

Note: This document seeks to reflect the policy priorities that are being proposed, as well as the basic framing. Everything will be further wordsmithed, and additional supporting material will be added to the final document to be released on Friday.

Emergency Task Force on Coronavirus & Equity

Top Priority Policy Recommendations

These recommendations will help people meet their basic needs while also slowing the spread of the virus. They will also create a platform over time to address structural inequities that create disparate impact of COVID-19. We recognize that racism, poverty, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination are at the root of inequitable vulnerabilities to this and future outbreaks.

Expand Earned Sick Time

The legislature should expand the provisions of the Earned Sick Time Law to create greater eligibility and coverage by expanding the duration of coverage, the types of workers who are covered (e.g., part-time, contractors, municipal workers, adjuncts, undocumented immigrants), and the reasons for eligibility (e.g., physical distancing, quarantine, caring for a loved one).

Ensure Immigrants Have Safe Access to Testing and Treatment

The Governor, Attorney General, and other state leaders must aggressively communicate to immigrant communities that all state residents will have access to testing and treatment for COVID-19 regardless of immigration status, and that testing, medical, and social service providers may not share patients' personal information with federal immigration enforcement authorities. They must also reassure immigrant communities that use of state-funded services will not count against them under new federal "Public Charge" rules. State funding should be allocated to trusted community organizations and community media to lead messaging and outreach campaigns.

Pass a Moratorium on Evictions, Foreclosures, and Termination of Public Benefits

The Legislature and Governor Baker should enact a moratorium on all evictions and foreclosures during and in the aftermath of the outbreak, as well as a moratorium on termination of public benefits such as SNAP, MassHealth, and disability benefits.

Make Sure Everyone Has Access to Safe Quarantine

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and other state agencies must identify alternative sites for safe, dignified quarantine for people experiencing homelessness and others living in congregate facilities without safe access, given the significant potential for rapid transmission of COVID-19 in homeless shelters and other facilities that are already at capacity and unable to implement recommended spatial distancing protocols. Adequate state and federal resources must be allocated to support this response.

Note: Contextual information in the release will note the importance of language access, highlight additional areas that need attention (e.g., people who are incarcerated), and stress the need for ongoing and additional work in these and other areas.