



DIGNITY ALLIANCE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY' 24 GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

LINE ITEMS

Dignity Alliance recommends that the items that support programs for older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers, NOT BE DECREASED. In some instances, we have recommended necessary increases in certain items and have suggested new wording in several items to increase transparency and accountability.

Dignity Alliance also recommends the establishment and funding of a Commission on the Status of Older Adults – a fast growing segment of our population.

Commission on the Status of Older Adults

Budgetary Direct Appropriations

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF OLDER ADULTS

0800-0005 For the operation of the commission on the social status of older adults

150,00

Dignity Alliance recommends the establishment of a commission on older adults since the Massachusetts population of older adults will grow by 2030 to twenty percent of the Commonwealth's population. An important role for the commission would be to identify any deficiencies in current programs and services for older adults, identify what may be needed to serve older adults in 2030 and beyond, and identify what policies and resources will be needed to attain what's needed. The new line item for the commission, that would be established in a proposed Outside

Section, is the same amount as proposed for the commissions on Asian and pacific Islanders, Latino and Latinas, LGBT, Black Men and Boys, Older Black Men, etc/

Massachusetts Office on Disability Budgetary Direct Appropriations 1,096,312

MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE ON DISABILITY

1107-2400 For the operation of the office on disability 1,096,312

Trust Spending 46,345

1107-2490 DISABILITY AND BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

46,345

NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

4000-0020 For the nursing and allied health workforce development initiative, to develop and support strategies that increase the number of public higher education faculty members and students who participate in programs that support careers in fields related to nursing and allied health workforce; provided, that the amount appropriated in this item shall be transferred to the Massachusetts Nursing and Allied Health Workforce Development Trust Fund established under section 33 of chapter 305 of the acts of 2008; provided further, that funds shall be transferred to the fund according to an allotment schedule adopted by the executive office for administration and finance; and provided further, that the secretary of the executive office of health and human services shall submit a report to the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on public health, the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on health care finance, the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on higher education, and the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and means not later than March 1, 2024 detailing the expenditures out of the Massachusetts Nursing and Allied Health Workforce Development Trust Fund and both short and long term strategies to increase the number of public and private higher education faculty and students who participate in programs that support careers in fields related to nursing and allied health, **including programs offered in community colleges and vocational/technical high schools, and provided further that funds are available to support certification of certified**

nurse assistants in languages common to racial and ethnic groups in the Commonwealth. 1,000,000

Dignity Alliance recommends language specifically for Certified Nurse Assistants in nursing homes available in multiple languages such as Spanish, Chinese, Haitian, etc.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT COUNCIL

4000-0050 For the operation of the personal care attendant quality home care workforce council established under section 71 of chapter 118E of the General Laws, **provided further that the council shall implement an outreach effort to attract personal care attendants for underserved populations.**

Dignity Alliance notes that there is a growing need for personal care attendants to serve clients from underserved populations and to provide employment opportunities for those underserved populations.

MASSHEALTH SENIOR CARE

4000-0601 For health care services provided to MassHealth members who are seniors including those provided through the Medicare Savings Program, and for the operation of the MassHealth senior care options program under section 9D of chapter 118E of the General Laws; provided, that funds may be expended from this item for health care services provided to recipients in prior fiscal years; provided further, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, for the purposes of an individual's eligibility for the Senior Care Options program, an individual is deemed to reach the age of 65 on the first day of the month in which his or her 65th birthday occurs; provided further, that funds shall be expended from this item to maintain a personal needs allowance of **\$72.80** per month for individuals residing in nursing and rest homes who are eligible for MassHealth, emergency aid to the elderly, the disabled and children program or supplemental security income; provided further, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, for any nursing home facility or non-acute chronic disease hospital that provides kosher food to its residents, the executive office of health and human services, in consultation with the center for health information and analysis and in recognition of the special innovative program status granted by the executive office of health and human services, shall continue to make the standard payment rates to reflect the high dietary costs incurred in providing kosher food; **provided, further**

than an audit shall be conducted to ensure that any higher dietary costs are consistent with the higher cost of kosher foods in the community; provided further, that the secretary of health and human services shall report by January 29, 2024 to the house and senate committees on ways and means on the implementation of the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) expanded program eligibility for seniors that was effective January 1, 2020; provided further, that said report shall include: (i) the number of members who are seniors whose household incomes, as determined by the executive office, exceed **138 per cent** of the federal poverty level that are enrolled in Medicare Savings Programs during each month of the prior fiscal year; (ii) total enrollment in the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program, Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) Program and Qualifying Individual (QI) Program; (iii) total annual spending on Medicare premiums and cost-sharing for such members; and (iv) total annual transfers from the prescription advantage program in line item 9110-1455 and Health Safety Net Trust Fund to fund the MSP expanded program eligibility; and provided further, that nursing facility rates effective October 1, 2023 under section 13D of chapter 118E of the General Laws may be developed using the costs of calendar year 2019, or any subsequent year that the secretary of health and human services may select in the secretary's discretion 4,486,764,509

Dignity Alliance recommends that given rising prices in nearly every field, there is a need to either raise the personal needs allowance to at least \$125 per month, or to insert language that allows for adjustment of this amount to keep pace with inflation.

Dignity Alliance further recommends that since long-term care providers frequently purchase goods and services from related third-party vendors without regard to competitive pricing, it is important to ensure that the Commonwealth is paying a fair price for food.

