THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

100 CAMBRIDGE STREET
BOSTON, MA 02108

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA)
For Local Housing Authority Housing Now Program

DOCUMENT TITLE:	**LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY HOUSING NOW PROGRAM**
DATE:	**JUNE 18, 2024**
COMMBUYS BID #:	**BD-24-1076-OCDDE-HS003-92815**
AGENCY DOCUMENT #:	**EOHLC2024-20**
DIVISION:	**HOUSING STABILIZATION & PUBLIC HOUSING**

PHN 2024-09
LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY HOUSING NOW PROGRAM

Local Housing Authority Housing Now Program

I. BACKGROUND AND FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) is committed to supporting the stability and well-being of residents living in the Commonwealth. The Local Housing Authority Transitional Housing Program (THP) supported our most vulnerable families to minimize their length of stay in Emergency Assistance shelter and achieve housing stability in c. 200 and c. 705 family public housing developments.

EOHLC is pleased to announce a Notice of Funding Availability for the evolution of THP to Local Housing Authority Housing Now (Housing Now). Housing Now provides funding to assist families experiencing homelessness in transitioning to state-aided c.200 and c.705 housing developments. Housing Now serves families through direct referral from EA shelters to Local Housing Authorities (LHAs), rather than through application to state-aided public housing waiting list. LHAs place these families in set-aside units under one of two models:

1) **Transitional Housing** provides short-term transitional housing services within state-aided housing developments to families experiencing homelessness to create new sustainable tenancies upon program exit. EOHLC administers the transitional program through LHAs and the Emergency Assistance (EA) program.

   This model is best suited for families who need additional short-term support (up to 9 months) to succeed in maintaining employment, developing daily living skills, such as money management, developing appropriate tenancy related skills and addressing other issues that may be impediments to becoming self-sufficient. This may include such barriers as domestic violence, health issues, academic deficiencies and personal debt. EOHLC will fund ongoing services to these families to help them overcome barriers and maintain tenancies and provide a unit fee.

2) Under **a Housing First** model**,** LHA places families from EA-funded shelters, hotels, and motels directly into long-term tenancies. EOHLC will fund ongoing services to these families to help them overcome barriers and maintain tenancies, while the unit will continue to receive operating subsidy and the family will pay rent as public housing tenants immediately.

II. PROGRAM DETAILS

Potential Housing Now families are identified by EA case workers and through direct referral from EA shelters to Housing Authorities considered for screening. Families coming into the program must still meet state-aided public housing eligibility and qualification requirements as set out in 760 CMR 5.00 (including CORI). Referred households are screened by an LHA case manager who will perform an assessment to determine if the program can meet the needs of the family. Once an eligibility decision is made, the LHA case manager contacts the referral source and family to inform them of the eligibility decision.

1) Transitional Housing Model

   Families who are accepted into the program are required to sign a Program Participation and License Agreement, as well as the Uniform Shelter Program Rules form which details the

conditions by which Participant Families must abide by in order to remain in the program[1]. Each family must also enter into a Housing Now Re-Housing Plan developed jointly by the Case Manager and the family. The Housing Now Re-Housing Plan outlines the specific goals a family must meet in order to graduate from the program. Once a Participant Family completes the Housing Now Re-Housing Plan, they are offered a public housing unit by the sponsoring LHA and enter into a lease. Housing Now also provides six months of stabilization services for each family that completes the Program to ensure that they transition successfully from transitional housing to permanent housing.

In the rare cases where families do not succeed in the transitional housing model (does not apply to a Housing First program model), termination follows the EA termination process. EOHLC will fund ongoing services to these families to help them overcome barriers and maintain tenancies and provided a unit fee.

See attached template (Attachment A).

2) Housing First Model

Families who are accepted into the program are required to sign a lease with the housing authority and assume all rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Each family must also enter into a Housing Now Plan developed jointly by the Case Manager and the family. The Housing Now Plan outlines the goals and services a family may need.

