

**Volume 2 #2 Newsletter Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants May - June 2021**

**Mass Union celebrating our 50th ANNIVERSARY.**

**Governor Charlie Baker Rescinds COVID-19 Law**

Governor Charlie Baker on Wednesday signed legislation that will allow restaurants to sell to-go cocktails until next May, extend certain protections around evictions, and keep in place a series of pandemic-era rules that had expired, or were slated to, with the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

The Legislature scrambled to pass a compromise version of the bill roughly 20 hours after Massachusetts’s emergency lifted just after midnight Tuesday, allowing some rules to lapse.

Senate president Karen E. Spilka [wrote on Twitter](https://twitter.com/KarenSpilka/status/1405167023844380680), that Baker had signed the bill Wednesday morning. A spokesman for the governor later confirmed Baker had approved the bill shortly after 9 a.m.

The 14-page law allows restaurants to sell to-go beer, wine, and cocktails through May 1, 2022, and requires they be sold at the same prices as those consumed on-site. It provides another boost for restaurants by extending the time towns and cities could allow for expanded outdoor dining at restaurants — which had been slated to end in mid-August — until April 1, 2022.

It also allows town councils, state boards, and other bodies to continue to hold remote public meetings, which many have continued to do as millions of people have become vaccinated, until April 1, 2022. Town meetings can be held remotely until Dec. 15, 2021.

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| Policy Board Members  Phyllis Corbitt, Chair (Boston)  Linda Montgomery, Vice Chair (Cambridge)  Ethel Peggy Santos, Treasurer (Boston)  Commissioner Renee Spencer, Secretary (Wellesley)  Tanya Morel, Member (Wellesley)  Commissioner Susan Bonner, Legislative Chair (Nahant)  Commissioner David Underhill, Member (Fall River) |  | Table of Content  page  Governor signs a new law 1.  Chairperson Corner 2.  Community Rooms Re-open 3.  3rd round Economic Recovery 4  FY 2022 State Budget Programs 5.  Adriene Todman HUD’s Deputy 6.  Community Corner 7.  Commissioner Law 8. |

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# The Chair’s Corner

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Welcome to my ZOOM Life. Since around March 17, 2021, I was on a zoom call with CHAPA (Citizens Housing And Planning Association) in reference to HD# 3891(Public Housing Production). On March 23, 2021, I was on a zoom meeting for (MASS NAHRO) Legislative Day. DHCD (Department of Housing and Community Development) MRVP (Mass Rental Voucher Program) will be increased by $150 million dollars. On March 25, 2021, I was on a one-day conference zoom for NARSAAH (National Alliance of Resident Services in Affordable and Assisted Housing). A representative from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) presenting at the NARSAAH Zoom Conference stated that $5 billion is available for Homeless Assistance; 100 million Emergency Assistance for Rural Housing, $5 billion for Emergency Housing Vouchers.

On March 30th and 31st I was participating in a Washington Zoom titled “A New Day” with NLIHC (National Low Income Housing Coalition). Our new US HUD Secretary, Marcia Fudge stated HUD’s new priorities which included promoting “Fair Housing”. On April 1st I watched on a Zoom congressional staff from Senator Warren’s office, Pat O’Connor from Representative Neal’s office, Steve Thornton from Representative Clark’s office, presenting the FY-2021 priorities of congress.

On April 5, 2021, on Zoom with NLIHC. April 6, 2021, on Zoom with CHAPA Virtual Housing Day. So, I know a lot of you may be living the same life as me, but I hope we are all getting information from the Zoom meetings. Since Governor Baker opened the State on May 29th, 2021, I hope most of our lives will start to go back to normal.

On another note, please pay your Affiliate Dues for Mass Union. Stay tune for more information on a two-day Convention in October where we will be holding elections for several new Board Member seats. Maybe a 50th Anniversary Halloween Party.

Thank you and stay safe and well.

