



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ♦ Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor ♦ Tina Brooks, Undersecretary

PUBLIC HOUSING NOTICE 2010-01

To: Local Housing Authority Executive Directors

From: Amy Schectman, Associate Director, Public Housing & Rental Assistance
Ray Frieden, Director, Bureau of Housing Development and Construction
Debra Hall, Sustainability Program Developer

RE: **Energy & Sustainability Initiatives - Update**

Date: January 5, 2010

The purpose of this email is to circulate the first publicly-available notice about the new **Low-Income Multi Family Energy Retrofit Grant Program** that is being funded by investor-owned electric & gas utilities. DHCD previewed this new energy efficiency program at the NAHRO fall meeting and in the Public Housing Notice 2009-19 back in October. The **Preliminary Program Description & Application Process** is attached for your review, and it will be followed by more finalized information once the Dept. of Public Utilities completes its review at the end of January.

We also would like to give you the latest news on the other topics covered in that October sustainability & energy update: Weatherization, Other ARRA grants and Low Flow Toilets Round 2. Over 110 housing authorities are involved in these programs!

Low-Income Multi Family Energy Retrofit Grant Program

As you will see on the attachment, the new program has substantial resources, likely over \$10 million a year! The best news is that grants will be offered - versus rebates – and can be pre-approved and applied to capital project budgets, augmenting your formula funding on projects involving energy improvements. However, to prove the cost-effectiveness of the spending, there will be a lot more emphasis on documenting energy performance and savings.

Whether you are just looking for some new lighting & refrigerators, or doing a more comprehensive capital project that involves energy systems and building envelope, the grant application process will be more elaborate, but the information benefits will be substantial over time. Once a significant number of housing authorities participate in the energy retrofit grant program and building energy performance information is loaded into the program's "Energy Tracker" system, each participating housing authority will have access to a powerful energy benchmarking tool that should help inform your capital and operating spending.

DHCD will be helping housing authorities "queue up" for the new services and funding, particularly if you already have a capital project underway that involves energy systems, or have poorer energy performance and could benefit from an audit. To make the application process easier, Rick Brouillard is working on a Capital Planning System (CPS) template report that will help you extract much of the required application data from the CPS database.

Debra Hall represents DHCD on the statewide Energy Efficiency Advisory Council that oversaw development of the utility 3-year plans; she will also be on the steering committee for program implementation working closely with program administrators. Debra will be setting up conference calls and updates at NAHRO regional meetings, so watch for email notices if you are interested in this utility-funded Multi Family Energy Retrofit Grant Program.

Weatherization, Other ARRA grants and Low Flow Toilets Round 2

Three other funding items from the October Sustainability & Energy notice are summarized below, with update information provided in italics.

- \$25 million in Weatherization Assistance Program /American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding is available for heating systems and energy-saving building envelope improvements in family housing where tenants pay heat.

28 housing authorities with Chapter 200 developments with expired heating systems are advancing ARRA weatherization projects through the design and bidding process, and 60+ additional housing authorities with Chapter 705 developments needing weatherization are in the tenant income verification process. Most of the projects approved for funding will involve heating system replacement. DHCD is using the Capital Planning Systems and LHA response form sent in October to identify additional sites for insulation and possibly window replacement.

- Small grants and zero interest bond funds are available for solar, wood and heat pump pilot projects, funded through the ARRA State Energy Plan.

These ARRA funds have turned out to be extremely limited for use by housing authorities, so we regret that the dozens of housing authorities who expressed interest cannot be accommodated in this heating season.

- DHCD's Water Conservation /Low-Flow Toilet Initiative – Round 2

Round 2 Award letters are being prepared and sent in several batches. Even if you have not yet received your award letter, you should contact Debra Hall about an upcoming January 12 conference call to launch the Round 2 program.

Thank you! Please direct questions to Debra Hall at debra.hall@state.ma.us if she has not already been in touch with you about these initiatives.