MASSHEALTH NURSING HOME SUPPLEMENTAL RATES

4000-0641 For nursing facility Medicaid rates; provided, that in fiscal year 2024 the executive office of health and human services, in consultation with the center for health information and analysis, shall establish rates that cumulatively total \$342,100,000 more than the annual payment rates established under the rates in effect as of June 30, 2002; and provided further, that the payments made under this item shall be allocated in an amount sufficient to implement section 622 of chapter

151 of the acts of 1996; and provided, further that nursing homes that receive supplemental rates shall submit consolidated financial reports, including reports of related third-party vendors such as rental agreements and the purchase of goods and services including certification that such cost must not exceed the amount a prudent and cost -conscious buyer would pay for comparable services, facilities, or supplies that could be purchased elsewhere.

Dignity Alliance recommends that since long-term care providers frequently purchase goods and services from related third-party vendors without regard to competitive pricing, it is important to ensure any supplemental Medicaid rates are based on the true cost of serving nursing home residents supported, in whole or in part, by Medicaid.

EMERGENCY AID TO THE ELDERLY DISABLED AND CHILDREN

4408-1000 For a program of cash assistance to certain residents of the commonwealth, entitled emergency aid to the elderly, disabled, and children found by the department to be eligible for the aid under the chapter 117A of the General Laws 194,155,514 and regulations promulgated by the department and subject to the limitations of appropriations for such purposes; provided, that the recipient shall not be subject to sponsor income deeming or related restrictions; provided further, that in implementing the program for fiscal year 2024, the department shall include all eligibility categories permitted in this item at or above the payment standard in effect for the former general relief program in fiscal year 1991; provided further, that any person experiencing homelessness, who (a) has no established place of abode, or lives in a temporary emergency shelter, and (b) is otherwise eligible under the provisions of this item and said chapter 117A shall receive the same payment rate as recipients who incur shelter costs including, but not limited to, rent or a mortgage; provided further, that the department may provide benefits to persons age 65 or older who have applied for benefits under chapter 118A of the General Laws, to persons suffering from a medically determinable impairment or combination of impairments which is expected to last for a period as determined by department regulations and which substantially reduces or eliminates such individuals' capacity to support themselves and which has been verified by a competent authority, to certain persons caring for a disabled person, to otherwise eligible participants in the vocational rehabilitation program of the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission and to dependent children who are ineligible for benefits under both chapter 118 of the General Laws and the separate

program created by section 210 of chapter 43 of the acts of 1997 and parents or other caretakers of dependent children who are ineligible under said chapter 118 and under said separate program; provided further, that no person incarcerated in a correctional institution shall be eligible for benefits under the program; provided further, that no funds shall be expended from this item for the payment of expenses associated with any medical review team, other disability screening process or costs associated with verifying disability for this program; provided further, that in promulgating, amending or rescinding its regulations with respect to eligibility or benefits, including the payment standard, medical benefits and any other benefits under this program, the department shall take into account the amounts available to it for expenditure by this item so as not to exceed the amount appropriated in this item; and provided further, that reimbursements collected for the Social Security Administration on behalf of former clients of the emergency aid to the elderly, disabled and children program or unprocessed payments from the program that are returned to the department shall be credited to the General Fund.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Budgetary Direct Appropriations

88,915,561

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS

4120-0200 For independent living centers 10,000,000

Dignity Alliance recommends that this appropriation be increased from \$8 million to \$10 million to meet the growing needs.

MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION

4120-1000 For the operation of the commission 429,907

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

4120-2000 For vocational rehabilitation services operated in cooperation with the federal government; provided, that funds from the federal vocational rehabilitation grant or state appropriations shall not be deducted for pensions, group health or life insurance or any other such indirect costs of federally reimbursed state employees

29,792,086

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

4120-3000 For employment assistance services 2,480,407

INDEPENDENT LIVING ASSISTANCE

4120-4000 For community-based independent living assistance services for people with multiple disabilities 13,325,279

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING REGISTRY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

4120-4001 For the housing registry for people with disabilities 150,000

TURNING 22 PROGRAM AND SERVICES

4120-4010 For the turning 22 program of the commission 347,454

HOME CARE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

4120-5000 For home care services 5,883,14

DIVISION OF HEALTH CARE QUALITY AND IMPROVEMENT 4510-0710

For the operation of the division of health care quality and improvement

15,345,493

Dignity Alliance recommends that the Division report on oversight of nursing homes by adding language at the end of the line item such as, “provided, however, that the division shall report annually on the number of nursing home complaints received, the number of complaints resolved, the amount of penalties imposed, and the reasons for unaddressed complaints, said report to be provided to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the joint committee on elder affairs, the joint committee on health care financing, and the house and senate committees on ways and means.

