

The Civic Engagement Times

~Massachusetts Recovery Plan Edition~

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A Message from the Governor

The effects of the economic downturn of the last eight months are being felt universally across our Commonwealth. Like families and businesses throughout Massachusetts, state government has also been tasked with cutting spending, seeking out new revenue, and being forced to cut essential services but our mission of governing for the long term continues.

The Massachusetts Recovery Plan combines state, federal and, where possible, private efforts to provide immediate and long-term relief and position the Commonwealth for recovery in the following ways:

- Deliver immediate relief by investing in the road, bridge and rail projects that put people to work today and providing safety net services that sustain people who are especially vulnerable during an economic crisis;
- Build a better tomorrow through education and infrastructure investments that strengthen our economic competitiveness, prepare workers for the jobs of the future and support clean energy, broadband and technology projects that cut costs while growing the economy; and
- Reform state government by eliminating the pension and ethics loopholes that discredit the work of government and revitalize the transportation networks that have suffered from decades of neglect and inaction.

Those of us in state government have a responsibility to change the way we do business, and to guide our state through the turbulent times we face. We owe it to you, the people of Massachusetts to use this opportunity to change the way we approach problems, and to work together on a more comprehensive solution that will provide not only the revenue we need, but also real reforms and real change in the way we do the people's business.



Civic Engagement Calendar Goes Digital

MAY 2009						
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Executive Branch Offices are now posting public events at

www.mass.gov/governor/calendar

Finds events in your area and contribute to the conversation.

MA Recovery Aids Seniors

As part of the Massachusetts Recovery Plan, more than \$300 million in federal recovery funds will be allocated to help boost the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and to increase nutritional services for seniors. SNAP also provides a significant boost to local business. Every \$5 spent in new SNAP benefits will generate \$9.20 in economic activity.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides an additional \$19.9 billion for states to increase SNAP benefits, commonly known

as the Food Stamp Program. For individuals and families facing the difficult choice of purchasing groceries or paying their bills, increased SNAP benefits will be a welcome relief. The amount of additional SNAP funds is dependent upon household income and size. For example, a four-person household will likely see an \$80 per month increase.

The Elderly Nutrition Program will receive \$2.1 million for nutrition programs at senior centers and home-delivered nutrition programs.

Twenty-seven nutrition programs located throughout the state serve more than 8.5 million meals to seniors each year. Meals are provided, often by volunteers, at more than 400 congregate meal sites and more than half are served to homebound elders. This federal recovery funding will help provide 300,000 meals for seniors in need.

For more information about services offered by the Massachusetts Elderly Nutrition Program please visit www.mass.gov/elders.

Affordable Homeownership

The latest in a series of free “Opportunity Knocks” regional homebuyer fairs and open houses to promote affordable homeownership opportunities in Massachusetts will be held on Saturday, May 9, at 5 shopping malls across Massachusetts.

Prospective homebuyers will have the opportunity to learn more about the homebuying process from MassHousing staff, REALTORS®, mortgage lenders and homebuyer counseling agencies.

Listings for affordable properties where REALTORS® will be hosting open houses

the weekend of May 9 and 10 will be available at the fair. These homes will be pre-selected to fall within MassHousing’s purchase price limits to be affordable to low and moderate-income families. These special listings will be available at www.masshomefair.com. Prospective buyers will also receive information on how to apply for an affordable, safe, fixed-rate 30-year mortgage from MassHousing and an affordable, fixed-rate SoftSecond mortgage from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership. Homebuyers interested in buying a foreclosed prop-

erty can also learn about an enhanced version of SoftSecond, which waives the program’s first-time homebuyer requirement, raises the program’s household income limit and makes rehabilitation grants available when the property is in an area that is eligible for federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding.

For more information about the Opportunity Knocks homebuying fairs and listings of affordable homes for sale with open houses, please visit www.masshomefair.com.



