

H.3020 / S.724, AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE ECONOMIC MOBILITY AND STABILITY PROGRAM



Filed by Rep. Aaron Vega & Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry

- This bill creates a commission to study the numerous Self-Sufficiency programs administered on federal, state and local levels that help households increase their incomes and build assets.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAMS IN MASSACHUSETTS

- Self-sufficiency programs help families get education, increase their incomes, and build assets to attain financial self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on supports with stable housing as the foundation.

- **Federal level:** The Federal Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) is program administered by the Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

- FSS is for federal public housing residents and Section 8 voucher recipients.
- As the participant's income and rent share increases, an escrow account is established by the public housing agency to set aside funds for the participant at the end of the program.
- The participant can use these funds for any purpose, such as homeownership, starting a business, paying off loans, or going back to school.



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Family Self-Sufficiency Program

- **State & Local level:** The State Legislature has funded, along with private philanthropic dollars, the Secure Jobs program.

- In 2014, DHCD also launched Massachusetts Learning Employment and Asset Program (MassLEAP) to help households receiving state rental assistance increase their incomes and assets, thereby increasing their stability.
- EMPATH and the Worcester Housing Authority have their own programs at the local level.

WHY STUDY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAMS?

- Each program has a different approach and program components with different outcomes.
- There is a need to identify the models that work best that can be scaled to run throughout the state.
- This will help more households across the Commonwealth attain financial stability.

WHAT WILL THIS LEGISLATION ACHIEVE?

- A legislative commission would provide the opportunity to bring together stakeholders to examine these programs and make recommendations to the Legislature and Administration for programs that could be scaled and assist families across the Commonwealth towards a path of economic mobility.
- Tied to increases in income, the Commission will also examine cliff effects and determine ways to adjust assistance in response to changes in income, including automatic adjustments tied to minimum wage increases.

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