Department of Developmental Services Budgetary Direct Appropriations

2,791,833,658

DDS SERVICE COORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATION

5911-1003 For service coordination and administration of the department of developmental services; provided, that the commissioner of developmental services may transfer funds between items 5920-2025, 5920-2000, and 5911-2000;

and provided further, that the commissioner shall notify the house and senate committees on ways and means 15 days in advance of any such transfer

91,022,293

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

5911-2000 For transportation costs associated with community-based day and work programs; provided, that the department shall provide transportation on the basis of priority of need as determined by the department

3,535,611

COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

5920-2000 For vendor-operated, community-based, residential adult services, including intensive individual supports; provided, that the commissioner of the department of developmental services may transfer funds from this item to item 5920-2010, as necessary, pursuant to an allocation plan, which shall detail, by object class, the distribution of the funds to be transferred and which the commissioner shall file with the house and senate committees on ways and means 15 days before the transfer; and provided further, that not more than \$5,000,000 shall be transferred from this item in fiscal year 2024

1,715,777,146

SUPPORTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR INDIVIDUALS

5920-2003 For supportive technology and remote services for individuals served by the department

2,750,000

STATE OPERATED RESIDENTIAL SERVICES 5

920-2010 For state-operated, community-based, residential services for adults, including community-based health services

317,747,049

COMMUNITY DAY AND WORK PROGRAMS

5920-2025 For community-based day and work programs and associated transportation costs for adults; provided, that the department shall provide transportation on the basis of priority of need as determined by the department

240,080,258

RESPITE FAMILY SUPPORTS

5920-3000 For respite services and intensive family supports 98,053,790

AUTISM DIVISION

5920-3010 For support services for families of children with autism through the autism division 10,940,691

AUTISM OMNIBUS

5920-3020 For the implementation of chapter 226 of the acts of 2014, including services and supports for individuals with a developmental disability attributable to autism spectrum disorder, Smith-Magenis syndrome, or Prader-Willi syndrome 52,540,994

AGING WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

5920-3025 For funding to support initiatives to address the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities who are aging including, but not limited to, individuals with Down syndrome and Alzheimer's disease, through the identification of best practices for services for such individuals, including: (i) medical care coordination models that address conditions common to individuals with developmental disabilities who are aging; (ii) training for direct care and other staff in the identification of dementia or other age-related conditions; and (iii) the collection of data regarding the effectiveness of the initiatives included in this item 100,000

TURNING 22 PROGRAM AND SERVICES

5920-5000 For services to clients of the department who turn 22 years of age during fiscal years 2023 and 2024 105,653,241

STATE FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

5930-1000 For the operation of facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities; provided, that the department may allocate funds from this item to items 5920-2000, 5920- 2010, and 5920-2025, as necessary, under allocation plans submitted to the house and senate committees on ways and means 30 days before any transfer for residential and day services for clients formerly receiving inpatient care at ICF/MRs 123,632,585

Trust Spending

13,000,000

HOME AND HEALTHY FOR GOOD PROGRAM

7004-0104 For the home and healthy for good program operated by Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, Inc. to reduce the incidence of chronic and long-term homelessness in the commonwealth; provided, that not less than \$250,000 shall be expended to continue a supportive housing initiative for unaccompanied 4,162,300 homeless young adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning; provided further, that Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, Inc. shall be solely responsible for the administration of this program; provided further, that not later than March 1, 2024, the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, Inc. shall submit a report to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the executive office of housing and livable communities, the joint committee on housing and the house and senate committees on ways and means detailing: (i) the number of people served, including available demographic information; (ii) the average cost per participant; (iii) whether participants have previously received services from the executive office; and (iv) any projected cost-savings to the commonwealth associated with this program; provided further, that not less than \$500,000 shall be expended for a statewide permanent supportive housing program to serve people experiencing long-term homelessness and who have complex medical and behavioral health needs for the purpose of ending homelessness, promoting housing stability and reducing costly utilization of emergency and acute care; and provided further, that not later than March 1, 2024, the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, Inc. shall submit a report to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the executive office of housing and livable communities, the joint committee on housing and the house and senate committees on ways and means detailing: (a) the number of people served, including available demographic information; (b) the average cost per participant; (c) whether participants have previously received services from the department; and (d) any projected costsavings associated with this program for the department or in the utilization of emergency and acute care

SPONSOR-BASED PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

7004-0105 For permanent supportive housing units to house individuals experiencing homelessness and mitigate overcrowding in homeless shelters; provided, that not less than \$2,100,000 may be expended to sustain low-threshold

sponsor-based leasing that had been previously linked to the pay-for-success projects funded through the Social Innovation Financing Trust Fund; provided further, that the executive office of housing and livable communities shall prioritize geographic equity when expending funds from this item; provided further, the executive office of housing and livable communities may contract directly with the organizations that received Social Innovation Financing vouchers funded under 7004-9024 in fiscal year 2022; and provided further, that not later than March 1, 2024, the executive office shall submit a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means detailing the distribution methodology and locations of units supported by this item.

HOMEBASE

7004-0108 For a program of short-term housing assistance to help families **or older adults** eligible for temporary emergency shelter under item 7004-0101 in addressing obstacles to maintaining or securing housing; provided, that the assistance shall include not less than 12 months of housing stabilization and economic self-sufficiency case management services for each family **or older adult** receiving benefits under this item; provided further, that except as specified in this item, a family **or older adult** shall not receive more than \$20,000 in a 24-month period from this item; provided further, that \$10,000,000 will be made available to administering agencies for circumstances where the administering agency believes an award greater than \$20,000 in a 24-month period is essential to resolve a housing crisis, in accordance with guidance from 42,070,445 the executive office; provided further, that so long as they meet the requirements of their housing stabilization plan, a family **or older adult** that received household assistance under this item whose income increases shall not become ineligible for assistance due to exceeding the income limit during the 24-month HomeBASE period; provided further, that a family **or older adult** shall not be deemed ineligible as a result of any single violation of a self-sufficiency plan; provided further, that the executive office of housing and livable communities shall take all steps necessary to enforce regulations to prevent abuse in the short-term housing transition program, including a wage match agreement with the department of revenue; provided further, that a family **or older adult** that was terminated from the program or did not make a good faith effort to follow its housing stabilization plan during the term of its assistance shall be ineligible for benefits under said item

