



## Where Do MassBudget's Budget Numbers Come From?

MassBudget reviews budget legislation and uses data provided to us by state and legislative officials to inform our budget analyses and to update the data in our Budget Browser. We make several adjustments to the state's published numbers to allow for better year-to-year and across-proposal comparisons. Our updated *Budget Browser* numbers and our budget analyses will include these adjustments, with explanations. Some of these are:

- MassBudget's budget totals include the "pre-budget transfers" of funds. There are statutes requiring automatic appropriations of revenue to support certain functions independent of the annual budget. These transfers include: tax revenues dedicated to the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) and school building assistance, cigarette excises dedicated to the Commonwealth Care Trust Fund, state contributions to the pension system, transfers to the State Retiree Benefits Trust, transfers to the Workforce Training Trust, as well as others.

The Governor and Legislature do not reflect these expenditures in their budget totals; instead, the Governor and Legislature reflect the amounts of these appropriations as amounts deducted or transferred from revenue prior to the budgeting process. MassBudget includes these amounts in budgeted totals.

- MassBudget's totals include annual appropriations into non-budgeted ("off-budget") trusts in all budget years. Prior to FY 2011, the budget authorized these transfers in Outside Section budget language. Starting in FY 2011, a new section of the budget, Section 2E, has systematically accounted for the transfer of funds into off-budgeted trusts. MassBudget's totals include these operating transfers in all budget years.
- MassBudget reduces State Employee Health Insurance totals to exclude spending on health insurance for municipal employees and retired teachers for which the state is fully reimbursed by participating municipal governments.
- MassBudget reduces funding for the community colleges, state universities, and University of Massachusetts campuses by the amount of tuition that these campuses remit to the state treasury each year. These adjusted totals more accurately reflect the "net" appropriations available to the campuses to support operations, and allow for more consistent comparisons across the years, since the policies about tuition remission have varied from year to year and from campus to campus. The MassBudget adjustments make it possible to make meaningful comparisons of appropriations to these campuses even with these policy changes.
- MassBudget's totals reflect legislatively-approved "prior appropriation continued" (PAC) amounts. MassBudget typically shifts the PAC amount from the year in which the funding was first appropriated into the year in which the Administration expects to spend the totals.

- Because MassBudget totals reflect budgeted appropriations and not actual spending, there can be apparent fluctuations in the MassHealth and Health Reform totals that are simply due to the timing of payments to certain off-budget trusts. These budget variations may not reflect real differences in spending.

## **What's Included in MassBudget's *Budget Browser*?**

The *Budget Browser* includes all funding in the state budget from Fiscal Year 2001 to the present. In the current fiscal year, the *Browser* also tracks the budget debate, from the Governor's initial budget proposal through the final enacted budget. The enacted budget – the General Appropriation Act (GAA) – includes the Governor's vetoes and the Legislature's overrides of those vetoes.

To simplify the budget, MassBudget groups budget appropriations into categories and subcategories. The *Browser* shows totals for large policy areas or categories (e.g., Health Care), smaller subcategories (e.g., Public Health), or specific line items (individual appropriations). The *Browser* also allows the user to review historical budgeted amounts adjusted for inflation.