

# ONE Massachusetts

Ready to Talk About Taxes!

# What is *ONE* Massachusetts?

A network of people and organizations sharing a common vision – to rebuild public confidence in our capacity to work together, through our government, to expand economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in Massachusetts.

Join at [www.onemassachusetts.org](http://www.onemassachusetts.org)

**ONE**  
Massachusetts

# Our Goal

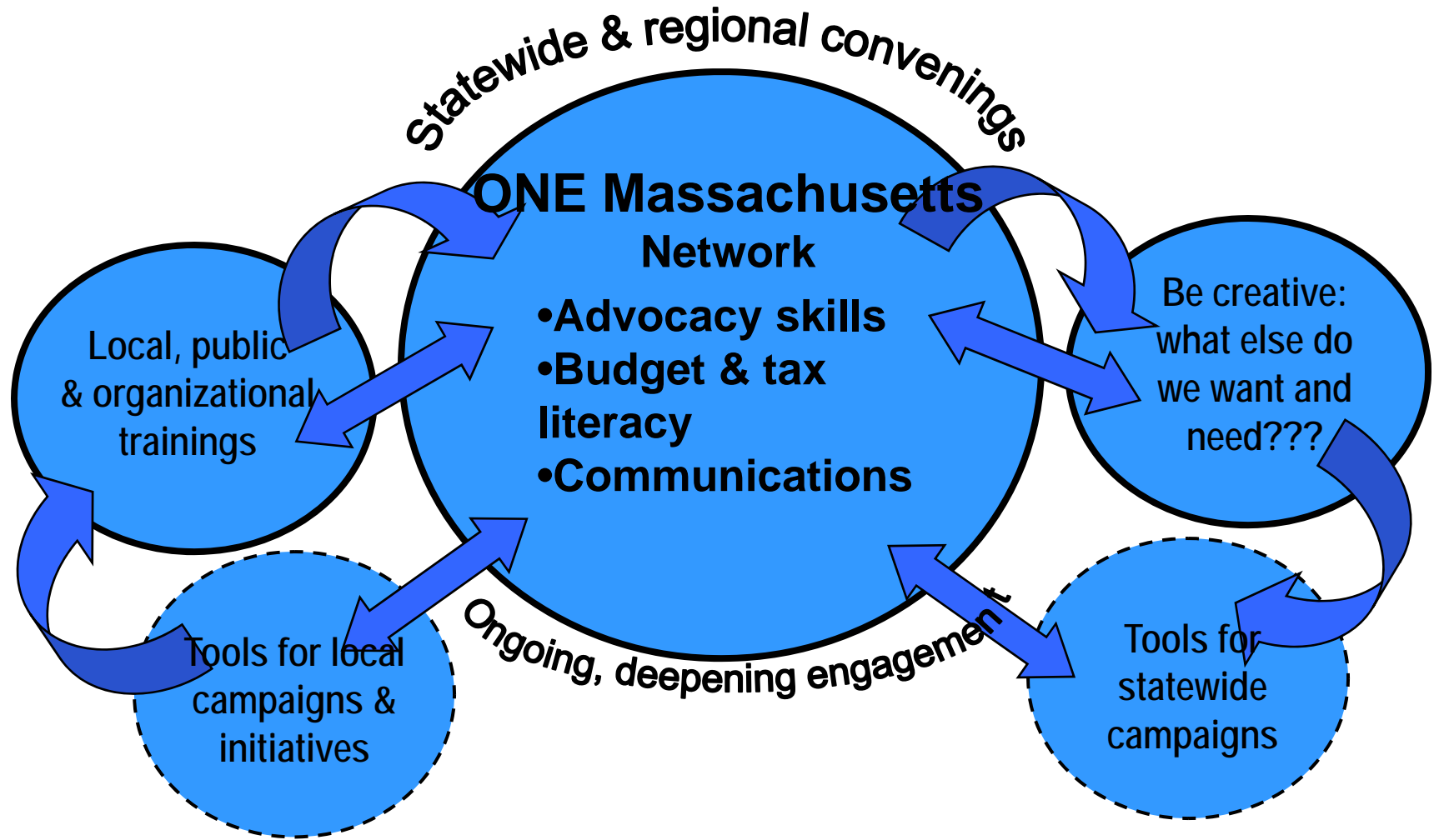


Public support for a government dedicated to the common good and empowered to address the challenges and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

[www.demos.org](http://www.demos.org)



# ONE Massachusetts Network



# What Makes a Healthy Community?



# The Challenge

Rebuilding Confidence in our  
Government

# The Challenge: results of Demos research

- Dominant and Resilient images consistently misdirect thinking.
- Concrete images of the systems and structures of government are missing.
- Consumerist thinking narrows understanding and responsibility.

