



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

Charles D. Baker, Governor ♦ Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor ♦ Jennifer D. Maddox, Acting Undersecretary

Public Housing Notice 2020-06

To: Local Housing Authority Executive Directors

From: Laura Taylor, Director, Bureau of Housing Management

Subject: Implementation of the Annual Plan per Chapter 121B, Section 28A

Date: February 20, 2020

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW – KEY POINTS:

1. The new LHA Annual Plan (AP) process, required by the 2014 Public Housing Reform Bill, is rolling out this year.
2. **LHAs whose FY20 ends on September 30, 2020 will be the first to produce their APs.**
3. **Training on how to enter your data in the AP on-line software will be provided by Cybersense in March, 2020 for these 9/30 FYE LHAs.** Training information and sign-up form will follow in a separate email.
4. All other LHAs will be trained later this year, as described below.

The purpose of this Public Housing Notice (PHN) is to announce the implementation of the Annual Plan (AP) requirement mandated by the 2014 Public Housing Reform Bill¹, provide you with a brief overview of what you will need to do, how you will be trained, and furnish you with links to training materials and other documents that will help guide you through the process. The AP will be required of all Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) with state-aided public housing units, beginning with LHAs with September 30, 2020 Fiscal Year Ends (FYE). **Training will be provided about seven months before each LHA's FYE, and APs will need to be drafted five to six months before the LHA's FYE.** LHAs with 9/30 FYEs will be the first group to be trained and assisted through the Annual Plan process, with sign-up now for training starting in March.

¹ C.235 of the Acts of 2014. The AP requirements are codified at M.G.L. Chapter 121B, Section 28A. See also the AP regulations at 760 CMR 4.16 and LTO participation regulations at 760 CMR 6.09(3)(h) and 760 CMR 6.09 (4) (a) (4).

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1. Purposes of the Annual Plan (AP)

- Transparency - Provide residents and the public with a broad array of information about LHA operations, performance and policies.
- Improve LHA performance – Encourage LHAs to set goals and objectives to meet or improve upon its success in meeting the Performance Management Review (PMR) assessment standards.

2. What is included in the Annual Plan?

The AP is developed in CIMS, the same software used for the CIP. It includes the following components, much of which is auto-generated by the AP software system (much more detailed information can be found in the attachments to this PMR):

1. AP Overview and LHA Certification – overview is mostly auto-generated by the AP system
2. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – developed the same way as in the past, with RCAT assistance for LHAs in an RCAT (minor CIP process revisions noted in Section #6 below).
3. Maintenance and Repair Plan – developed with RCAT assistance, for LHAs in RCAT
4. Operating Budget – data auto-generated from prior approved budgets/op statements
5. Narrative responses to Performance Management Review (PMR) findings, if any – drafted by LHA
6. Policies – a list of LHA policies and the date each was approved by LHA Board
7. Waivers – a list of active DHCD waivers received (excluding those related to specific tenants or units, such as vacancy waivers)
8. Glossary of common words/acronyms found in the AP; automatically provided by the AP system
9. Other Elements – documents uploaded by the AP system or by the LHA, including tenant survey results, public comments on the AP, if any, and the LHA's responses

3. What is the process for creating my AP?

More details are provided in the attachments, but briefly the key steps are:

1. Training: Sign up for Cybersense online training
2. CIP: Prepare your CIP as usual, with Cybersense or RCAT assistance as appropriate
3. Gather the info you'll need to fill out your AP, as shown in AP Preparation Checklist
4. Pick a date for your public hearing, and make sure to post your hearing notice and draft AP 46 days in advance (see attached 'AP Date Calculator' for more detail).
5. Review the AP with Local Tenant Organizations (LTOs), if any
6. Hold a public hearing, hosted by the Board, with a quorum of members present, to accept any public comments on the draft AP
7. Review the AP and public comments with your Board, revise if needed, and obtain Board approval
8. Submit to DHCD

4. The AP preparation schedule

Annual Plans are due at DHCD two months before the LHA’s Fiscal Year End (FYE). For example, for the first group to create their APs – those with September 2020 FYEs (highlighted below) - the AP due date will be July 31, 2020. To work with your regular Board meeting dates, DHCD recommends these September FYE LHAs hold the public hearing in June, allowing for the document to be revised and approved at the July Board meeting, if needed. The following table lists recommended dates for the various AP preparation steps. For more exact dates based on your public hearing date, use the AP Date Calculator issued with this PHN.

