Sample Letter to Prospective Tenants

Dear Prospective Massachusetts Public Housing Tenant Head of Household or Household Member:
Dear Prospective Massachusetts Rental Voucher Participant Head of Household or Household Member:

Under state law, each head of household and adult household member (age 18 and over) residing in state-aided public housing is required to participate in the Massachusetts Wage Reporting System. The purpose is to verify the income of households. This will be done by matching the income and assets reported by each head of household and adult household member (age 18 and older) of each household with wages reported by employers to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

Tenants must be informed about the wage match program and must authorize the use of their Social Security numbers for the program. **However, there is no requirement that applicants or tenants have a social security number to be eligible for housing or to be or remain housed.** Tenants are required by the lease to provide their social security number, and to authorize use of their social security number by the housing authority for verification of income and assets through DOR's wage reporting system. Therefore, if you have a Social Security Number, we are requiring you provide it at this time, so that we can determine income and asset eligibility for your first lease. Periodically, we will ask all tenants to sign the release again to allow for the most current information to be provided.

The SSNs and the names of the head of household and all adult members of the household will be forwarded by this housing agency to the state agency, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which administers the state-aided public housing programs. DHCD will forward this information to the Department of Revenue. The information you have reported to us concerning your income and assets will be matched with wage reporting information reported by employers to the Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue will provide DHCD with information from its records as to your reported wages and the reported wages of other members of your household, and DHCD will inform this housing agency of this information.

If there is a "mismatch" between the information provided to us by the household and the information provided by the Department of Revenue, we will contact the head of household. We will meet and work with the head of household whose information is in question to try to resolve the "mismatch". However, if the "mismatch" cannot be resolved, and we determine that the household has incorrectly underreported wages, we may take one or more of the following actions: adjust the household's current rent: seek repayment of rental underpayments incorrectly made by the household, and/or terminate the household's tenancy. If we take any of these actions, the head of household has the right to dispute our decision through this Agency's grievance procedures and in court.

Any "mismatch" which cannot be resolved could also result in referral to DHCD. Information concerning you and your household may also be referred to the District Attorney, Attorney General, or other appropriate law enforcement officials, which may result in further investigation, action, and/or criminal prosecution.

Before you sign this form, it is important that you know the following additional information:

1. In accordance with state law (chapter 43 of the Acts of 1997, section 174; 760 CMR 6.06 (5)(s)), it is mandatory that each head of household and adult household member (age 18 and over) disclose to us his or her social security number. If a head of household or any adult (age 18 or over) household member has a social security number, and fails to provide this Agency with that social security number, that is grounds for termination of the household's tenancy. However, there is no requirement that applicants or tenants have a social security number to be eligible or housed.

2. We will use and hold your social security number and the information obtained from the Department of Revenue and DHCD in our records only for the purposes described above unless we get your consent to use it for any additional purposes.

3. We will keep the wage reporting information confidential. Only employees of this Agency and the other agencies or entities described above may see this wage reporting information or keep it in their records for the purposes described above. These other agencies or offices will also keep the information confidential. If we receive a legal order to release the information to anyone else, we will notify you.

4. If you ask, you or your authorized representative has a right to inspect and copy information collected about you.

5. If you ask, we will answer your questions about how we keep and use this information.

6. You may object to the accuracy, completeness, pertinence, timeliness, relevance, use or dissemination of information we hold about you. If you object, we will investigate your objection and will either correct a problem or make your objection part of the file. If you are dissatisfied, we will further inform you of any additional opportunity for appeal.

Sincerely,

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LHA

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Date