# Hurdles in Talking about Government & Taxes

## Dominant Images

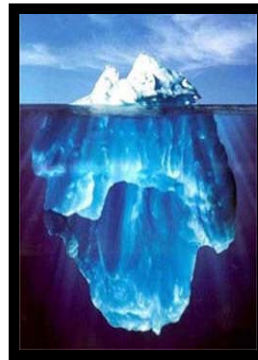
## Implications

Government as:  
“those” partisan,  
bickering  
elected officials.



Taxes are:  
paid to those “corrupt and  
incompetent” individuals.

Government as:  
a dimly understood  
but vividly-imagined  
bureaucratic blob.



Taxes are:  
swallowed and wasted by  
the invisible, inefficient  
blob.

Government as:  
a Vending Machine.



Taxes are:  
being taken from me – not  
being spent on *my*  
priorities!



# Shifting the Terrain

## Dominant Story

Budget Crisis means  
Cuts are the answer

So People can keep  
more of their money

Government Spending  
is Bad

Taxes will Make  
Things Worse

## A New Story

Economic challenges  
need Wise decisions

To maintain  
Quality of Life

Public Systems must  
Respond

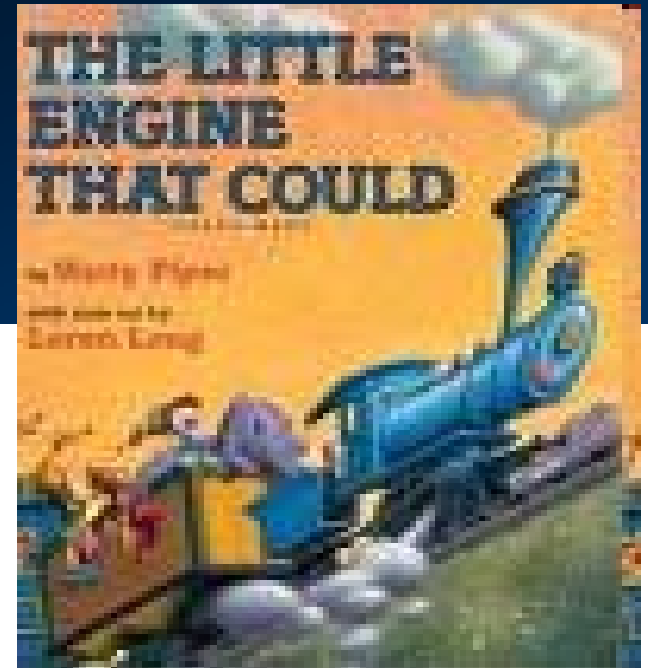
A Responsible Budget  
looks at both revenues  
and expenditures

# What kind of story do you tell?

## Chicken Little



Desperation



Aspiration

# Elements of a New Story

<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>
<b>Laundry Lists</b>	<b>Values</b>
<b>Protecting The Vulnerable</b>	<b>Looking Forward</b>
<b>Crisis</b>	<b>Our Communities</b>
<b>Short-Term Thinking</b>	<b>Long-Term Thinking</b>
<b>How much will it cost?</b>	<b>What kind of state do we want?</b>

# Leading with Values

- ***Shared Values:*** Connect services or programs to quality of life and community well-being.
- ***Unique role of Public Institutions:*** shared tools for addressing public priorities.
- ***Supported Personas of Government:*** protector, long-term planner, steward.
- ***Budget Implications:*** Spending decisions effect *all of us* and the future of our state.
- ***Pitfalls of Scare-Tactics:*** Laundry lists of dire consequences do not work.

