

THE SUN

Sunday, August 17, 2025

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EMPLOYEES TAKE SIDES

A Market Basket divided

Dueling narratives show divisions within the company's offices

By Peter Currier
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TWICKSBURY » As the corporate shakeup within Market Basket continues to unfold, some divisions are visible within the company's corporate offices as some

employees report tension in the Tewksbury headquarters, and others report an improved company culture.

After May 28, when Market Basket CEO Arthur T. Demoulas

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Market Basket Store Operations Supervisor Valerie Polito speaks at a press conference at the grocery chain's Reading location Aug. 8, a day after her letter to the Market Basket board became public, detailing a devolving company culture in the wake of the suspension of CEO Arthur T. Demoulas. Other employees have since come forward to say the culture has improved, showing divisions among staff.

JIM DAVIS — BOSTON HERALD

'A LACK OF DUE DILIGENCE'

MONKS REMOVE TREES IN FLOOD PLAIN WITHOUT PERMIT

Conservation Commission ratifies enforcement order against Vatt Khmer temple



COURTESY CITY OF LOWELL

A section of trees cut down without permitted approval at 48 Townsend Ave. at the Vatt Khmer Lowell and Khmer American Cultural Center in Pawtucketville.

By Melanie Gilbert
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LOWELL » A resident on Shirley Avenue remembers kayaking around her Pawtucketville neighborhood after the Mother's Day flood of 2006. The area, designated a flood plain, is home to the Claypit Brook and the Merimack River.

It is also home to the Vatt Khmer Lowell and Khmer

American Cultural Center on Townsend Avenue, which was slapped with an enforcement order by the Conservation Commission for cutting down dozens of trees within a flood plain without a permit.

"This to me screams of a lack of due diligence," Chair Brad Buitenhuys said during the Wednesday night meeting at City Hall. "You have a set of documents that say flood zone.

I know it's your property but it's our jurisdiction. You've removed a significant amount of trees in the flood plain, which help to soak up and disperse flood waters."

Drone footage from Aug. 3, sent to The Sun by Centralville resident William Palermo, shows the extent of the tree-cutting operation. The tree destruction comes at a time of increasing concerns about the city's

urban canopy, heat islands and flooding risks to residents and infrastructure due to climate-related changes.

Samkhann Khoeun, president of the board of directors for Vatt Khmer, told the commission that the tree-cutting was an "oversight," based on a permit approved in 2019.

But Conservation Commis-

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ANTI-POVERTY FUNDS

Community services grants on chopping block in D.C.

Program defenders up against Trump claims that grants fund 'woke programs'

By Chris Lisinski
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LAWRENCE » Anti-poverty advocates and a Democratic congresswoman on Thursday accused the Trump administration of "doubling down" on spending cuts that could harm the state's lowest-income residents.

As President Donald Trump targets the Community Services Block Grant program he alleges has been "hijacked" for other purposes, Bay Staters argued that the funding provides critical support for housing assistance, child care, heating aid and more.

Leaders from several community action agencies laid out a call to action, urging their supporters and constituents to contact members of Congress and express opposition to the cuts Trump has eyed.

"It's not only a part of our identity, but it's also an amazing investment in our communities," Greater Lawrence Community Action Council Executive Director and CEO Vilma Dominguez-Martinez said about the block grant program. "Through community action, the entire community prospers each time a family avoids eviction with our support. We alleviate the strain on our hospitals and shelter system."

Trump in May outlined a discretionary budget request for federal fiscal year 2026, which begins Oct. 1. His plan would cut money from what the administration described as several "woke programs," including elimination of

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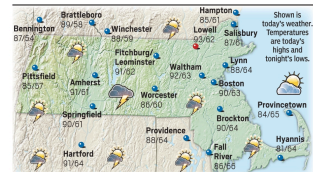
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Weather

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TODAY		TOMORROW	
High: 93	Low: 62	High: 78	Low: 54
A t-storm late this afternoon		Sunny and less humid	
TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY	
High: 74	Low: 58	High: 68	Low: 57
Sunshine and delightful		Cloudy, showers around; cool	



Almanac

Statistics through 4 p.m. Saturday

Temperature
High/low 84/56
Normal high/low 82/64

Precipitation
24 hour total Trace
Month to date 1.96"

Year to date 22.68"
Normal year to date ... 30.38"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2025

Sun & Moon

Sunrise today 5:54 a.m.
Sunset tonight 7:44 p.m.
Moonrise today none
Moonset today 3:53 a.m.

