



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

Charles D. Baker, Governor ◆ Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor ◆ Jennifer D. Maddox, Undersecretary

**PHN 2020-33
Addendum #1**

To: All Local Housing Authority (LHA) Executive Directors
From: Ben Stone, Director, Division of Public Housing
Date: December 21, 2020
Subject: [COVID-19 Response: Updated Recommendations](#) – Addendum #1

As we continue to see a surge of COVID-19 cases, we are reinstating the policy regarding waivers for vacant congregate units as stated in [PHN 2020-27](#). LHAs **may again request vacancy waivers** for congregate senior housing. The Executive Office of Elder Affairs has given Congregate Coordinators permission to pause lease-ups as the shared living setting may increase the risk for COVID-19 transmission. The setting makes it difficult to social distance and to follow other public health guidance. Congregate coordinators and LHAs should work together to discuss any vacancies and pending applications.

Each agency is asked to review each vacancy and the applicant's situation individually. Please balance the need to ensure safety of existing residents with the housing needs of the applicant based on their housing situation. As a reminder, LHAs may encourage but cannot require applicants to be tested for COVID before moving into congregate housing.

Waiver requests for vacant congregate units should be requested as Reason 4 – No c. 667 wait list (including congregate) in the on-line vacancy system. This policy will remain in effect until further notice from DHCD.