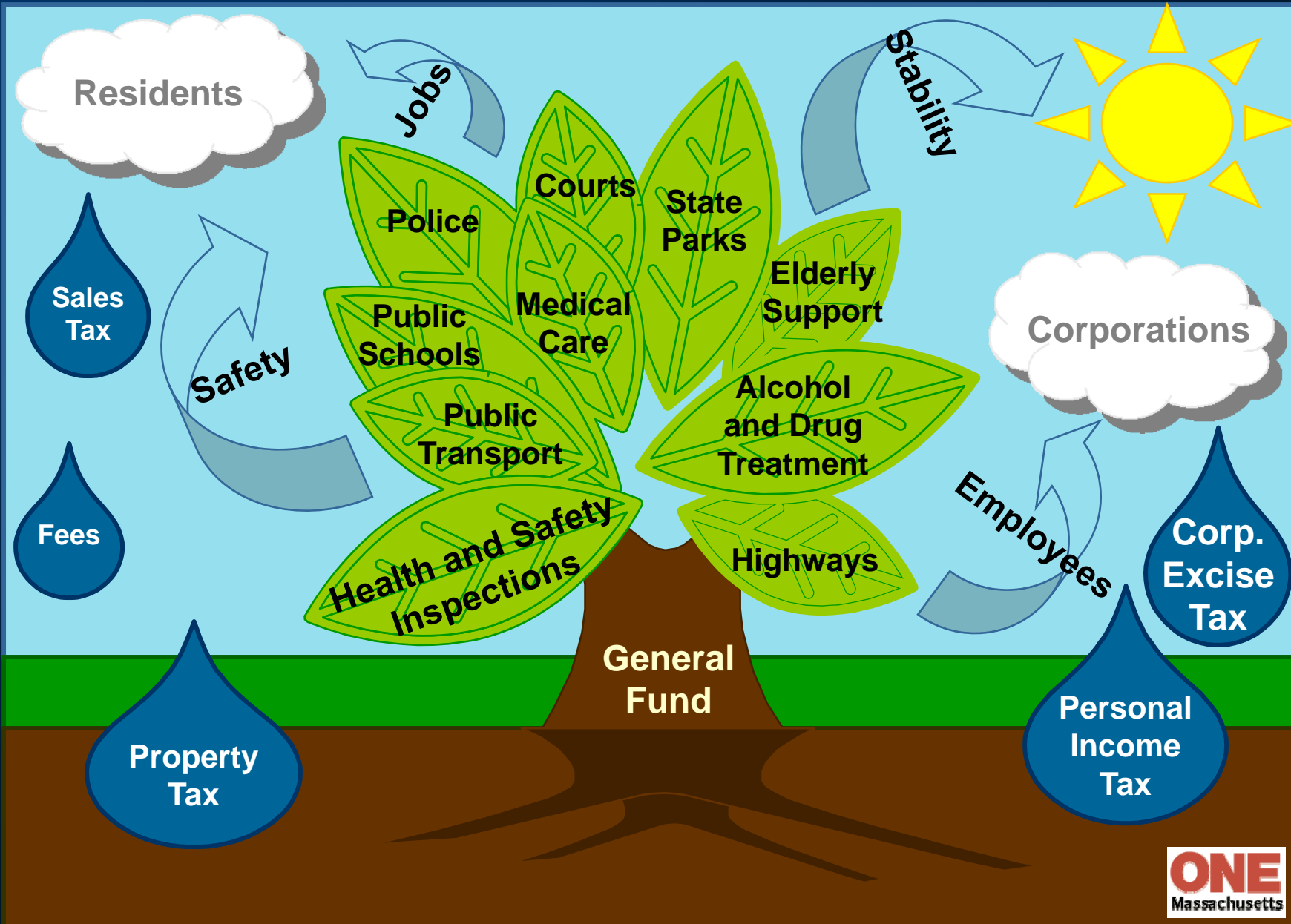
# Government as Public Structures

. . the main advantages that make America so successful come from the **Public Structures** it has created

. . . these **Public Structures** include the *physical* structures (highways, airports, and communications grids) and the *organizational* structures (the postal system, courts) we need to get things done, and the *social* support systems that help to ensure the health and well-being of our communities

. . . it is our well-functioning and supported **Public Structures** that are essential for overall success . . .