Description	September FYE	December FYE	March FYE	June FYE
AP Year	AP-2021	AP-2021	AP-2022	AP-2022
Select hearing date	February-March 2020	May-June 2020	August-September 2020	November-December 2020
Take AP training session	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020
Prepare CIP	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020
Gather information for AP	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020
Prepare AP Components	April 2020	July 2020	October 2020	January 2021
Post draft AP and hearing notice (46 days before hearing date)	April 2020	July 2020	October 2020	January 2021
Review draft AP with LTOs	May 2020	August 2020	November 2020	February 2021
Hold public hearing	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
Revise AP and obtain Board approval	July 2020	October 2020	January 2021	April 2021
Submit to DHCD by due date	July 31, 2020	October 31, 2020	January 31, 2021	April 30, 2021
DHCD review	August-September 2020	November-December 2020	February-March 2021	May-June 2021

5. Training and other support

- LHA will be creating their Annual Plans using the CIMS software platform (the same system used to prepare CIPs). This system automates a great deal of the Annual Plan preparation, **but it requires training to use it.** Cybersense will be providing on-line web training to all LHAs, about seven months before the end of their fiscal year, as noted in the schedule above.

LHAs will be asked to sign up from a schedule of available training dates. We estimate the training will take 2-2.5 hours. DHCD strongly urges all LHAs to sign up for these **essential** training sessions as soon as they are offered. Since it touches upon all aspects of an LHA's operations, the Executive Director should participate in the training. LHAs may request that Cybersense authorize an additional staff member to participate in training. Please note that DHCD is not offering individualized training.

- In addition, DHCD will be providing a variety of user guides and other materials for users of the AP system in CIMS, including:
 - AP Date Calculator
 - Annual Plan Preparation Checklist
 - Quick start guide
 - User manual
 - Guidelines
 - Sample format for Preventive Maintenance Schedule
 - Sample format for Deferred Maintenance Schedule
- Help desk: Most LHAs are familiar with the on-line Public Housing Application Services Request System (PHASRS) as a way of directing and tracking specific questions about CHAMP and CAP HUB to DHCD. DHCD will update the PHASRS system to accept questions about the AP process as well, to ensure a quick response.

6. Changes to the CIP process

Beginning with the September FYE CIPs, the following changes will be made to coordinate with the Annual Plan.

- The CIP certification form will no longer be required as the CIP will be certified as part of the AP.
- The CIP will be reviewed with LTOs or tenants and approved by the Board as part of the AP; it will not need a separate review.
- It may be necessary to update the CIP after the hearing or just before submitting to DHCD, especially if revisions have been made to the currently active CIP during the time since the new CIP was drafted.
- The CIP must be submitted to DHCD before the AP. They can be submitted one right after the other, but for technical reasons you can't submit the AP until the CIP has been submitted.
- We will continue to issue FISH Reports to RCATs & Cybersense to assist preparers in updating Cap Hub project and award information.

If you have any questions about anything in this PHN, please contact Bill Holland, at william.holland@mass.gov or 617-573-1142

Attachments

Attachment A: AP Date Calculator

Attachment B: Annual Plan Preparation Checklist

Attachment C: Sample format for Preventive Maintenance Schedule – Excel from RCATs

Attachment D: Sample format for Preventive Maintenance Schedule – Word from PHN 2016-18

Attachment E: Sample format for Deferred Maintenance Schedule