Opportunity Knocks homebuyer fairs will be held at the following locations from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 9th:

- Holyoke Mall
- Square One Mall, Saugus
- Solomon Pond Mall, Marlborough
- Westgate Mall, Brockton
- Silver City Galleria, Taunton

For helpful information from some **Opportunity Knocks** sponsors, please visit:

MassHousing
www.masshousing.com

Dept. of Housing and Community Development
www.mass.gov/dhcd

MA Housing Partnership
www.mhp.net

April 3, 2009
Chelsea, MA
Governor Patrick’s tours rental housing construction sites.



Visit WWW.MASS.GOV/GOVERNOR/CALENDAR and be a part of the discussion.

25 Communities Welcome Affordable Rental Housing in Massachusetts

Thirty-nine affordable rental housing projects will be the target of \$108 million from several state and federal affordable housing programs and tax credits, yielding more than 2,000 affordable housing units across Massachusetts, while helping to create thousands of jobs.

The \$108 million investment will yield 2,255 rental apartments which will be affordable for low- and moderate-income wage

earners. Roughly 350 units will be reserved in various developments for low-income families transitioning from homelessness. Each project will utilize green building technology, including energy saving appliances, plumbing fixtures, heating systems, windows and insulation to make these new developments energy efficient. Project funding will support 39 developments in the following communities:

Athol, Boston, Billerica, Cambridge, Greenfield, Harwich, Lawrence, Longmeadow, Lowell, Marshfield, Northampton, Somerville, Townsend, Tyngsboro, Wareham, Chelsea, Fall River, Gloucester, Leominster, New Bedford, North Andover, Salem, Springfield, Weymouth and Worcester.

For a detailed list of projects, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/cqgeaf>.

Summer Jobs for Massachusetts Youth

This summer 60 communities across the state will receive more than \$30 million in state and federal recovery funds over the next two years to create an estimated 10,000 summer jobs for young people. Summer jobs are opportunities for young people to imagine a different future for themselves, and a structure through which to achieve it while earning an income. With summer approaching, Governor Patrick plans to combine \$6.67 million from the state's YouthWorks summer jobs program with \$3.1 million in public safety

funds and \$21.1 million in workforce development funds provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Governor's approach will maximize state and federal resources, helping to increase the number of jobs for young people between the ages of 14 and 24 to an estimated 10,000. Summer jobs are also part of a comprehensive youth public safety strategy that includes prevention, intervention and enforcement. Work teaches young people alternatives to violence and promotes positive activities and responsibility, helping

to reduce violence in our communities. Learning about cutting edge technology, finance or public service helps students academically and prepares them as they make college and career choices. For a full list of communities that will receive funding for summer jobs, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/dzqa6z>. If you want to hire a teen or if you are a teen looking for work you can call the toll-free hotline at 1-866-968-8461 or visit www.commcorp.org/youthworks.

MA Recovery Reaches Public Education

School districts across Massachusetts will receive \$280 million in federal education recovery funds to assist special education, care and support plus \$10 million for preschool special education services for Fiscal Years 09 and 10. The new special education funding will help school districts boost student achievement by improving direct services to children,

releasing technical assistance to schools and districts, advancing the integration of technology into curricula and classroom instruction, developing and implementing transition programs, and focusing on capacity building activities to improve the delivery of services by school districts. Additionally, 166 school districts across the Commonwealth will receive

\$168 million in federal education recovery funds to ensure every district reaches foundation spending levels next school year. This investment will preserve programs and avoid teacher layoffs at a time when the global economic crisis is forcing communities to increase class sizes, cut positions and make other difficult budget decisions.

Visit WWW.MASS.GOV/GOVERNOR/CALENDAR and be a part of the discussion.