Housing Now families are tenants and removal of the tenant from the unit would need to follow the lease and applicable housing laws. Housing Now families would not follow the EA termination process.

EOHLC will fund ongoing services to these families through an agreed upon service fee, while the unit will continue to receive operating subsidy and the family will immediately pay rent as state-aided public housing tenants, in accordance with 760 CMR 5.00 and 760 CMR 6.00.
See attached template (Attachment B).

Both Models EOHLC will make these award increases for a period of five years (starting in FY25, through FY30). Once a LHA receives an award of a first year of funding or funding increase, the LHA will not need to reapply for the additional years of funding (if available).

LHAs are encouraged to submit proposals as soon as possible. Submissions will be accepted until July 5th, 2024. EOHLC anticipates contracting a maximum of 99 units to the program as subject to funding availability.

EOHLC provides funding to participating LHAs to administer Housing Now. These funds are used to cover program costs including case management, occupancy and administrative costs and support services. Note that EOHLC will continue to pay operating subsidy for these units, net of rental income. EOHLC will compensate LHAs operating Housing Now based on an approved budget which may reflect

[1] A Housing First model would have the family sign a lease with the housing authority and start a tenancy.

unique expenses due to program offerings, region and location in the state. EOHLC anticipates budgeted costs will conform to the ranges below:

- EOHLC will provide to the LHA (for both the THP and Housing First programs) a service rate ranging from $600 - $1,100 per month/family for support services.
- For transitional housing models only, EOHLC will pay a unit rate for the public housing units at least equal to the amount that the LHA would receive if the unit were rented as a public housing unit.
- For Housing First models, the LHA will collect the tenant portion of rent from the Housing Now participant/ LHA tenant, comparable to any other public housing tenant.

III. GRANT AWARDS

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding, LHAs must agree to operate the program in accordance with Program Guidelines or an agreed upon Housing First model. EOHLC will grant awards to LHAs that meet the following threshold criteria:

- LHAs must administer c. 200 and/or c. 705 family state-aided public housing.
- LHAs must dedicate at least 7 units of state-aided family public housing to the program
- LHAs have demonstrated experience working with EA shelter providers and households exiting shelter.
- Housing Now is a continuous program. As a result, it is expected that if operating a Transitional Housing model, once the transitional period has concluded for one family and they are a permanent tenant at the LHA, another unit is made available for the next eligible family household for Housing Now. If operating a Housing First Model, the LHA can propose a placement rate to fill units available for Housing Now referrals. For example, an LHA could propose to fill one (1) unit with a Housing Now referral for every five (5) vacancies.
- The Participating LHA shall provide adequate staffing for this Program which may include the following positions: project coordinator, case manager and, depending on the size of the program, a family aide.
- The Board supports the LHAs participation in Housing Now, as evidenced by a Board vote.
- LHAs must agree to operate the program in accordance with Program Guidelines.
- EOHLC strongly encourages current LHAs participating in the existing Transitional Housing Program to apply, but all applications will be evaluated on their merits. EOHLC will limit awards to the number of units dedicated to the program as of Jan 1, 2023.

Award Limits

LHAs that are awarded Housing Now funding will be eligible for funding starting in FY25, through FY30. EOHLC will implement the budget exemption to reflect the award at the start of the LHA fiscal year starting on or around July 1, 2024.

EOHLC encourages LHAs to identify leveraged or in-kind funds to use in conjunction with Housing Now funds to support staffing plan. LHAs will be required to include any awarded Housing Now funds in their state-aided program's operating budget, regardless of whether the LHA is a surplus or deficit housing authority.

