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## Statement from Joe Diamond, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association for Community Action, In Response to Proposed Federal Budget Blueprint

**Boston, Mass. (February 12, 2018)** - “The budget proposed by the Trump administration is a cruel one, especially in light of the new tax law that in almost every way favors the rich. President Trump’s budget adds insult to injury by eliminating the very programs that have helped millions of people leave poverty.

Cutting the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) program will not only adversely affect thousands of residents of Massachusetts, but will also remove millions of dollars from communities across the Commonwealth. It will devastate vulnerable individuals, families, and seniors while also weakening communities as a whole.

Similarly, eliminating the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and weatherization programs (WAP) will hurt low income families struggling through winters in New England. This will cause people to have to make terrible choices between heating, eating, food, clothes, and medicine, and will create a public health hazard in cities and towns across Massachusetts.

The economy currently does not work for everyone, and until it does, programs like fuel assistance, CSBG, and WAP are critical. The President’s budget eviscerates the social safety net, the very programs that are necessary to counter the effects of his tax package. Community Action Agencies are on the front lines, and we see the struggles that low income families face. We very much appreciate the tireless work of our congressional delegation who continue their efforts to protect the programs that help hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Massachusetts residents living with low incomes become economically stable and mobile.”

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### **About MASSCAP**

The Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) is a statewide association of the 23 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) operating in Massachusetts. Through the combined skills and vision of its members, MASSCAP works to enhance the ability of each agency to better serve its clients. We work with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and other state agencies to open doors to self-sufficiency for low-income Massachusetts residents.

### **About Community Action Agencies (CAAs)**

Community Action Agencies work to help our most vulnerable populations, especially the poor. Rooted in the communities we serve, we ensure that the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable are met. Our agencies provide basic

social safety net services, including administration of services that help mothers and children afford nutritious food, assistance that prevents seniors from going cold in the winter, and centers that provide quality early child care to families. Last year, FY2016, CAAs helped more than 600,000 people in need.

We are also at the forefront of providing vulnerable populations with innovative services that help move individuals and families to economic independence. By employing thousands throughout the state, and by administering services whose funds create an important multiplier effect throughout communities, Community Action Agencies are important economic engines, especially in the Gateway cities of Massachusetts.