



## For Families Raising Children in Challenging Circumstances Federal Budget Cuts Could Make Conditions Worse

Massachusetts ranks **7<sup>th</sup> in family and community conditions** for children in the national KIDS COUNT rankings of the states. Recent victories and future progress could be at risk if Massachusetts loses federal funding that has been crucial to Massachusetts for building strong and healthy family communities and shaping our children's physical and social environments.

### The Rankings

#### ***#1 in Lowest Teen Birth Rate***

Massachusetts leads the nation in having the lowest teen birth rate (currently 9 births per 1,000). The rate has been cut almost in half over the past five years. [State-](#) and federally-funded local public health programs have included access to reproductive health care and other strategies that are successful in encouraging teens to delay pregnancy.

#### ***Tied for #6 in Lowest Percent of Children in Families Where Parent Lacks High School Diploma***

Approximately 8% of children in Massachusetts live in families in which their parents never graduated from high school. State and federal funds support [adult basic education](#), alternative education, and other programs that help low-income adults finish high school and have access to affordable higher education. These programs help parents towards a diploma, which lessens risks of economic instability, unemployment, and housing insecurity.

#### ***#18 in Lowest Percent of Children Living in High Poverty Areas***

Close to 106,000 children in Massachusetts (8%) live in communities with relatively high poverty rates, and are less likely to have access to high-quality child care, well-resourced schools, convenient medical clinics, or access to affordable transportation.

#### ***#21 in Lowest Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families***

About one in three children (33%) in Massachusetts are growing up in single-parent families. While that in and of itself may not necessarily be a risk factor in child development, when coupled with economic insecurity, housing instability, lack of community resources, and other characteristics, these children are particularly vulnerable to multiple challenges growing up.

The federal government is a key [partner](#) for the state in funding programs that support families' social environment and their communities. Cuts to these programs could have lasting effects on Massachusetts' children.

- The state receives more than \$9.8 billion in federal funds for Medicaid (MassHealth), supporting affordable health insurance for low-income families. Proposed repeal of the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion could put more than [\\$1.1 billion](#) at risk in

Massachusetts by 2021. The proposal to turn Medicaid from an entitlement to a per capita cap and additional funding cuts in the President's budget proposal would cut even more. Altogether, these could amount to an [estimated](#) 45% reduction in federal funds for health insurance by 2026 (over \$4 billion each year). Federal revenue cuts this large would put enormous pressure on the state, potentially leading to cuts throughout the state budget.

- The state receives \$506 million for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, which supports child care for low-income families as well as [direct cash assistance](#) for very low-income families in the state's Transitional Assistance program. The President's budget would [cut](#) funding going to Massachusetts by about \$90 million.
- The state [receives](#) \$232 million in federal funds for Housing Choice ("Section 8") Vouchers. These flexible housing subsidies can be [important](#) for families hoping to move out of poor communities with low-quality housing. The President's budget cuts this and other affordable housing programs [by about 15%](#) from what policymakers had approved for this current year.
- The state budget relies on approximately \$114 million from a variety of federal grants that support child welfare programs. Although the President's [budget proposal](#) does not target these grants for cuts, the elimination of the Social Services Block Grant (below) and cuts to TANF (above) could have an effect on supports essential for strengthening at-risk families, as a portion of these other block grants also support child welfare programs.
- Massachusetts [receives](#) \$11 million for the maternal and child health block grant, a [priority](#) of which is to "Promote equitable access to preventive health care including sexual and reproductive health services." The President's budget proposal increases this by 5%, but [prohibits](#) the use of federal funding for any reproductive health care at any of Massachusetts' five Planned Parenthood clinics.
- Massachusetts [receives](#) \$10 million in federal funds for adult basic education in the community, as well as funds that support adult education through workforce innovation (WIOA) grants. The President's budget proposal would [cut](#) by anywhere from about 13% to 16% these various funds that support education for low-income learners.

In addition, the President's [proposed budget](#) recommends completely **eliminating** certain sources of federal funds. Massachusetts would [lose](#):

- \$29 million: Community Development Block Grant (economic development for communities);
- \$72 million: Community Development Entitlement Grants (municipal economic development);
- \$16 million: Community Services Block Grant (funding for community action agencies).

**To see what works to improve family and community environments for our children, see MassBudget's [Children's Budget](#) and [Jobs & Workforce Budget](#).**