Public Housing Notice 2020-01

To:	LHA and RAA Executive Directors
From:	Brendan Goodwin, Associate Director, Division of Rental Assistance
	Ben Stone, Associate Director, Division of Public Housing
Subject:	Rental Assistance and Public Housing Data Warehouse
Date:	January 2, 2020

The Divisions of Rental Assistance and Public Housing are excited to announce that development of a Rental Assistance and Public Housing Data Warehouse has begun!

As you may remember, DHCD began planning for a data warehouse in summer of 2018 by launching a state-wide listening tour and releasing a Request for Information. From the information DHCD learned, we posted a formal Request for Response for the data warehouse, selected a vendor, and signed a contract and statement of work with the selected vendor this week. DHCD selected Green River to build the Rental Assistance and Public Housing Data Warehouse. We have been impressed with their past work on collection of information on homeless households, multipronged solutions, and demonstrated experience working with stakeholders.

What is the SOHA Data Warehouse?
The SOHA (State Oversight of Housing Assistance) Data Warehouse will allow DHCD to centralize state-funded rental assistance (MRVP and AHVP) and state-funded public housing program data from Administering Agencies for the following purposes:
- ✓ To make better informed policy decisions
- ✓ To forecast future spending
- ✓ To respond to data and constituent requests
- ✓ To comply with reporting requirements

What Does the SOHA Data Warehouse Mean for Administering Agencies?
Part of the SOHA project is to standardize the information sent from Administering Agencies to DHCD. After the initial standardization efforts, data transfer should be streamlined and semi-automatic. In early January 2020, DHCD and Green River will work together in the planning stage. Green River will then spend the next few months on discovery and perform in-depth interviews with DHCD, with Administering Agencies, and with your housing management software vendors. The interviews will elaborate and update the information gathered in the 2018 listening sessions. The goal is to identify the best way to collect information needed by DHCD that is the least burdensome on you and your staff at the agencies.

DHCD and Green River will be reaching out to 20-40 LHAs to conduct discovery interviews. **During these interviews, LHA staff will only have to answer questions. Green River will track and document your answers for their design.** Green River will primarily focus on the software that Administering Agencies use to manage tenant information, what information is collected, and how information is stored. Agency input is necessary for the success of the SOHA. We know that Administering Agencies are very busy and appreciate your contribution. If you would like to volunteer to be interviewed in the discovery phase, please contact Pam Cole by email at pam.cole@mass.gov or call at 617-573-1418. Ms. Cole has been contracted as Project Manager for the development of SOHA and is the point of contact for Green River.

Thank you in advance for any assistance you can provide on this important project. If you have any questions, comments, and concerns, please feel free to contact Pam Cole at pam.cole@mass.gov or 617-573-1418.