7004-0101 and this item for 12 months from the last date the family **or older adult** received financial assistance under said item 7004-0101 and this item; provided further, that a family's **or older adult's** housing stabilization plan shall adequately accommodate the ages and disabilities of the family members **or older adult**; provided further, that families **or older adults** receiving benefits under this program who are found ineligible for continuing benefits shall be eligible for aid pending a timely appeal under chapter 23B of the General Laws; provided further, that families who are denied assistance under this item may appeal that denial under said chapter 23B, including subsection (F) of section 30 of said chapter 23B and regulations adopted to implement said chapter 23B; provided further, that benefits under this item shall only be provided to residents of the commonwealth who are citizens of the United States or persons lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise permanently residing under the color of law in the United States; provided further, that the executive office, as a condition of continued eligibility for assistance under this program, may require disclosure of social security numbers by all members of a family **or older adult** receiving assistance under this item for use in verification of income with other agencies, departments and executive offices; provided further, that if a family member **or older adult** fails to provide a social security number for use in verifying the family's **or older adult's** income and eligibility, then the family **or older adult** shall no longer be eligible to receive benefits from this program; provided further, that the executive office shall administer this program through the following agencies, unless administering agencies are otherwise procured by the executive office: the Berkshire Housing Development Corporation; Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc.; Community Teamwork Inc.; the Housing Assistance Corporation; the Franklin County regional housing and redevelopment authority; Way Finders, Inc.; Metro Housing Boston; the Lynn housing authority and neighborhood development; the South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.; NeighborWorks Housing Solutions; and RCAP Solutions, Inc.; provided further, that the executive office shall reallocate funding based on performance-based statistics from underperforming service providers to above average service providers in order to move as many families **or older adults** from hotels, motels or shelters, **or nursing homes** into more sustainable housing; provided further, that the executive office shall use funds provided under this program for stabilization workers to focus efforts on housing retention and to link households to supports, including job training, education, job search and child care opportunities available, and may enter into agreements with other public and private agencies for the provision of

such services; provided further, that a stabilization worker shall be assigned to each household; provided further, that funds shall be used to more rapidly transition families served by the program into temporary or permanent sustainable housing; provided further, that the executive office shall expend funds under item 7004-0108 on families **or older adult** residing in temporary emergency shelters and family residential treatment or sober living programs under items 4512-0200 and 4513-1130 if said families **or older adults** otherwise meet all eligibility requirements applicable to emergency shelter under item 7004-0101, except that, solely for the purposes of this item, the fact that a family **or older adult** is residing in a temporary emergency domestic violence shelter under item 4513-1130 or in a family residential treatment or sober living program under item 4512-0200 shall not preclude said family from receiving assistance; provided further, that this item shall be subject to appropriation and, in the event of a deficiency, nothing in this item shall give rise to, or shall be construed as giving rise to, any enforceable right Page 194 or entitlement to services in excess of the amounts appropriated in this item; and provided further, that household assistance funds shall be advanced to the administering agencies at the end of each month and before the next month's disbursement, the amount of which shall be estimated based on the prior month's expenditure with a reconciliation not less than annually.

Dignity Alliance recommends that the purpose of including older adults in this program is to assist older adults who are at risk of nursing home placement or who are able to leave a nursing home, but need temporary housing until they can find more permanent housing.

MASSACHUSETTS RENTAL VOUCHER PROGRAM

7004-9024 For the Massachusetts rental voucher program to provide rental assistance for low-income families and elderly persons through mobile and project-based vouchers; provided, that the income of eligible households shall not exceed 80 per cent of the area median income; provided further, that the executive office of housing and livable communities may require that up to 75 per cent of newly issued vouchers be targeted to households whose income at initial eligibility does not exceed 30 per cent of the area median income; provided further, that the department may award mobile vouchers to eligible households currently occupying project-based units that shall expire due to the non-renewal of projectbased rental assistance contracts; provided further, that the department, as a condition of continued eligibility for vouchers and voucher payments, may require disclosure of

social security numbers by participants and members of a participant's household in the Massachusetts rental voucher program for use in verification of income with other agencies, departments and executive offices; provided further, that if a participant or member of a participant's household fails to provide a social security number for use in verifying the household's income and eligibility, then that household shall no longer be eligible for a voucher or to receive benefits from the voucher program; provided further, that until the implementation of a payment standard by the executive office for all voucher holders, each household not yet covered by the payment standard shall pay not less than 30 per cent of its monthly adjusted income but not more than 40 per cent of its monthly adjusted income for rent except that the household payment in any project-based unit that is subsidized under another federal or state subsidy or public housing program shall be subject to applicable limits on tenant paid rent under such federal or state program; provided further, that until the implementation of such payment standard for all voucher holders, the monthly dollar amount of each voucher not yet covered by the payment standard shall be the executive office-approved monthly rent of the unit less the monthly amount paid for rent by the household; provided further, that any household that is proven to have caused intentional damage to its rental unit in an amount exceeding 2 months of rent during any 1-year period shall be terminated from the program; provided further, that if the use of a mobile voucher is or has been discontinued, then the mobile voucher shall be reassigned; provided further, that the executive office shall pay regional administering agencies not less than \$50 per voucher per month for the costs of administering the program; provided further, that subsidies shall not be reduced due to the cost of inspections; provided further, that beginning on January 1, 2023, for newly issued vouchers and at the time of income recertification, relocation, rent increase, and otherwise required interim recalculation for households with existing vouchers, the executive office shall 168,247,567 provide assistance using a payment standard so that the required household payment for a household choosing a unit with gross rent less than or equal to the payment standard will be not more than 30 per cent of the household's monthly adjusted income, with gross rent defined as the contract rent plus an amount allowed by the executive office for tenant-paid utilities; provided further, that effective January 1, 2024, the payment standard shall be set, at the discretion of the executive office, at either 100 per cent of the current area-wide fair market rent or 100 per cent of the current small area fair market rent, both as established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for the same size of dwelling unit in the same region, except as necessary as a reasonable