New	First	Full	Last
Aug 23	Aug 31	Sep 7	Sep 14

Lotto

WINNING NUMBERS DRAWN SATURDAY

MASSACHUSETTS

Mid-Day: 3-4-1-3

Playoffs (on \$1 bet):

Exact Order:

All four, \$5,189

First, last three, \$726

Any two, \$62

Any one, \$6

Any Order:

All four, \$432

First three, \$121

Last three, \$121

Evening: 0-3-0-9

Playoffs (on \$1 bet):

Exact Order:

All four, \$4,888

First, last three, \$684

Any two, \$59

Any one, \$6

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COURTESY COMMUNITY TEAMWORK

From left, Massachusetts Association for Community Action Executive Director Joe Diamond, Congressman Lori Trahan, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council Executive Director and CEO Vilma Dominguez-Martinez, Community Teamwork Inc. CEO Carl Howell and Kerri Perry, CEO of Community Action Inc. in Haverhill, at a Thursday, Aug. 14, 2025 media event at GLCAC.

Grants

FROM PAGE 1

Community Services Block Grants worth a combined \$770 million.

The White House in a fact sheet alleged the funding "has been hijacked from true poverty reduction to things such as equity-building and green energy initiatives."

"Grants have funded things such as the California Community Action Partnership to host focus groups on bringing 'DEI to the forefront,' and Community Action Agency in Wisconsin to 'combine clean energy with affordable housing in the pursuit of both economic and environmental justice,'" the White House wrote.

The grant program is a core source of funding for the 23 community action agencies in Massachusetts, who together serve more than 600,000 people, according to the Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP). Dominguez-Martinez said her organization used \$381,000 in CSBG funds to help more than 2,700 people last year with workforce development, English classes and financial empowerment services.

"This is pretty affordable, considering that at a cost of just \$72 per client — talk about cost-effective and rate of return," Dominguez-Martinez said.

Massachusetts received \$75 million in CSBG funds last year, said Congresswoman Lori Trahan, who



COURTESY COMMUNITY TEAMWORK

From left, Community Teamwork Chief Program Officer Kayombo Kamawu, Division Director of Energy and Community Services Connie Martin, Director of Contracts Amy Weatherbee, and Division Director of Child and Family Services Meghan Simmer.

added that its uses ranged from job training to housing assistance to emergency food aid. Some of the grant funding went toward the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helped more than 170,000 Bay State families pay for heat or electricity.

"Anyone who has spent a February here in Massachusetts knows just how critical that is and how dangerous it would be to take it away, but that's what Republican politicians in Washington are trying to do," Trahan, a Democrat, said. "They're defunding these programs, and it's not just cruel, it's short-sighted, because when families can't afford their heat or their food or stable housing, the ripple effects hit our schools. It hits our hospitals, our local economies, our entire community."

Trahan described the budget proposal targeting CSBG as "doubling down" on the major spending cuts already enacted through the federal reconciliation bill targeting areas such as Medicaid and food stamps. "Eliminating LIHEAP and CSBG would be devastating for families, seniors, and veterans across Greater Lowell and throughout the



COURTESY COMMUNITY TEAMWORK

Community Teamwork Inc. CEO Carl Howell speaks at a Thursday, Aug. 14, 2025 media event at the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council to highlight the impacts of cuts to federal anti-poverty funds.

country," Community Teamwork Inc. CEO Carl Howell said in a statement. "These aren't handouts—they are lifelines. They keep people safe in their homes, provide critical stability during times of crisis, and

ensure no child or elder is forced to choose between heating their home and putting food on the table. We are profoundly grateful to Congresswoman Trahan for her leadership in protecting these essential programs and standing up for the communities that rely on them most."

MASSCAP launched an email campaign helping supporters contact Congress to urge continued funding for the block grant program.

"Community Action was created over 60 years ago to fight poverty, to eliminate the paradox of poverty amidst plenty in the richest country in the world," said MASSCAP Executive Director Joe Diamond. "We've made progress. There have been fits and starts, and now we're facing probably the most stressful, if not dangerous, time in the life of the republic in terms of our ability to organize ourselves and help each other."

MASSCAP and community action agencies are asking the public to visit masscap.org/takeaction and urge their congressional representatives and senators to fight to protect these programs, include CSBG and LIHEAP funding in the fiscal 2026 budget, and save Community Action.

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— John Leahy, Former Mayor & City Councilor, City of Lowell

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