Commonwealth of Massachusetts

executive office of Housing &

livable communities

# Maura T. Healey, Governor u Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor u Edward M. Augustus Jr., Secretary



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To: All Local Housing Authorities and Regional Administering Agencies (Housing Agencies) Administering Mobile Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) Vouchers

From: Cecilia Woodworth, Assistant Director, State Program

Date: November 7, 2024

Re: **Updated Ceiling Rents Effective January 1, 2025**

EOHLC aligned ceiling rents for **mobile AHVP vouchers** to HUD’s Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMR), effective March 1, 2024. SAFMR sets the ceiling rent at the zip code level, instead of at an area-wide level. This means that ceiling rents better reflect market rents in a specific neighborhood, allowing voucher participants greater choice when deciding where to live. In August 2024, HUD released updated area-wide FMRs and SAFMR for FY25. Four housing agencies have since challenged FMRs for the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH Metro area. Until HUD has finished their reconsideration, FY24 FMR and SAFMR will continue to be used for the Boston area.

**Effective January 1, 2025, the ceiling rents for AHVP mobile voucher participants shall be equal to HUD’s FY25 110% SAFMR, except as noted.** Please see an attached listing by zip code, as well as an updated calculation sheet. [mass.gov/paymentstandard](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-my-payment-standard) will also be updated to reflect the correct ceiling rents for AHVP.

* The ceiling rent for all zip codes in the Boston area shall be 110% FY24 SAFMR.
* The ceiling rent for all zip codes in Lynn, MA shall be 100% FY24 area-wide FMR.
* The ceiling rent for Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard shall be 110% area-wide FY25 FMR.
* The ceiling rents for lower and outer Cape Cod shall be 110% area-wide FY25 FMR.

The new, updated ceiling rent applies to new admissions, relocations, rent increases, and regular recertifications effective on or after January 1, 2025. If you have already completed any actions effective on or after January 1, 2025, please review to see if the new, updated ceiling rents would apply. If the new, updated ceiling rent applies, please redo the action and send the participant an updated tenant rent share letter at least 30 days in advance of the effective date.

EOHLC is continuing existing policies that hold households harmless if the new ceiling rent is lower than the current ceiling rent being used for the household. In other words, **except at relocation or change in voucher size, the housing agency shall not lower the amount of the ceiling rent for a continuing lease**.

The new, updated ceiling rent shall be used at regular recertification when:

* There has been a change in voucher size; or
* Ceiling rents have increased since the household’s last regular recertification.

The new, updated ceiling rent shall be used at an interim or regular recertification when:

* Contract rent is increased; and
* Ceiling rents have increased since the household’s last tenant rent share determination.

**All contract rents must be rent reasonable.** Rent reasonableness shall be determined by comparing the unit to other non-assisted units in the area. Amenities, unit size, unit quality, and included utilities can affect rent reasonableness. Rent reasonableness shall be determined in a fair and consistent manner, and an owner may request documentation of why a rent was not approved.