



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

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ♦ Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary

## Public Housing Notice 2013-26

To: All Local Housing Authority Executive Directors  
From: Lizbeth Heyer  
Re: Accessible Unit Initiative for FY14  
Date: November 1, 2013

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DHCD is committed to the goal of having 5% fully accessible units across the entire state-aided portfolio and making yearly progress toward this end. We are therefore pleased to announce that \$1M in funding is available in FY14 for bringing family and elderly public housing units up to the standards of current Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) codes (and Fair Housing Act and Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards where applicable). The funding for this initiative is separate and above the existing 1% Formula Funding set-aside for reasonable accommodations and the DHCD compliance reserve.

**Eligibility:** All local housing authorities (LHAs) with less than 5% accessible units in a program group may apply for funding under this initiative. However, due to limited funding availability, this year DHCD will give priority to those LHAs that have:

- **Zero fully accessible units** in the program for which they are applying (e.g. zero elderly ch. 667 units or zero family ch. 200/705 units) and no pending capital projects to create accessible units for such program; and/or
- **Prior, pending, and/or potential litigation or administrative complaints** concerning lack of accessible units at developments.

**Application Process:** LHAs should complete the attached application form and email to [amy.stitely@state.ma.us](mailto:amy.stitely@state.ma.us) by 5pm, Friday, November 22, 2013. Please write "Accessible Unit Application" in the subject line. Late submissions will be reviewed as funding permits.

**Funding Availability and Award Limits:** There is \$1M available for this initiative in FY14, and DHCD anticipates that this amount will remain steady in future years. In order to fund as many units as possible, awards will be limited to:

- A maximum of \$80,000 total development cost (TDC) per ch. 667 unit
- A maximum of \$250,000 TDC per ch. 200/705 unit

LHAs may pursue an accessible unit project that exceeds this per unit cost limit only if they can apply formula funding or other leveraged funds to make up the difference. Please note that the per unit award limit applies to both new construction and renovation projects.

DHCD will only fund accessible unit projects that bring the LHA up to the 5% baseline. For example, if an LHA has 100 elderly units, then an award will cover *a maximum* of five accessible elderly unit projects.

**Preconditions for funding:** In order to receive an award under this initiative, an LHA must incorporate the accessibility project into an updated ADA/Section 504 self-evaluation/transition plan. LHAs must submit a copy of the existing plan with their application. For more information on self-evaluation/transition plans, please see guidance on DHCD's Fair Housing and Civil Rights information webpage: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/fair-housing-and-civil-rights-information.html>.

**Criteria for Prioritizing Awards:** DHCD anticipates that there will be more requests for funding than there will be funds available. Applications will, therefore, be evaluated according to the following considerations:

- LHA's supply of accessible units (% available by program type);
- Prior, pending, and/or potential litigation or administrative complaints concerning lack of accessible units at developments;
- Need/demand for accessible units, as demonstrated by waitlist and/or local/regional data;
- Ability to convert unit for a reasonable cost, per estimated scope;
- Total number of units that would be taken offline in renovation and would require tenant relocation;
- Consistency with LHA's ADA self-evaluation and transition plan;
- LHA's capacity to successfully manage and execute capital improvement projects; and
- LHA's ability to leverage other non-DHCD funding sources for the project.