



February 3rd, 2022

New Year, New DLS Webinars Municipal Finance Training and Resource Center



As the calendar turned over, DLS was pleased to host two webinars in January covering topics important to the local budgets. Recorded versions of these presentations and other related resources are available on our [Municipal Finance Training and Resource Center](#):

In this edition:

- **New Year, New DLS Webinars**
- **Ask DLS: Appropriation Transfers**

Important Dates & Information

FY2023 Preliminary Cherry Sheets Estimates

DLS has posted on its website preliminary cherry sheet

- [Tuning Your Motor Vehicle Excise Skills](#): Chris Wilcock, Chief of the Bureau of Local Assessment, highlighted motor vehicle excise best practices, excise regulations, and content tips for excise webpages. Chris explored helpful DLS publications that are available on the DLS website for local officials and residents who want to know more about excise. For more information, check out the [motor vehicle excise training and resource](#) webpage. You can also refer to the motor vehicle excise [assessors' learning module](#) and find answers to [frequently asked questions](#) provided by the [Bureau of Municipal Finance Law](#).
- [The Next Step in Forecasting](#): Melinda Ordway from our [Financial Management Resource Bureau](#) highlighted how a forecast enables the user to play out a variety of financial scenarios, examine and project revenue streams, use varying assumptions, analyze the potential cost implications in the current and following years, and develop

estimates based on Governor Baker's FY2023 budget recommendation (House 2).

[Municipal receipts and charges](#)

[Regional school receipts and charges](#)

More detailed information regarding Chapter 70 and other school finance related initiatives contained in House 2 and the accompanying legislation can be found on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) [website](#). Information includes the Chapter 70 aid calculations, minimum contributions and net school spending requirements.

It is important for local officials to remember that these estimates are preliminary and are subject to change as the legislative process unfolds.

Please contact the Data Analytics and Resources Bureau at databank@dor.state.ma.us with any questions.

2022 Housing Choice Designation Application

The 2022 application for

reasonable budget options in the best interest of the community. To start developing your forecast, download our [financial forecast template](#) and corresponding [financial forecast user manual](#). You may also find the [debt service calculator](#) and [capital targets template](#) helpful. You can also refer to [prior training videos](#) focusing on forecasting to help guide you.

We also want to thank the Massachusetts Municipal Association, Secretary Heffernan, Commissioner Snyder and all our partners in local government who joined us virtually for our [Fiscal Outlook Webinar](#). To view the webinar, please [click here](#). To download the presentation, [click here](#).

Be sure to bookmark the [Municipal Finance Training and Resource Center](#) page and subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) to stay updated on new items as they become available.

Have something you'd like to see added? We'd love to hear from you! Please email our Data and Analytics Bureau at DARB@dor.state.ma.us.

Ask DLS: Appropriation Transfers

This month's *Ask DLS* features frequently asked questions concerning appropriation transfers. Please let us know if you have other areas of interest or send a question to cityandtown@dor.state.ma.us. We would like to hear from you.

How does a municipality determine the amount available for a transfer?

The amount of any appropriation available to be used as a financing source for another appropriation is the unspent and unencumbered balance, i.e., the amount after all potential liabilities to be charged to the appropriation are considered. Accounting officers should determine this

Housing Choice designation is now live at [2022 Housing Choice Designation Application](#).

The Housing Choice Initiative rewards municipalities that have produced certain rates or amounts of new housing units in the last five years and that adopted best practices related to housing production that will sustain a 21st century workforce and increase access to opportunity for Massachusetts residents. Communities that achieve the Housing Choice Community designation have exclusive access to apply for the Housing Choice Grant Program and receive bonus points or other considerations to certain state grant programs.

Details, recent changes, and application can be found at [2022 Housing Choice Designation Application](#).

MCPPO ARPA Training

The Office of the Inspector General through its Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official Program will be presenting an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) training on March 24th, 2022.

amount before any transfer from an appropriation is approved.

Are there special rules if the transfer is being made from surplus bond proceeds or a restricted fund?

Yes. Transfers from surplus bond proceeds after a project that was financed by borrowing has been completed or abandoned may only be made in the manner and for the purposes set forth in [G.L. c. 44, § 20](#). Transfers from appropriations financed by other restricted sources, e.g., stabilization, enterprise, water surplus or community preservation funds, are subject to the same statutory restrictions as the original appropriations.

What is the appropriation transfer process for towns?

At any time during the fiscal year, a town meeting may by majority vote transfer any amount from any appropriation to any other municipal use authorized by law. During May and June, and the first 15 days of July of the new fiscal year, the selectboard, with the agreement of the finance committee, may transfer any amount from a departmental or other appropriation to any other appropriation. This procedure may not be used, however, to transfer funds from a municipal light or school department budget. An end-of-year transfer using this alternative procedure requires a majority vote of the selectboard and a majority vote of the finance committee. Any end-of-year transfer from the municipal light or school department budget requires town meeting approval.

What is the intra-departmental appropriation transfer process in cities?

At any time during the fiscal year, the city council, upon recommendation of the mayor, may transfer any amount from a departmental appropriation to another appropriation within the same department. Intra-departmental transfers require a majority vote of the council.