accommodation for a household member with a disability or otherwise directed by the executive office, except that a reduction by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in such fair market rental shall not reduce the payment standard applied to a household continuing to reside in a unit without a change in voucher size for which the household was receiving assistance at the time the fair market rent or small area fair market rent was reduced; provided further, that if the gross rent for the unit does not exceed the applicable payment standard, the monthly assistance payment for the household for both project-based and tenant-based assistance shall be equal to the gross rent less the required household payment, except that the required household payment in any project-based unit that is subsidized under another federal or state subsidy or public housing program shall be subject to applicable limits on tenant-paid rent under such federal or state program; provided further, that for a household receiving tenant-based assistance under this section, if the household chooses a unit with a gross rent that exceeds the applicable payment standard, the monthly assistance payment for the household shall be limited to the amount by which the applicable payment standard exceeds 30 per cent of the monthly adjusted income of the household; provided further, that even if a household with tenant-based assistance chooses a unit with gross rent exceeding the payment standard, at the time the household initially receives tenant-based assistance with respect to any dwelling the total amount that the household may be required to pay for gross rent, including the amount by which the gross rent exceeds the payment standard, may not exceed 40 per cent of the monthly adjusted income of the household at the time a household initially receives tenant-based assistance with respect to any dwelling; provided further, that households receiving tenantbased assistance under this section may pay more than 40 per cent of the monthly adjusted income of the household, at their option; provided further, that the executive office shall establish the amounts of the mobile and project-based vouchers so that the appropriation in this item shall not be exceeded by payments for rental assistance and administration; provided further, that the executive office shall not enter into commitments that shall cause it to exceed the appropriation set forth in this item; provided further, that participating local housing authorities may take all steps necessary to enable them to transfer mobile voucher program participants from the Massachusetts rental voucher program into another housing subsidy program; provided further, that the executive office may assist housing authorities at their written request in the immediate implementation of a homeless prevention program utilizing alternative housing resources available to them for low-income families

and the elderly by designating participants in the Massachusetts rental voucher program as at risk of displacement by public action through no fault of their own; provided further, that not later than December 1, 2023, the executive office of housing and livable communities shall submit a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on housing on the utilization of rental vouchers during the last 3 fiscal years under this item and item 7004-9030; provided further, that the report shall include, but not be limited to, the: (i) number and average value of rental vouchers currently distributed in the commonwealth in each county and in each municipality; (ii) average number of days that it takes for a household to utilize a voucher after receiving it from the administering agency; (iii) number of households that reach the date by which they must lease up their voucher without having found an available unit; (iv) number of households that apply for an Page 197 extension by the deadline to lease up their voucher and the number of extensions granted; (v) actions taken by the executive office to reduce the wait time for households to lease up their voucher; (vi) number of distributed vouchers available to be utilized; (vii) number and type of new vouchers issued after July 1, 2023; (viii) number of families on a waitlist for an available rental voucher; (ix) average number of days that it takes for project based vouchers awarded by the executive office to be utilized after the award is made; and (x) obstacles faced by the executive office in its efforts to provide the information detailed in the preceding provisos, if applicable; and provided further, that the report shall comply with state and federal privacy standards

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM

7004-9030 For the rental assistance program established in section 16 of chapter 179 of the acts of 1995; provided, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, assistance may be provided in the form of either mobile vouchers or project-based vouchers; provided further, that the vouchers shall be in varying dollar amounts set by the executive office of housing and livable communities based on considerations including, but not limited to, household size, composition, household income and geographic location; provided further, that the department's approved monthly rent limits for vouchers newly issued or leased after a date set by the department, but no later than June 30, 2024, shall be set, at the discretion of the executive office, at either up to 110 per cent of the current area-wide fair market rent or up to 110 per cent of the current small area fair market rent, both based on unit size as established annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for the same size of dwelling unit in the same

region; provided further, that the requested rent level for vouchers shall be determined reasonable by the administering agency; provided further, that any household that is proven to have caused intentional damage to its rental unit in an amount exceeding 2 months of rent during any 1-year period shall be terminated from the program; provided further, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there shall be no maximum percentage applicable to the amount of income paid for rent by each household holding a mobile voucher; provided further, that unless the executive office implements a payment standard and/or utility allowance for the rental assistance program, that each household may be required to pay not less than 25 per cent of its net income as defined under regulations promulgated by the executive office for units if payment of utilities is not provided by the unit owner or not less than 30 per cent of its income for units if payment of utilities is provided by the unit owner; provided further, that payments for the rental assistance program may be provided in advance; provided further, that the executive office shall establish the amounts of the vouchers so that the appropriation in this item is not exceeded by payments for rental assistance and administration; provided further, that the executive office shall not enter into commitments which shall cause it to exceed the appropriation set forth in this item; provided further, that the amount of a rental assistance voucher payment for an eligible household shall not exceed the rent less the household's minimum rent obligation; and provided further, that not later than December 15, 2023, the executive office shall submit a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means detailing: (i) expenditures from this item; (ii) the number of outstanding rental vouchers; and (iii) the number and types of units leased.

