To disrupt poverty and create economic mobility for families, we need to address systemic racism by enacting policies that eliminate barriers and promote success for all families. Our efforts are informed by the families we work with and the staff who partner with them every day.

**Priority Bills**

**An act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth** (H605/S362)


Establishes a system of affordable, high-quality early education & care for all children from birth through age 5 as well as after- and out-of-school time for children ages 5-12, and for children with special needs through age 15.

**An act to lift kids out of deep poverty** (H199/S96)*


Raises the TAFDC grants by 20% until they reach 50% of the Federal Poverty Level in order to lift families out of deep poverty. Grants have only been raised by 10% in the past 20 years and are currently not tied to inflation.

* Indicates there is a corresponding budget effort

**Secondary Bills**

**An act to streamline access to critical public health and safety-net programs through a common application** (H1290/S761)

Streamlines and improves the application process for safety-net programs by creating a common application.

**An act to prevent COVID-19 evictions and foreclosures and promote an equitable housing recovery** (H1434/S891)

Seeks to prevent evictions and ensure equitable distribution of housing resources during the pandemic and recovery.

**An act to guarantee debt-free higher education** (H1339/S829)

Ensures Massachusetts public college and university students can leave college without student loan debt.

**An act providing for climate change adaptation infrastructure and affordable housing investments in the Commonwealth** (H2890/S1853)

Doubles the deeds excise tax on real estate purchases and dedicates the estimated $300 million in annual revenue for affordable housing and climate sustainability.
$200 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) (7004-9024)
Provide families with access to safe and affordable housing. We want to maintain the 9,000-plus vouchers in use and increase the number of vouchers to provide families with the stability they need. We also call for making vouchers more affordable by decreasing the tenant share of rent to 30% of income. (We also support the corresponding bill to codify the program and make these improvements.)

$250 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program (7004-9316)
Ensure people have support with back rent and utility payments, first and last month’s rent, security deposits, and transportation to avoid evictions and maintain housing. We support targeting eviction prevention dollars towards communities most impacted, particularly BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities. We call for the inclusion of language to increase the benefit cap to $10,000/household to meet current needs. (We also support the corresponding bill to codify the program and make improvements.)

Raise cash grants by 20% in the Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) program (4403-2000)*
Maintain recent TAFDC grant increases and raise grants by 20% more with the goal of lifting families out of deep poverty (grants above 50% of the Federal Poverty Level). Grants have only been raised by around 19% in the past 20 years and are not tied to inflation.

$5 million for the Secure Jobs Initiative (4400-1020)
Help families experiencing homelessness access stable jobs in order to move closer to economic stability. This initiative bridges the critical gap between housing and workforce development services.

$17 million for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) including the Learn to Earn (LTE) Initiative (7002-1075)
Fund training opportunities for parents who are low-income for jobs leading to economic stability. We support the WCTF programs, including the LTE Initiative, which helps families on basic needs programs manage the cliff effect and get support to access and maintain employment. The LTE pilots launched in 2021 focused on serving BIPOC families currently utilizing basic needs programs.

* Indicates there is a corresponding legislative effort

Questions? Contact Chelsea Sedani at csedani@empathways.org or 617-259-2936