# Public Structures



Residents

Jobs

Stability

Sales Tax

Police

Courts

State Parks

Public Schools

Medical Care

Elderly Support

Corporations

Safety

Public Transport

Alcohol and Drug Treatment

Fees

Health and Safety Inspections

Highways

Employees

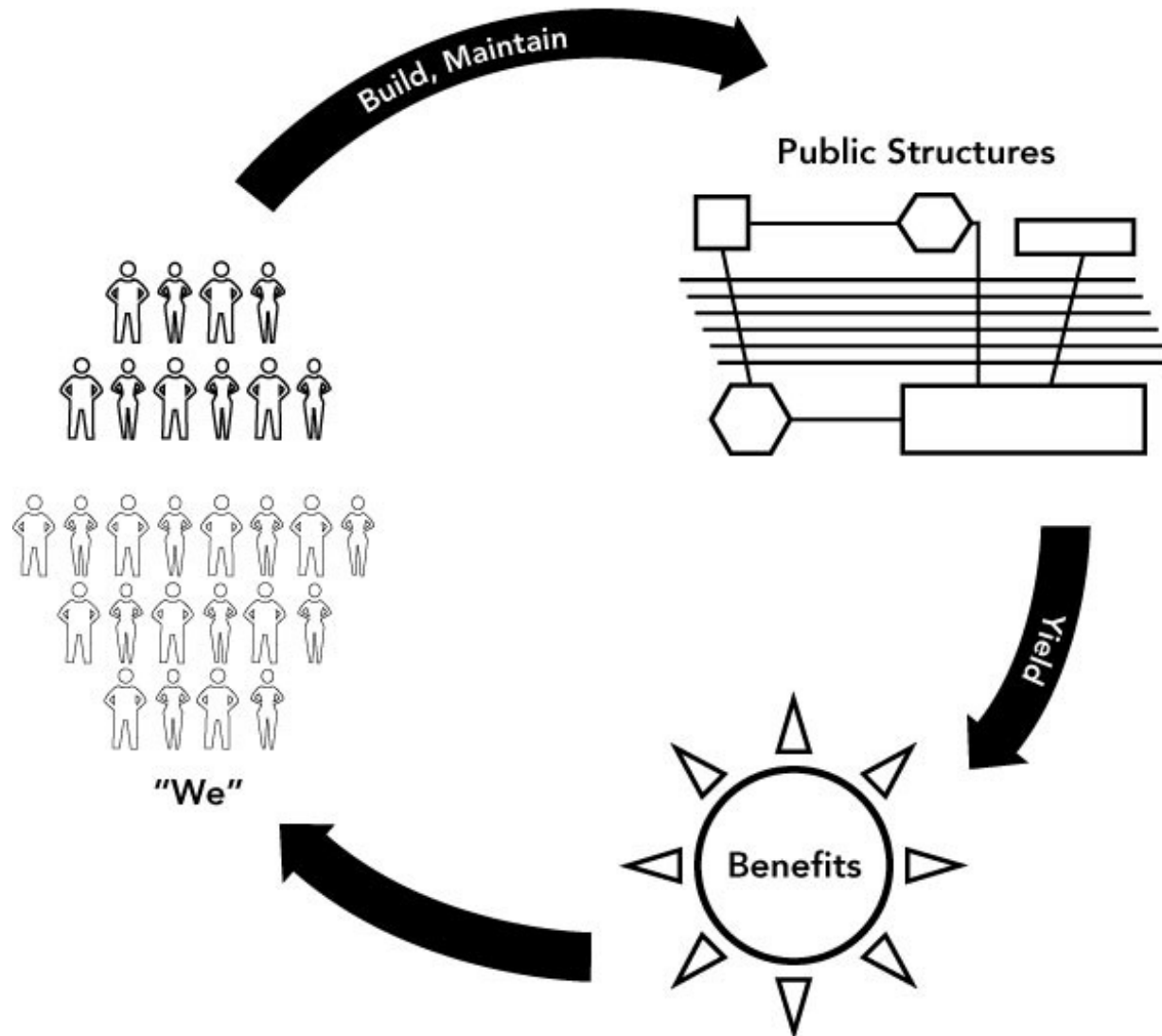
Corp. Excise Tax

Property Tax

General Fund

Personal Income Tax

# Rounding Out the Story



# Talking about Taxes

"The tax break that the legislature is considering is bad policy; our state already has one of the lowest tax burdens in the country and further reductions will only result in a loss of government services that people like and expect."

**VS.**

"There are projects in our state that need to be taken on for everyone's good – from repairs to our bridges and upgrades to our schools' technology to improved access to health care and more affordable higher education. Taxes are a means for getting these things done together. Changes to our tax system that reduce revenues threaten our prosperity and quality of life."



# Use Values to Build a Case

- **Level One** (values): justice, opportunity for all, strong family, common good, quality of life, prosperity.
- **Level Two** (issues & movements): anti-poverty, women's rights, the environment, adult education, workforce development
- **Level Three** (policies & stats): TANF, SCHIP, EITC, RX Assistance, Reduce bycatch

# Exercise

- Choose a program you are concerned about.
- Describe how we all/the state benefits from this program/service (Value).
- Does this have particular significance during an economic downturn? Why?
- Why is this a public/governmental responsibility?

Want more? email to [info@onema.org](mailto:info@onema.org)