CAREER TECHNICAL INSTITUTES

7002-1091 For the development and operation of Career Technical Institutes in Vocational Technical schools in partnership with industry and community stakeholders; provided, that Career Technical Institutes build out industry recognized credentialing pathways for adult learners in technical and trade fields to retrain and grow the workforce; and provided further, that at the direction of the secretary of labor and workforce development funds may be transferred to the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund established in section 2WWW of chapter 29 of the General Laws to issue competitive, performance-based contracting models to support the start-up and educational costs of Career Technical Institutes

15,379,600

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

7003-0100 For the operation of the office of the secretary of labor and workforce development 1,656,126

LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SHARED SERVICES

7003-0101 For the costs of core administrative functions performed within the executive office of labor and workforce development; provided, that common functions that may be designated core administrative functions include, without limitation, human resources, financial management, information technology, legal, procurement, and asset management; and provided further, that the General Fund shall be reimbursed the amount appropriated in this item attributed to the department of industrial accidents based on rates approved by the office of the comptroller and for associated indirect and direct fringe benefits costs from assessments levied under section 65 of chapter 152 of the General Laws 18,576,380

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH

7003-0105 For the operations of the department of economic research, **provided, further that research conducted by this department shall include an analysis of the needs of older adults or people with disabilities to allow them to remain or re-enter the workforce** 850,889

Dignity Alliance recommends that given the shortage of workers, it is important to understand what policies and work conditions may be needed to help older workers continue in the workforce, or re-enter the workforce and what education or training or other accommodations may be appropriate.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

7003-0607 For the Commonwealth Corporation for an employment training program for unemployed young adults with disabilities; provided, that funds shall be awarded competitively by the Commonwealth Corporation to community-based organizations with recognized success in creating strong collaborations with employers to consider young adults with disabilities; and provided further, that a community-based organization that receives funding under this item shall provide extensive training, internship programming, and ongoing post-placement support for participants and employers 1,000,000

HEALTH CARE WORKER TRAINING

7003-0608 For the 1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund to deliver innovative worker training for eligible health care workers that will better the lives of health care workers, reduce costs and improve the quality of health care provided by MassHealth personal care attendants and provided at nursing homes, community health centers, hospitals and health systems 1,000,000

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

7066-0000 For the operation of the department of higher education; provided, that the department shall recommend savings proposals that permit institutions of public higher education to achieve administrative and program cost reductions, reallocate resources and re-assess programs and utilize resources otherwise available to such institutions; provided further, that in order to meet the estimated costs of employee fringe benefits provided by the commonwealth on account of employees of the Massachusetts State College Building Authority and the University of Massachusetts Building Authority and in order to meet the estimated cost of heat, light, power and other services to be furnished by the commonwealth to projects of these authorities, the boards of trustees of the state colleges, the state universities and the University of Massachusetts shall transfer to the General Fund from the funds received from the operations of the projects such costs, if any, as shall be incurred by the commonwealth for these purposes in the current fiscal year, as determined by the appropriate building authority, verified by the commissioner of higher education, and approved by the secretary of administration and finance; provided further, that not less than \$2,000,000 shall be expended for a strategic review of existing higher education financial aid programs and to consolidate and streamline financial aid programs; provided further, that such funds may be expended on establishing a more user-friendly interface for students applying for financial assistance, in coordination with the executive office of education; and provided further, that funds shall be expended to meet existing statutory requirements and establish trustee recruitment, training and accountability initiatives 4,672,123

Dignity Alliance recommends that this line item include a provision at the end, including, but not limited to the development of age-friendly university standards in each state university. (NOTE: UMass currently administers such a program.)

RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS

8900-1100 For re-entry programs at the department of correction intended to reduce recidivism rates 1,420,984

Dignity Alliance recommends that language be included in this line item to ease the transition of individuals receiving compassionate release such as “and to assist individuals granted compassionate release to gain access to home health services, if needed.”

ELDER AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION

9110-0100 For the operation of the department of elder affairs and the regulation of assisted living facilities, **provided, however, that the department shall submit a report on complaints received from residents of assisted living residences, the number of complaints resolved, and the number of complaints not satisfactorily addressed; and provided, further, that the department shall develop recommendations to assist lower income individuals who otherwise would be eligible for assisted living, to afford the benefits of assisted living residences.**

5,001,799

Dignity Alliance wants to improve protections for consumers who reside in assisted living residences and to determine how to expand the benefits of assisted living to lower income individuals.

