

# massbudget

Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center



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## **32% of Children Live in Cost-Burdened Households: MassBudget Urges Lawmakers to Focus on Affordability**

*50-State Data Show Massachusetts Kids Continue to Fare Well in Education and Health Outcomes, But Massachusetts Families Are Battling Some of the Highest Housing Costs in the Country*

**BOSTON, MA** — Massachusetts ranks second in child well-being, according to the **2024 KIDS COUNT® Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how kids are faring in post-pandemic America. **However, high housing costs relative to family income continue to leave Massachusetts families worse off economically than families in almost all other states, with Massachusetts ranking 43<sup>rd</sup> nationally.**

The Commonwealth continues to be a nationwide leader in education and health, ranking first and second, respectively, in these domains. Relatively strong state test scores and the lowest uninsured rate among children in the country drive Massachusetts's ranking in these areas. While our state ranks relatively highly on the economic well-being of children, Massachusetts families face some of the least affordable housing costs in the nation. Hispanic households in the state are the most likely to be cost burdened, with about 47% of all Hispanic households paying more than 30% of their income for housing. The data show Massachusetts leaders must do more to address the housing affordability crisis.

"Housing is a foundational piece of overall child well-being. Stable housing is an essential precondition for children to thrive academically, socially, and physically. With only 7 states doing worse than the Commonwealth, we must address this crisis in housing affordability for Massachusetts to continue to be a national leader in overall child well-being," said Adam Jones, Policy Analyst at Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, Massachusetts's member of the KIDS COUNT network.

Each year, the *Data Book* presents national and state data from 16 indicators in four domains — economic well-being, education, health, and family and community factors — and ranks the states according to how children are faring overall.

Addressing the housing affordability crisis will take new thinking and investments at the local, state, and national levels. MassBudget recommends:

- Allowing cities and towns to choose to levy a local fee on high-end real estate transactions, with revenue placed into the municipality's affordable housing trust fund.

- Increasing the number of Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) vouchers available while maintaining the 9,500+ vouchers in use to provide individuals and families safe and affordable housing.
- Codify MRVP to show a long-term commitment to this vital housing tool, ensure voucher holders' rights are explicitly defined in law, and create a statutory framework to assess and report on outcomes and make data-driven decisions to improve the program over time.

This legislative session, our legislature can move us closer to an equitable Commonwealth by passing a budget and other legislation that prioritizes affordable housing for Massachusetts families.

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#### **RELEASE INFORMATION**

The 2024 KIDS COUNT® *Data Book* will be available at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://www.aecf.org/databook). Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the *Data Book* can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at [datacenter.aecf.org](http://datacenter.aecf.org).

#### **ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's young people by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.