Phyllis Corbitt

Chairperson

**Community Rooms Reopening and Programs**

**From: Ben Sone, Associate Director DHCD, Public Housing Notice 2021-11, June 16, 2021**

LHAs (Local Housing Authorities) should reopen community rooms to residents as soon as possible if they have not yet done so and may restart programming in those rooms. LHAs may consider posting signage asking non-vaccinated residents and visitors to wear masks in community rooms and other common areas. These requests are not enforceable and LHAs should not query tenants or community room visitors about their vaccination status as it may violate various privacy and civil rights laws to do so. LHAs should be aware that there may be disputes among residents about mask wearing and vaccination statuses; unfortunately, these may be difficult for LHAs to resolve given privacy restrictions and absence of state mandates. LHAs may request visiting services staff (i.e., Council on Aging, Meals on Wheels) to wear masks or to require visiting services staff to wear masks if not vaccinated, if the LHA chooses to do so, with appropriate reasonable accommodations. LHAs may request or require visiting vendors (i.e., construction or maintenance contractors) to wear masks in certain situations on LHA property, such as when in proximity to tenants and staff, with appropriate reasonable accommodations. DHCD reiterates that such decisions are at LHA discretion and DHCD does not take a position on mask policies in Housing Authority common areas; however, any policy should be adopted by the LHA Board.

Office Operations LHAs should, as soon as possible, open administrative offices to the public for in-person services during all LHA business hours, with an appropriate administrative employee available in-person to meet with tenants and applicants. LHAs should also remain available to the public by phone and email during business hours and remove “out of office due to COVID” messages on Authority phone lines and emails if they remain.

All office capacity restrictions have been lifted.

**Third Round of Economic Recovery Impact Payments**

**Did you get your check from the IRS?**

The first two rounds of Economic Impact Payments were advance payments of the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit. Most eligible people already received the payments and will not include this information on their 2020 tax return.

**Who May Be Eligible to Claim the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit?**

If you did not get a first and second Economic Impact Payment or got less than the full amounts, you may be eligible to claim the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit and must file a 2020 tax return even if you do not usually file a tax return.

**Claiming the Credit**: To claim the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit, you must file a 2020 tax return, even if you are not required to file.

You must also know the amount of any first and second Economic Impact Payment you received.

[File electronically](https://www.irs.gov/filing/e-file-options) and the tax software will help you figure your 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit.

**Get details on electronic filing options:**

* [IRS Free File](https://www.irs.gov/filing/free-file-do-your-federal-taxes-for-free) Program and [Free File Fillable Forms](https://www.irs.gov/e-file-providers/free-file-fillable-forms) – Prepare and file your federal taxes online for free.
* [Tax Professionals](https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/choosing-a-tax-professional) – Find how to choose a qualified tax preparer.

The Recovery Rebate Credit Worksheet in the 2020 [Form 1040 and Form 1040-SR instructions](https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-1040) can also help determine if you are eligible for the credit and how much you can claim.

Anyone with income of $72,000 or less can file their federal tax return electronically for free through the IRS [Free File](https://www.irs.gov/filing/free-file-do-your-federal-taxes-for-free) Program. The fastest way to get your tax refund is to [file electronically](https://www.irs.gov/filing/e-file-options) and have it [direct deposited](https://www.irs.gov/refunds/get-your-refund-faster-tell-irs-to-direct-deposit-your-refund-to-one-two-or-three-accounts) - contactless and free - into your financial account. You can use a bank account, prepaid debit card or alternative financial products for your direct deposit and will need to provide routing and account numbers.

The fastest way to get your Recovery Rebate Credit (sent as a tax refund) is to [file electronically](https://www.irs.gov/filing/e-file-options) and have it [direct deposited](https://www.irs.gov/refunds/get-your-refund-faster-tell-irs-to-direct-deposit-your-refund-to-one-two-or-three-accounts) into your financial account. You can use a bank account, prepaid debit card or alternative financial products for your direct deposit. You will need to provide routing and account numbers.

**Finding the amount of your first and second Payments**

You will need the amount of any first and second Economic Impact Payments you received to calculate your 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit amount using the RRC Worksheet or tax preparation software. **Find the amount of your first and second Economic Impact Payments:**

**View Your Online Account** – Securely access your individual tax information with an [IRS online account](https://www.irs.gov/payments/view-your-tax-account) including your first and second Economic Impact Payment amount.