Criteria for Prioritizing Awards

EOHLC anticipates that there will be more requests for funding than there will be funds available for new awards and will therefore evaluate applications according to the following considerations:

- Length of time and depth of experience as a participant in the Transitional Housing Program
- Size of public housing portfolio (or combined size of public housing portfolio if regional application);
- Length of time and depth of experience providing resident support services;
- Length of time and depth of experience working with EA shelter providers and households exiting shelter;
- Shelter demand in the EA region;
- Availability of public transportation;
- Evidence of strong community relationships with Continuum of Cares (CoCs), public schools, and other relevant organizations;
- Proposed use of a Housing First model.

Application Process

To apply for funding, LHAs requesting to join the Housing Now program must send complete applications to EOHLCPublicHousing@mass.gov with the subject "Housing Now NOFA Application (LHA name)" by July 5, 2024.

The application must include an LHA program proposal applying for funding to administer the Housing Now including, budget, proposed timeline, proposed programs, and if applicable partnerships with other LHAs.

The application must include an LHA program proposal applying for funding to administer Housing Now Application documentation must include:

- Identification of the number of units that the LHA is committing to Housing Now, identifying the program and development name, location, and total units LHA will commit to this program, by development, with an expected time frame for unit availability.
- Identification of if the program will operate under the Transitional or Housing First model.
- Description of the availability of public transportation to development(s).
- Description, in detail, of how the current LHA provided resident services to tenants, the nature of those services, and the length of time they have been available.
- Submission of a program budget that details projected spending.
- LHA statement regarding current working relationship and willingness to work with EA Shelter Provider(s) and CoC(s) in area(s) contiguous to the LHA.
- A Board vote supporting the LHAs involvement in this program. Where 2 or more LHAs are partnering, a Board vote must be submitted from each of the LHAs.

Applications will be accepted until July 5th, 2024. Please send submissions to EOHLCPublicHousing@mass.gov with the subject "Housing Now NOFA Application (LHA name)" by July 5, 2024.

EOHLC reserves the right at any time to accept or reject any or all proposals in whole or in part, to waive any informality and to exclude any proposals for further consideration for failure to fully comply with the requirements of this NOFA. EOHLC reserves the right to request additional information from LHAs during the review process and to use other available information as may be necessary to complete its review. Each LHA shall provide any additional requested information to EOHLC prior to funding. All awards are subject to funding availability.

IV. TIMELINE

Applications will be reviewed within sixty days of application deadline. We encourage timely submissions.

V. ADDITIONAL TERMS

All responses and information submitted in response to this NOFA are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law. All written correspondence and materials submitted to EOHLC during this process, including as part of the response to this NOFA, become the property of EOHLC upon their receipt and will not be returned to the submitting parties. Except as provided in the Public Records Law, all materials submitted to EOHLC are subject to release as public records. In no event shall EOHLC, or any of their agents, representatives, consultants, directors, officers, or employees, be liable to an LHA for the disclosure of all or a portion of a response or related information submitted in connection with this NOFA.

By submitting its application, an LHA agrees to the terms of this NOFA and affirms that it is not the subject of any state or federal debarment order.

This NOFA does not commit EOHLC to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an LHA's response to this NOFA or to enter into a contract for services. EOHLC may (i) accept or reject any and all proposals received as a result of this NOFA; (ii) contract for some, all or none of the services offered by LHAs in response to this NOFA; (iii) negotiate with one or more of the qualified LHAs; or (iv) cancel, in part or in its entirety, this NOFA if it is in the best interest of the Commonwealth to do so.

EOHLC reserves the right to make amendments to the NOFA after initial publication. Any such amendment will be posted to COMMBUYS. It is each LHA's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for any amendments, addenda or modifications to this NOFA, and any Q&A records related to this NOFA. EOHLC accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to LHAs who submit a response based on an out-of-date NOFA or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS. LHAs may not alter the NOFA language. Modifications to the NOFA, or additions which change the intent of this NOFA, are prohibited and will be disregarded.

Selected LHAs must ensure that all client/participation data is held in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements, including but not limited to, M.G.L. c. 66A, M.G.L. c. 93H, M.G.L. c. 93I, the applicable Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, and the Enterprise Information Security Policies and Standards published by the Executive Office for Technology, Services, and Security (EOTSS). Such that the confidentiality and security of the program data is protected.

