAC the Power of Municipal Fair Rent Commissions* – Signed by the Governor 5/28/13

Clarifies that municipal rent commissions are authorized to investigate and address complaints about any fee or charge, in addition to rent, that a landlord imposes or seeks to impose on a tenant

HB 6482 (PA 13-142): *AAC Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth* – Signed by the Governor 6/21/2013

Allows certified homeless youth (15 to 17 years old) and emancipated minors to access or receive their birth certificates and set conditions for how youth are certified as homeless for this purpose. Prior law did not allow minors to access or receive their birth certificates (only parents, guardians, or certain other family members could obtain them for the youth).

SB 896 (PA 13-251): *AAC a Homeless Person's Bill of Rights* – Signed by the Governor 7/11/13

Establishes a bill of rights for the state's homeless individuals stating that each homeless person has the right to: (1) move freely in public spaces (e. g. , parks, buildings, sidewalks, and public transportation) in the same manner as other people and without harassment or intimidation by law enforcement officers; (2) have equal employment opportunities; (3) receive emergency medical care; (4) register to vote and vote; (5) have their personal information protected and a reasonable expectation of privacy in their personal property; and (6) receive equal treatment by state and municipal agencies.