**IRS letters** – IRS mailed Notice 1444 for the first Economic Impact Payment, and they are mailing Notice 1444-B for the second Economic Impact Payment to the address they have on file.

# Massachusetts Senate Concludes Debate on FY2022 State Budget Proposal

Printed by: Citizen Housing and Planning Association

On May 27th, the Massachusetts Senate concluded debate on its FY2022 state budget proposal. The budget includes strong investments in affordable housing priorities. The House proposed increases for Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), Alternative Housing Voucher Program, Public Housing, Housing Consumer Education Centers, and DMH Rental Subsidies.85

Mass Union and Mass NAHRO prosed to the Joint Committee on Housing a subsidy request for $88 million. The House ways and Means Committee proposed $84 million, and the Senate Ways and Means Committee proposed $85 Million to fund start public housing maintenance and management operations.

The Senate also included a program change for RAFT which will allow applicants to access up to $10,000 maximum RAFT benefit through the end of the year, then up to $7,000 for the rest of FY22. The Senate budget also allows families to access the maximum benefits for both RAFT and HomeBASE, if eligible until the end of FY22.

Please thank all House and Senate members of the Massachusetts General Court for supporting affordable housing, homelessness prevention, and community development resources in the final FY2022 state budget proposal!

The conference committee appointed by House of Representatives and State Senate will now reconcile the differences in the House and Senate budget. Each branch appointed its Ways and Means Committee chair, vice chair and ranking minority member to the budget conference committee: Reps. Aaron Michlewitz, Ann-Margaret Ferrante, and Todd Smola in the House, and Sens. Michael Rodrigues, Cindy Friedman, and Patrick O'Connor in the Senate.

Please stay tuned on the next steps for the budget advocacy!

**Adrianne Todman Sworn in as Deputy Secretary of**

**The Department Housing and Urban Development**

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| [Adrianne Todman Sworn in as Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development] |

WASHINGTON - Today, Adrianne Todman was officially sworn in as the twelfth Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge issued the oath of office to Deputy Secretary Todman during a ceremony at HUD’s headquarters that was livestreamed to the department’s staff. Deputy Secretary Todman was confirmed by the Senate by unanimous consent on June 10.

Deputy Secretary Todman most recently served as the CEO of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). Before joining NAHRO in 2017, she served as the Executive Director of the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) and served in several career positions at HUD. [Click here](https://www.hud.gov/about/leadership/Adrianne_Todman) for a full bio. Adriene is a friend to the poor.

Since that trip, I have spent my career working to expand opportunity for people -in the halls of Congress, at federal and local housing agencies, and as an advocate for organizations that advance affordable housing and community development.

Throughout my journey, I have made it my mission to help restore and revitalize our nation’s public housing; to help build more affordable homes in our country; to help house people who are homeless and to help families achieve their dreams.

At every step along the way, I have worked to safeguard the public’s trust-and to deliver support to people in need with efficiency and with equity.

My name is Adrianne Todman-and I now have the great honor of serving as the Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**A picture containing outdoor, porch, garden

Description automatically generatedCommunity Corner**

**Menotomy Manor Is a family state aided development of the Arlington Housing Authority. Residents in partnership with LHA board members have built relationships outside the housing authority with the Arlington School system, Arlington Police Department, local town Select Board, and Arlington Garden Club. With the help of the garden club the tenants received seeds and stater plants and have beautiful gardens. A garden contest is being planned this summer. Awards will be given to the winners. The residents are forming a LTO (Local Tenant Organization). Mass Union is providing tenants with technical assistance.**

**A group of people standing around a sign

Description automatically generated with low confidenceAlice Heyward Taylor Apartments, a family development of the Boston Housing Authority, are planting gardens at their development. Their Task Force have created partnerships with their neighbors: Wentworth Institute and Northeastern University. Wentworth Institute assist Alice Taylor Task Force with meeting space at the Institute and provide refreshment for community meetings. Northeastern University provide academic scholarship to Boston Housing Authority residents.**

Massachusetts General Law 121b (Statute)

Local Housing Authorities Board Members

Appointments and Elections

Section 5: Housing and redevelopment authorities; membership; appointment; election; term of office

Section 5. Every housing and redevelopment authority shall be managed, controlled and governed by five members, appointed or elected as provided in this section, of whom three shall constitute a quorum. Every member of a housing or redevelopment authority shall be a fiduciary of the housing or redevelopment authority.