This 90-minute webinar will provide an overview of eligibility rules for fiscal recovery funds and limits on the use of ARPA funds and reporting requirements.

Participants will also learn how ARPA applies to Chapter 30B and cooperative and collaborative contracts, and federal single audit compliance.

To learn more, please [click here](#).

Proposed FY2023 State-Owned Land Valuation under MGL C. 58 § 13-17

The Division of Local Services has posted on its website proposed FY2023 state-owned land values based on the fair cash value of certain state owned lands (SOL) pursuant to [MGL Ch. 58, §§ 13-17](#). These lands are reimbursed for loss of local tax revenue on the Cherry Sheet's State-Owned Land line.

Click [here](#) to display the proposed municipal state-owned land values and their share of the total state-owned land. In addition, please see the DLS [Frequently Asked](#)

What is the inter-departmental appropriation transfer process in cities?

At any time during the fiscal year, the city council, upon recommendation of the mayor, may transfer any amount from a departmental or other appropriation to any other appropriation. Inter-departmental transfers require the prior written approval of the amount by the department from which the transfer is being made and a two-thirds vote of the city council. If the transfer is being made from a municipal light or school department appropriation, the light board or school committee must approve the amount by majority vote.

Is there an alternative end of year transfer process for cities?

Yes. During May and June, and the first 15 days of July in the new fiscal year, the city council, upon the recommendation of the mayor, may transfer any amount from a departmental or other appropriation to any another appropriation. This procedure may not be used, however, to transfer from a municipal light or school department budget.

An end-of-year transfer using this alternative procedure requires only a majority vote of the council. Approval of the department from which the transfer is being made is not required. Any end-of-year transfer from the municipal light or school department budget requires approval under the applicable general transfer procedure.

What else should I know about year-end transfers?

The relevant statute which addresses this process is [G.L. c. 44, §33B](#). This addresses year-end budget transfers for the last two months of the fiscal year, i.e., May and June, and the first 15 days of July of the new fiscal year, which is the statutory period for closing municipal financial records for the fiscal year. [G.L. c. 44, §§ 56 and 56A](#). The relevant Informational Guideline Release (IGR) for appropriation transfers is [IGR-2017-13](#). The procedures explained here

[Questions](#) about this [program](#).

The Bureau of Local Assessment (BLA) is notified of acquisitions, deletions and agency transfers by the Department of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance (DCAMM). In preparation for the FY2023 final numbers, if your community has newly reported and outstanding acquisitions from calendar year 2020 and 2021, you will be notified by mid-February by BLA for processing in the Gateway system by March 1, 2022. It is imperative you respond to any request for information within fifteen (15) days to have the additional acreage included in your FY 2023 valuation issued on June 1, 2022.

Any community questioning their proposed state-owned land valuation should contact the Bureau of Local Assessment at bladata@dor.state.ma.us.

ARPA's Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) – Revenue Loss

The Division of Local Services has posted revised guidance regarding the revenue loss component of the American

govern appropriation transfers unless a charter or special act provides otherwise. Officials should consult with municipal counsel about any applicable charter or other provisions.

Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), based on the US Treasury's [final rule](#) implementing the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) issued on January 6, 2022. To view Bulletin 2022-01, please [click here](#).

For additional information and guidance related to the municipal finance aspects of ARPA, please bookmark the DLS [Covid-19 Resources and Guidance for Local Officials page](#). To access additional IGRs and Bulletins, please click [here](#).

Office of the Inspector General ARPA Resources

Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Massachusetts state, county, tribal and local entities are receiving millions of dollars in federal aid to respond to the public health and economic impacts of the public health emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Office of the Inspector General has compiled the following rules and resources related to the ARPA from our Office, the federal government, other state

agencies and private organizations. Our Office also has compiled [Bulletin articles](#) related to: using ARPA funds, including articles about:

- paying for supplies and services with federal funds
- reviewing invoices
- analyzing data
- auditing vendors
- applying Chapter 30B
- preventing bid manipulation

Cybersecurity Health Check Program

The Office of Municipal and School Technology provides the following program available to Massachusetts municipalities and schools. If you have any questions, please contact

Catherine.Marques@mass.gov

[Cybersecurity Health Check](#)

The Cybersecurity Health Check Program provides opportunities for local government to access basic cyber security services at no cost.

These services can be a good first step in discovering,

assessing and identifying cybersecurity gaps that could impact IT systems that support essential business functions. This is a rolling application.

DLS Links:

[COVID-19 Resources and Guidance for Municipal Officials](#)

[Events & Training Calendar](#)

[Municipal Finance Training and Resource Center](#)

[Local Officials Directory](#)

[Municipal Databank](#)

[Informational Guideline Releases \(IGRs\)](#)

[Bulletins](#)

[Tools and Financial Calculators](#)





Editor: Dan Bertrand

Editorial Board: Marcia Bohinc, Linda Bradley, Sean Cronin, Emily Izzo, Lisa Krzywicki and Tony Rassias

Contact *City & Town* with questions, comments and feedback by emailing us at cityandtown@dor.state.ma.us. To view previous editions, please [click here](#).

To unsubscribe to *City & Town* and all DLS alerts, email dls_alerts@dor.state.ma.us.