Public Housing Notice 2017-05

To: Local Housing Authorities

From: Sarah Glassman, Associate Director, Division of Public Housing & Rental Assistance

Date: February 14, 2017

Subject: Local Housing Authority Mandatory Board Member Training

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DCHD) is pleased to announce the launch of a mandatory online training program for board members of state-aided Local Housing Authorities (LHAs).

Chapter 235 "An Act Relative to Local Housing Authorities" Section 5B requires that DHCD establish and implement a comprehensive training program for board members of state-aided LHAs. DHCD partnered with the University of Massachusetts's Donahue Institute to develop an online training. Board members can take this training anywhere there is an internet connection. Board members may go through the five modules and one mini-module at their own pace as long as they complete all modules by the deadline of **11:59pm on Monday, June 19, 2017.**

Below are common questions and answers about the training:

1. **I'm an executive director, do I need to do anything regarding this training or public housing notice (PHN)?**

Please make sure that your board has received copies of this public housing notice and attachment either in hard copy _or_ forwarded in soft copy to a frequently checked e-mail address. **This PHN should also be printed, brought to and discussed at your next board meeting.**

Your board members may not remember which e-mail address you submitted to DHCD on their behalf and may ask you to check for them in the Housing Application (where you take monthly board member attendance); please provide them with that information if requested.

2. **I'm a board member, how do I access the training?**

Board members can take the training by clicking on the link below, or copying and pasting the link into their browser, and entering their username and password when prompted:

Link to training: https://lhaboardtraining.umassonline.net/

3. **What is my username? What is my password?**

Username: Board members should use whatever **email address** they or their executive directors submitted to DHCD as their username. If you do not know or remember what e-mail address was submitted on your behalf, please reach out to your executive director.

Password: All board members should use the password **LHAtraining**

4. **What if I don't know/remember what e-mail address my executive director submitted to DHCD on my behalf?**

Your executive director submitted an e-mail address, on your behalf, using the online Housing Application. Your executive director can find the e-mail address they submitted on that site. If you or your executive director never entered an e-mail address, please have your **executive director add your e-mail** through the online **Housing Application** system and **then** e-mail Cate Mingoya at Cate.Mingoya@state.ma.us to alert her to the update.

5. **By what date should board members complete their online training?**

Current board members should complete all five modules and one mini-module **by 11:59pm on Monday, June 19, 2017**. After board members have completed their training, they need only retake the training upon reelection, reappointment, or every two years. Newly elected or appointed board members (those elected or appointed after the issuance of this public housing notice) must complete their training within 90 days of their election or appointment; executive directors must submit newly elected or appointed board members' unique e-mail addresses to DHCD as soon as possible via the online Housing Application.

6. **What topics do the modules cover?**

Mini-Module: History of Public Housing.
Module One: State-aided Public Housing and Funding.
Module Two: Governance, Oversight, and Staffing.
Module Three: Management and Operations.
Module Four: Modernization, Capital Projects, and Bidding.
Module Five: Resident Participation and Responsibilities.

7. **What is the program like?**

DHCD's board member training program is similar in format to the Commonwealth's ethics training. It is composed of five online modules and one mini-module that have slides of text overlaid with narration. After each lesson there is a knowledge check so that trainees can evaluate what they've learned. Board members must complete each module from start to finish in order to receive credit for completion.

8. **Is this training required for __all__ local housing authority board members?**

Yes, if your portfolio has state-aided public housing units, then __all__ board members are required to take the training. Chapter 235 Section 5B states: "Upon appointment and reappointment or election and reelection, all members shall complete a training program, as developed by the department, within 90 days of assuming the member's position. Members shall complete a training program every 2 years. Failure to complete a training program within 90 days of assuming a position as a member or failure to complete a training program every 2 years may constitute neglect of duty and that member may be subject to removal proceedings pursuant to section 6."

9. **How is module completion tracked?**

In order to take the training, board members must log in using a username (which is the e-mail address they or their executive director submitted to DHCD) and a password (the password is LHAtraining). When users log in and complete a module, a record of completion for that module is stored and transmitted to DHCD.

10. I'm a board member who isn't comfortable with computers and/or does not own a computer/tablet. How should I complete the training requirement?

For some, using an LHA computer to complete the training before or after a board meeting might be best. For others, receiving printed login instructions from the LHA and heading over to a local library to use public computers might be best. Board members may also reach out to friends, family, colleagues and fellow board members to borrow their computers.

As for computer comfort levels, we've developed a user-friendly format that requires board members to only enter their e-mail address and password and click on the module number to begin. We have also developed step-by-step guides with screenshots to help board members navigate the website; further assistance in using the website can be found here: https://confluence.umassonline.net/display/MDHCD. You can download and print a copy of the step-by-step guide here.

11. Is there tech support available if I have trouble accessing the modules?

Yes, The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute will provide support for issues in accessing the training. You can access tech support by e-mailing: lhasupport@umassonline.net or by using the ticketing system on the website.

If you have questions about the board member training that are ***not tech support related***, contact Cate Mingoya at 617.573.1190 or Cate.Mingoya@state.ma.us.