COMMUNITY CHOICES

9110-0600 For health care services provided to MassHealth members who are older adults eligible for community-based waiver services; provided, that funds may be expended from this item for health care services provided to recipients in prior fiscal years; provided further, that subject to the assessed needs of consumers or the terms of the waiver, the funding for benefits of community-based waiver services shall not be reduced below the level of services provided in fiscal year 2023; provided further, that the eligibility requirements for this program shall not be more restrictive than those established in fiscal year 2023; provided further, that funds shall be expended from this item to implement the pre-admission counseling

and assessment program under the fourth paragraph of section 9 of chapter 118E of the General Laws, which shall be implemented on a statewide basis through the Aging and Disability Resource Consortia; and provided further, that funds from this item may be expended for the Clinical Assessment and Eligibility Program and the Comprehensive Service and Screening Model Program 303,085,276

PRESCRIPTION ADVANTAGE

9110-1455 For the costs of the drug insurance program under section 39 of chapter 19A of the General Laws and for the operations of the consolidated MassOptions, prescription advantage and 800-age-info customer service centers; provided, that amounts received by the department of elder affairs' vendor as premium revenue for this program may be retained and expended by the vendor for the program; provided further, that funds shall be expended for the operation of the pharmacy outreach program under section 4C of chapter 19A of the General Laws; provided further, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, unless otherwise prohibited by federal law, prescription drug coverage or benefits payable by the department of elder affairs and the entities with which it has contracted for administration of the subsidized catastrophic drug insurance program under said section 39 of said chapter 19A, shall be the payer of last resort for this program for eligible persons with regard to any other third-party prescription coverage or benefits available to the eligible persons; provided further, that the department shall seek to obtain maximum federal funding for discounts on prescription drugs available to the department and to prescription advantage enrollees; provided further, that the department shall take steps for the coordination of benefits with the Medicare prescription drug benefit created under the federal Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 to ensure that Massachusetts residents take advantage of this benefit; 17,552,870 provided further, that a person shall be eligible to enroll in the program at any time within a year after reaching age 65; and provided further, that the department shall allow those who meet the program eligibility criteria to enroll in the program at any time during the year

SUPPORTIVE SENIOR HOUSING PROGRAM

9110-1604 For the operation of the supportive senior housing program at state- or federally assisted housing sites 6,378,780

HOME CARE SERVICES

9110-1630 For the operation of the elder home care program, including contracts with aging service access points or other qualified entities for the home care program, inhome care, homemaker, personal care, supportive home care aides, home health and respite services, geriatric behavioral health services, and other services provided to older people; provided, that sliding-scale fees shall be charged to qualified older people; provided further, that the secretary of elder affairs may waive collection of sliding-scale fees in cases of extreme financial hardship; provided further, that not more than \$16,000,000 in revenues accrued from sliding-scale fees shall be retained by the individual home care organizations without reallocation by the department of elder affairs and shall be expended for the home care program, consistent with guidelines to be issued by the department; and provided further, that the secretary of elder affairs may transfer not more than 3 per cent of the funds appropriated in this item to line item 9110- 1633 for case management services and the administration of the home care program

213,760,443

Dignity Alliance is pleased that this line item has been increased by approximately \$2,400,000

HOME CARE CASE MANAGEMENT AND ADMIN

9110-1633 For the operation of the elder home care case management program, including contracts with aging service access points or other qualified entities for home care case management services and the administration of the home care organizations funded through item 9110-1630; provided, that the contracts shall include the costs of administrative personnel, home care case managers, travel, rent, and other costs deemed appropriate by the department of elder affairs; and provided further, that the secretary of elder affairs may transfer not more than 3 per cent of the funds appropriated in this item to line item 9110-1630

78,556,327

Dignity Alliance is pleased that there has been a modest increase in this line item.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

9110-1636 For the elder protective services program, including, but not limited to, protective services case management, guardianship services, the statewide elder

abuse hotline, money management services, **supported decision- making, and anti-bullying programs** 43,198,936

Dignity Alliance recommends that elder protective services include support for anti-bullying and supported decision-making programs. It should be further noted that supported decision-making is, increasingly, seen as an alternative to guardianship. Dignity Alliance is pleased that there has been a slight increase in this line item.

HOME CARE AIDE TRAINING GRANT PROGRAM

9110-1637 For a grant program administered by the secretary of elder affairs focused on advanced skill training for the home care aide workforce that serves consumers of the elder home care program administered by the department of elder affairs 1,206,947

GERIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAM 9110-1640 For the geriatric behavioral health program, including outreach, counseling, resource management, and system navigation for community-dwelling older people with behavioral health needs 2,500,000

Dignity Alliance recommends that the appropriation for this item be increased by \$1,000,000 from \$2,500,000 to \$3,500,000

CONGREGATE HOUSING

9110-1660 For congregate and shared housing services for older people and to fund the long-term care ombudsman program to include assisted living residences 3,025,491

ELDER HOMELESS PLACEMENT

9110-1700 For residential assessment and placement programs for older adults at-risk or experiencing homelessness, **and provided, further, that older adults at risk of entering a nursing home, or currently in a nursing home shall be assessed and placed through this program..**

286,000

NUTRITION SERVICES PROGRAMS

9110-1900 For the nutrition program for older people 11,047,709

GRANTS TO COUNCILS ON AGING

9110-9002 For grants to the councils on aging and for grants to or contracts with non-public entities which are consortia or associations of councils on aging

25,789,30

Dignity Alliance understands that this line item has been increased by nearly \$1 million, and that this amount will support an increase in the formula grants from \$12 to \$14 per older adult. Dignity Alliance, therefore, supports this increase of funding for Councils on Aging.

OUTSIDE SECTIONS

Section 13 –Medicare Savings Program Asset Test Elimination 1

SECTION 13. Subsection (a) of section 25A of said chapter 118E of the General Laws, as amended by section 55 of chapter 126 of the acts of 2022, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 1 to 4, inclusive, the following words:- (a) For individuals 65 years of age or older, the division shall not consider income in an amount equivalent to 90 per cent of the federal poverty level or assets in an amount equivalent to the federal resource limit for the Medicare Saving programs, each" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- (a)(1) For individuals 65 years of age or older, the division shall not consider income in an amount equivalent to 90 per cent of the federal poverty level. Summary: This section, along with one other, requires MassHealth to disregard all assets or resources when determining eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program.

