



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

Charles D. Baker, Governor ◆ Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor ◆ Janelle L. Chan, Undersecretary

Public Housing Notice 2019-27

To: Public Housing Authority Executive Directors
From: Ben Stone, Director, Bureau of Housing Development and Construction
Subject: **FY20 Health & Safety Initiative: Small Project Grant Round**
Date: November 14, 2019

This Public Housing Notice (PHN) informs all Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) of the availability of funds through the FY20 Health and Safety Initiative. This initiative provides LHAs with funds (**up to \$125/unit**) for small projects to address health and safety concerns. All projects must be substantially complete by June 30, 2020. Applications are due by December 13, 2019, but will be accepted and processed on a rolling basis before that.

These funds will be awarded by formula; this is **not** a competitive funding round.

Eligibility: All LHAs are invited to submit applications for funding by December 13th. LHAs must commit to completing the capital project requested by June 30, 2020.

Criteria for selection: DHCD Project Managers will review all proposed projects to make sure that they fit within the definition of a true health and safety liability and are appropriately funded through capital. **Total maximum award per LHA is \$125 per state public housing unit, with a minimum award of \$10,000.**

Although an LHA may receive greater than \$50,000 based on unit count, any individual project requested must **have an estimated construction cost of \$50,000 or less.**

Eligible Projects

DHCD will award up to \$5M in funds to LHAs for addressing health and safety hazards in site, common areas, and units. Before applying, LHAs should proactively examine their properties for potential hazards that threaten the health and safety of residents, staff, and visitors. Awards will be for capital projects that:

- If *not* completed, could put the LHA (and indirectly DHCD) at risk for future liability claims; OR
- Will improve accessibility for residents; OR
- Will improve health outcomes for residents; AND
- Require between \$1,000 and \$50,000 in capital funds; AND
- Can be fully completed in the current state fiscal year (by June 30, 2020); AND

• The project has not already been approved for funding and assigned a CapHUB project number. As was true in FY13, FY14, and FY15, awards will not carry over into the next fiscal year. Projects that have not been started will be put on hold, and for active projects remaining spending incurred after June 30th will come from LHA's formula funding. This initiative is specifically targeting the following types of work:

- Eliminating on-site trip and fall hazards, such as: damaged stair treads and nosing, damaged front & rear thresholds, pot holes or buckling in driveway areas or walkways, and ponding areas that lead to water & ice build-up;
- Replacing damaged, loose, or missing handrails;
- Replacing on-site public safety lighting;
- Removing trees or large tree limbs near buildings or power lines. If a tree is removed, sustainability funding is available to replace the removed tree in a more strategic location;
- Replacing windows with damaged balances;
- Replacing broken doors or inoperable door closers that lead to slamming doors.
- Installing ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs);
- Replacing or upgrading fire detection and protection systems;
- Reasonable Accommodation projects, such as installing roll-in showers; and
- Installing or upgrading bathroom or kitchen exhaust fans which vent to the exterior to improve indoor air quality; or
- Installing or upgrading outdoor lighting.

If you have a capital project that supports the health and safety of residents, but is not described above, you may still submit this item in your application for consideration. However, the DHCD Project Managers will be reviewing all proposed projects to verify that they fall within the definition of a true health and safety liability. Since DHCD is funding this initiative through the Capital Bond Account, all projects must qualify as bond-funded, capital expenses. (See Attachment C for detailed criteria)

Use of Extraordinary Maintenance Funds

DHCD's [budget guidelines for FY2020](#) included an Extraordinary Maintenance Initiative offering \$200/unit for health and safety items. This funding *may* be combined with the capital-funded Health & Safety initiative, under the following two conditions:

1. Project requested does not exceed \$50,000 in estimated construction cost
2. Project is an allowable capital expense (Attachment C)

Regional Capital Assistance Team (RCAT) Role:

Due to their current workload, in general RCATs **will not** serve as project managers for these projects, even those between \$10-50,000 construction cost. LHAs applying for funds must take on the responsibility or procuring and managing the project through completion before June 30th. DHCD Project managers will flag certain projects as "complex" and needing RCAT project management, but most projects funded through this initiative must be managed by LHAs.

Application process: Return Application (Attachment A of this PHN) to dhcddesignsubmission@mass.gov by **Friday, December 13, 2019 at 5pm. Applications will be**

accepted and projects processed at any time before the December 13 deadline. Include the words Health and Safety in the email subject line.

For planning purposes, **LHAs should anticipate a maximum award that is equal to \$125 per state subsidized unit.** This **does not** include the Section 8 New Construction/Substantial Rehab units that do not receive formula funding or DHCD operating subsidy. For instance, if an LHA has 500 units of state public housing, then that LHA could expect to get up to \$62,500 (500 X \$125) in funding. That said, DHCD has the discretion to award more or less than that amount depending on the situation.

LHAs should, therefore, be sure to list all potential projects on their submission sheet and rank them by priority level. A priority of ‘1’ denotes highest importance, and the total cost of ‘priority 1’ projects should not exceed the \$125 per unit limit.

DHCD project managers will briefly review to check that request is within funding limits, project is an allowable use of capital funds (Attachment C), and check whether the project is complicated enough to require RCAT involvement.

If you have questions about the Health and Safety Program, please contact Project Management Unit Director Fatima Razzaq at Fatima.razzaq@mass.gov.

All responses will be posted as an addendum to this PHN.

Attachments

Attachment A: Health and Safety Application

Attachment B: Guidance for Health and Safety Initiative FY20

Attachment C: Allowable Bond Expenses

Attachment D: Component Cost List & Calculator

Attachment E: Construction Front End under \$10,000

Attachment F: Construction Front End \$10-50,000

Attachment G: Health and Safety Design Consultant Scope of Services

Attachment H: List of DHCD Technical Specifications