In a city, four members of a housing or redevelopment authority shall be appointed by the mayor subject to confirmation by the city council; provided, that, the members shall be appointed to serve for initial terms of one, two, four and five years, respectively.

In a town, 3 members shall be elected by the town; provided, that of the members originally elected at an annual town meeting, the one receiving the highest number of votes shall serve for five years, the one receiving the next highest number of votes, for four years and the one receiving the next highest number of votes, for two years; provided, that upon the initial organization of a housing or redevelopment authority, if a town so votes at an annual or special town meeting called for the purpose, four members of such an authority shall be appointed forthwith by the selectmen to serve only until the qualification of their successors, who shall be elected at the next annual town meeting as provided above.

In a city or town, one member of a housing or redevelopment authority shall be appointed by the department for an initial term of three years. If the department does not fill a vacancy in the position of that member within 120 days from the date that the vacancy is created, the board of selectmen shall appoint, in writing, a person by a majority vote to fill such vacancy for the unexpired term. In a city, the mayor shall appoint a person subject to confirmation by the city council for the unexpired term.

Thereafter, as the term of a member of any housing or redevelopment authority expires, his successor shall be appointed or elected, in the same manner and by the same body, for a term of five years from such expiration. Membership in a housing or redevelopment authority shall be restricted to residents of the city or town.

In a city, one of the four members of a housing authority appointed by the mayor shall be a resident of that city and shall be a representative of organized labor who shall be appointed by the mayor from a list of not less than two nor more than five names, representing different unions submitted by the Central Labor Council, AFL–CIO and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America of the city or of the district within which the city is included. If no such list of names is submitted within sixty days after a vacancy occurs, the mayor may appoint any representative of organized labor of his own choosing to the authority. In a city, one of the four members of a housing authority appointed by the mayor shall be a tenant in a building owned and operated by or on behalf of the local housing authority who shall be appointed by the mayor from lists of names submitted by each duly recognized city-wide and project-wide tenants' organization in the city.

**Continue, See next page**:

A tenants' organization may submit a list which contains not less than two nor more than five names to the mayor who shall make his selection from among the names so submitted; provided that, where no public housing units are owned and operated by the local housing authority and no such units are owned and operated on behalf of the local housing authority, the mayor shall appoint any tenant of the housing authority from lists submitted in accordance with this section. If no list of names is submitted within sixty days after a vacancy occurs, the mayor shall appoint any tenant of his choosing to the authority. The mayor shall notify in writing tenant organizations as specified herein not less than ninety days prior to the expiration of the term of a tenant member. Whenever a vacancy occurs in the term of a tenant member for any reason other than the expiration of a term, the mayor shall notify in writing the tenant organizations specified herein within ten working days after the vacancy occurs. The mayor shall make an appointment within a reasonable time after the expiration of sixty days after said notice.

Vacancies, other than by reason of expiration of terms, shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term, in the same manner and by the same body, except elected members in towns whose terms shall be filled in accordance with the provisions of section eleven of chapter forty-one. Every member, unless sooner removed, shall serve until the qualification of his successor.

As soon as possible after the qualification of the members of a housing or redevelopment authority the city or town clerk, as the case may be, shall file a certificate of such appointment, or of such appointment and election, as the case may be, with the department, and a duplicate thereof, in either case, in the office of the state secretary. If the state secretary finds that the housing or redevelopment authority has been organized and the members thereof elected or appointed according to law, he shall issue to it a certificate of organization and such certificate shall be conclusive evidence of the lawful organization of the authority and of the election or appointment of the members thereof.

Whenever the membership of an authority is changed by appointment, election, resignation or removal, a certificate and duplicate certificate to that effect shall be promptly so filed. A certificate so filed shall be conclusive evidence of the change in membership of the authority referred to therein.