



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

Deval L. Patrick, Governor



Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor



Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary

**Public Housing Notice: 2012-10**

To: Local Housing Authorities  
From: Lizbeth Heyer, Associate Director, DPHRA and Ray Frieden, Bureau of Housing  
Development & Construction  
Subject: DHCD Small Projects Guide - \$0-\$25,000 Construction Cost  
Date: September 5, 2012

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Congratulations and thank you to all Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) statewide for submitting your three-year Capital Improvement Plans and starting to spend your Formula Funding! Taken altogether, these plans include hundreds of proposed capital projects to be completed each year of the three-year planning period. This represents a four-to-five-fold increase in the number of capital projects initiated and carried out annually, and a two- to three-fold increase in the number of LHAs engaged annually with DHCD in capital project implementation, as compared with prior years.

**Proposed Transition in Approach to Capital Project Implementation:** This order-of-magnitude increase in projects requires a major change in how DHCD and LHAs collaborate in capital project implementation. DHCD expects that LHAs will assume a larger role in managing their projects, especially the smaller ones with under \$25,000 in construction costs. **Going forward, LHAs will be responsible for implementation of projects with construction budgets less than \$25,000; DHCD will provide very limited technical assistance in small project implementation.** DHCD knows from experience that even small LHAs are capable of managing their own small capital projects, as evidenced by over 100 successful Accelerated Emergency Response Projects (AERP) and Water Conservation/Low Flow Toilet Retrofit projects.

**Introducing the DHCD Small Projects Guide:** Building on this experience, DHCD has compiled this Small Projects Guide for projects with construction costs under \$25,000. The Guide contains step-by-step instructions to make sure your project is done efficiently, cost-effectively and according to the applicable statutes, rules and regulations. At the end of the Guide is an Appendix with copies of checklists, sample documents or web links to key reference documents, such as "Front Ends" and DHCD Design Guidelines & Standards. Using this Guide, an LHA can:

- Take the project description from the Capital Planning System (CPS) level of detail and turn it into a doable project
- Decide whether and how to use professional design services
- Prepare design documents, compile a bid package, advertise or solicit quotes, receive bids and award a contract for the project
- Oversee the construction phase from Notice to Proceed (NTP) to closeout

- Certify to DHCD that the project was implemented in accordance with law and regulation and CPS information was updated to reflect the capital improvements installed and relevant repair, parts and warranty information, and
- Maintain a project record.

The information contained in the Guide represents DHCD's understanding of the current laws, regulations, and policies regarding procurement of design and construction services and the execution of small (less than \$25,000) building-related repair, replacement or modernization projects, including public bidding of construction in Massachusetts. DHCD will update this guide and its attachments and appendices as often as possible and the most current version will be available at: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/housing/ph-mod/0-25000-dhcd-small-projects-guide.html> Since these laws, regulations, and policies are always subject to change, the LHA is responsible for insuring that all information is current before proceeding.

The Small Projects Guide replaces the Accelerated Emergency Response Program (AERP) guidance that was recommended in many CIP approval letters as the "toolkit" for managing projects with construction costs under \$25,000. If you currently are using AERP Front Ends to bid a project, you can continue without any problem, since the bidding requirements and content has not changed for either the \$0-10,000 or \$10,000-25,000 process.

**Upcoming Training & Technical Assistance:** DHCD will also be providing other assistance in the form of trainings and remote technical assistance opportunities to help LHAs learn to implement smaller capital projects independently. Initially, we invite you to participate in one of three conference call/webinars to review this Guide, on:

*Thursday, September 13 at 2 PM*

*Tuesday, September 18 at 3 PM*

*Friday, September 21 at 10 AM*

Please RSVP to Gail Cassarino ([gail.cassarino@state.ma.us](mailto:gail.cassarino@state.ma.us)) indicating the date you would like to participate and she will send you call-in information. Over the next few months, DHCD will also schedule in-person presentations/trainings at some NAHRO regional meetings, and at the MAHAMS Conference on September 23. We will host District Hours in various regions of the state if at least 8 housing authorities commit to participating.

DHCD project managers, engineers, architects and construction advisors will still be available to answer questions and provide assistance when issues arise that are not addressed in this guide. However, they will try to limit their assistance on small projects, so they can focus on helping LHAs implement hundreds of larger capital projects (over \$25,000 and especially over \$100,000 in construction cost).

Your feedback on this guide is most welcome, either in these conference calls or by email. Please direct comments on the guide to [david.mcclave@state.ma.us](mailto:david.mcclave@state.ma.us).

Thank you for helping make Formula Funding and Capital Planning a success!