Section 14 - Medicare Savings Program Asset Test Elimination 2

SECTION 14. Said subsection (a) of said section 25A of said chapter 118E, as so amended, is hereby further amended by adding the following paragraph:- (2) In determining eligibility for Medicare Saving or Medicare Buy-in programs described in paragraph (1) for individuals 65 years of age or older, the division shall disregard all assets or resources. Implementation of this paragraph is contingent upon receiving federal approvals described in subsection (b). Summary: This section, along with one other, requires MassHealth to disregard all assets or resources when determining eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program.

Dignity Alliance supports the elimination of this asset test.

Section 26 - Nursing Facility Base Year

SECTION 26. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, nursing facility rates to be effective on October 1, 2023 under section 13D of chapter 118E of the General Laws may be developed using the costs of calendar year 2019.

Summary: This section allows the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to continue using 2019 costs to develop nursing facility rates, **provided, further that, in order to be eligible for such funding, a nursing home shall provide consolidated financial reports reflecting the true cost of care, and including reports from related third-party vendors, including an evaluation of charges from said vendors certifying that such cost does not exceed the amount a prudent and cost -conscious buyer would pay for comparable services, facilities, or supplies that could be purchased elsewhere**

Dignity Alliance is concerned with the lack of transparency and accountability for the costs of long-term care and the lack of competitive bidding for rent, and other goods and services, that, therefore, fail to represent to policy makers and the public, the true cost of long term care.

SECTION XX. Commission on the Status of Older Adults

SECTION XX. [Chapter 3](#) of the General Laws as appearing in the 2020 Official Editions is hereby amended by inserting at the end therefore the following new section:

Section 76 (a) There shall be a permanent commission on the status of Older Adults which shall consist of 21 persons as follows: 3 persons to be appointed by the governor; 3 persons to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; 3 persons to be appointed by the president of the senate; 3 persons to be appointed by the state treasurer; 3 persons to be appointed by the state secretary; 3 persons to be appointed by the attorney general; and 3 persons to be appointed by the state auditor. Members of the commission shall be residents of the commonwealth who have demonstrated a commitment to the concerns of older adults in both institutional settings and the larger community.. Members shall be subject to [chapter 268A](#) as it applies to special state employees.

(b) Members shall serve for terms of 3 years and until their successors are appointed. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the original appointing authority for the balance of the unexpired term. All appointments shall be made in consultation with organizations advocating for older adults, especially consumers of long-term services, supports and care. No appointee shall be an owner, operator, officer, or employee of a provider of long-term care. Nominations for members shall be solicited by the appointing authorities between August 1 and September 16 of each year through an open application process using a uniform application that is widely distributed throughout the commonwealth.

(c) The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and any other officers it considers necessary. The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

(d) The commission shall be a resource to the commonwealth on issues affecting older adults at present and in the future, including, but not limited to, quality of life, health, housing, transportation, and long-term care in both institutional settings and their community of residence. In furtherance of that responsibility, the commission shall:

(1) promote research and be a clearinghouse and source of information on issues pertaining to older adults in the commonwealth;

(2) inform the public and leaders of business, education, human services, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of the unique cultural, social, ethnic, economic and educational issues affecting older adults in the commonwealth;

(3) foster unity among older adults and organizations in the commonwealth by promoting cooperation and sharing of information and encouraging collaboration and joint activities;

(4) serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups with regard to matters of unique interest and concern to older adults in the commonwealth;

(5) identify opportunities to expand and improve commercial and cultural ties with older adults of other states of the United States and other nations including, but not

limited to policies and programs for better serving the growing population of older adults;

(6) identify and recommend qualified older adults for appointive positions at all levels of government, including boards and commissions, as the commission considers necessary and appropriate;

(7) assess the effect on older adults of programs and practices in all state agencies, as the commission considers necessary and appropriate;

(8) advise executive and legislative bodies on the potential effect on older adults of proposed legislation, as the commission considers necessary and appropriate; and

(9) generally undertake activities designed to enable the commonwealth to realize the full benefit of the skills, talents and cultural heritage of older adults in the commonwealth.

(e) The commission shall annually, not later than June 2, report the results of its findings and activities of the preceding year and its recommendations to the governor and to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives.

(f) The powers of the commission shall include, but not be limited, to:

(1) using voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations that may from time to time be offered and needed, including provision of meeting places and refreshments;

(2) holding regular, public meetings and fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it considers necessary;

(3) directing a staff to perform its duties;

(4) establishing and maintaining offices that it considers necessary, subject to appropriation;

(5) enacting by-laws for its own governance that are not inconsistent with any general or special law; and

(6) making policy recommendations to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government to effectuate the purposes of subsection (d).

(g) The commission may request from all state agencies such information and assistance as the commission requires.

(h) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or any federal funds for any of the purposes of this section. These funds shall be deposited in a separate account with the state treasurer, be received by the treasurer on behalf of the commonwealth and be expended by the commission in accordance with law.

(i) The commission staff shall, subject to appropriation, consist of an executive director, employees and volunteers who assist the commission in effecting its statutory duties. The commission shall, subject to appropriation appoint the executive director for a term of 3 years.