Public Higher Education in Massachusetts

All state and community colleges and the University of Massachusetts system will together receive \$162 million in federal education recovery funds, restoring funding to campus budgets, averting layoffs and program cuts and mitigating student fee hikes. These investments will save programs and positions at all of the colleges while mitigating the need for schools to institute drastic

student fee hikes to plug budget deficits, saving students money and ensuring continued access to an affordable education. Additionally, federal funds will allow the University of Massachusetts to rebate the \$1,500 fee increase announced last month, and instead employ the standard annual increase to cover the cost of inflation. If the higher education recommendations in the Gov-

ernor's FY10 budget are approved by the Legislature, Governor Patrick will use \$162 million in federal education recovery funds to restore budgets to FY09 levels as follows:

- UMass: \$81.6M
- Community colleges: \$40.3M
- State colleges: \$36.7M
- Other forms of support including training grants: \$2.8M

**COMMONWEALTH
CORPS**
INSPIRE. UNITE. ACT.

Helping MA Recover

**Worcester State College
Intergenerational
Urban Institute:
Ending Hunger Together
Project**



12 Corps members have recruited an additional 70 volunteers and anticipate they will reach at least 300 people in their service year.

Service includes:

- Food stamp outreach and application assistance to elders
- Assist with the outreach and management of volunteers at Brigham Hill Community Farm
- Create an outreach program to involve urban schools
- Develop and maintain a new hunger website that connects people across the Commonwealth in the fight against hunger.

MA Recovery Aids Health and Human Services



Great Barrington – August 5, 2008



Milton – July 21, 2008



Salem – July 8, 2008

Approximately \$764 million in additional Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) funding will be available to Massachusetts in FY09 and FY10.

Through thoughtful and strategic investments, Massachusetts residents who will rely on the state for key services and supports now more than ever, will be protected.

FMAP funding will secure jobs and support health care services by providing

needing funds to hospitals, nursing homes, and community health centers. Additionally, it will assist in maintaining health care reform by preserving coverage and eligibility for all existing MassHealth and Commonwealth Care members.

Finally, it will protect the Safety Net within key Health and Human Services agency including support for additional rental subsidies for people with mental

illness living in the community, preserving 82 social work positions at the Department of Children and Families, addressing substance abuse for detained and committed youth and provide critical funding for the Children’s Behavior Health Initiative.

For more information about what the federal recovery law means for Massachusetts, please visit www.mass.gov/recovery.

Patrick-Murray Administration Holds Community Forums

Governor Patrick, Lieutenant Governor Murray and senior administration officials will host 36

“Community Forums on Choices and Priorities” between now and the end of May. The forums will give residents a chance to voice their opinions about the proposals being debated on Beacon Hill, allowing them to offer suggestions, ask questions and engage with their neighbors.

The Governor will host community forums in:

- Braintree, May 11th
- Boston, May 14th
- Franklin, May 17th
- Marblehead, May 21st

The Lieutenant Governor will host community forums in:

- Cambridge, May 12th
- Norwood, May 18th
- Saugus, May 19th
- Hyannis, May 21st

Dates, times, locations and administration hosts for other forums can be found at

www.mass.gov/governor/forum. Summaries of the forums, along with videos and questions, will be posted here starting next week. To attend a forum or find more information, visit the website or call the Governor’s Office at 617.725.4025.

Massachusetts is Shovel-Ready

A modern transportation network, adequately funded and professionally managed, is essential to our economic and social future. Just as the Internet serves as a platform for modern communication, our roads, rails and bridges serve as a platform for commerce and economic growth.

The Transportation and Economic Security Plan will help pay down debt and make sound, sustainable investments to fix crumbling roads and bridges and secure the state’s economic future. The Massachusetts Recov-

ery Plan integrates state, federal, and private investments through Transportation Bond Bills, the Accelerated Bridge Repair Program and federal stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to put people to work today repairing our transportation infrastructure.

Massachusetts will spend \$437.9 million over two years on road and bridge projects and federal stimulus funds are now being invested in “shovel ready” projects across the Commonwealth. The first 8 projects to be advertised repre-

sent critical road resurfacing and traffic sign replacement in each of the five MassHighway regional districts including Route 116 in Adams, Route 6 In Bourne and Routes 18 and 28 in Bridgewater. An additional \$319 million will fund urban and regional transit projects.

For more information about the Governor’s transportation reform proposal, “shovel-ready” projects in your area, or to contribute to the conversation, please visit www.youmovemassachusetts.org.



Don't forget to check out the Civic Engagement Calendar

www.mass.gov/governor/calendar

Finds events in your area and contribute to the conversation.