Applicants with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of NOFA information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. An LHA

requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the respondent's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the NOFA.

EOHLC reserves the right to use other available information regarding an applicant's history, experience and past performance as a EOHLC grantee or borrower (as applicable) when evaluating applications, including whether the applicant has:

- Met prior work plan objectives in a timely and proper manner in accordance with an approved budget, and otherwise performed effectively;
- Complied with the Terms and Conditions of previous contracts;
- Conducted due diligence, closed loans and constructed Program/Projects in accordance with applicable requirements;
- Maintained compliance with applicable programmatic and legal requirements for any required period of affordability, and;
- Has a significant balance of unutilized credits.

VI. COMMBUYS INSTRUCTIONS

While all applications seeking funding pursuant to this NOFA should be submitted to EOHLCdesignsubmission@mass.gov, this NOFA will be launched and managed via COMMBUYS. Instructions for log-in and use of COMMBUYS are described in http://www.mass.gov/anf/docs/osd/forms/instructions-for-vendors-responding-to-bids.docx
LHAs may also contact the COMMBUYS Helpdesk at COMMBUYS@mass.gov or the COMMBUYS Helpline at 1- 888-MA-STATE.

LHAs are required to monitor COMMBUYS for changes to the procurement calendar for this NOFA. It is the responsibility of the prospective LHA to maintain an active registration in COMMBUYS and to keep current the email address of the LHA's contact person and prospective contract manager. EOHLC and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective LHA's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective LHA's computer, network or internet service provider cause email communications sent to/from the LHA and EOHLC to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

VII. QUESTIONS

Any questions regarding this NOFA should be made via e-mail to EOHLCPublicHousing@mass.gov by noon on June 26th, 2024 with the subject line "Housing Now NOFA Inquiry." A final Q&A will be posted as an addendum to this NOFA and on COMMBUYS by June 30th, 2024 at the latest.

ATTACHMENT A

[CITY/TOWN] HOUSING AUTHORITY SCOPE OF SERVICES – Transitional Housing model

The [CITY/TOWN] Housing Authority's (_HA) Housing Now program (HN) will operate with a Transitional Housing model. _HA will move families from shelter to transitional public housing units and provide needs-based case management and support services to the households to ensure on-going housing stability and lease compliance. Upon successful completion, participating families may become tenants of the _HA. The program will serve ## families.

Families referred to the _HA Housing Now program must be from shelters funded by Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). The _HA Case Manager will be responsible for obtaining referrals from EOHLC funded shelters and will assess the family's needs to determine if the household is an appropriate fit for the program. The _HA will participate in the screening process of families and provide on-going support with the development of the family's service plan to address the service needs of the household.

Once the family is approved and accepted into the program, the family will execute a participation agreement. Additionally, the case manager and the family will jointly develop a comprehensive service plan that identifies the service needs of the household. They will be assigned a case manager who will work with them to create an individualized self-sufficiency plan which will include budgeting, medical care, employment, skills training, and other areas that impact a family's stability. The case manager will be responsible for linking the family with the community resources that address these needs. The family will be provided with at least nine (9) months of intensive case management support and services. Services will include:

- Recruiting referrals and conducting eligibility screening and preliminary assessment of referrals;
- Collecting required forms and documents and maintaining participants files;
- Developing a re-housing plan with goals and objectives for participant families;
- Coordinating connections with outside services;
- Tracking participant progress through periodic meetings and home visits;
- Meeting with participants on a regular (weekly or monthly) basis, according to participant needs;
- Coordinating move-in and required program agreements with participant families and relevant housing authority staff;
- Ensuring participant compliance, issuing advisory notices and termination requests for non-compliance, as needed (EA termination process is applied to the transitional housing model);
- Collaboration with other housing authority programs and community providers to achieve program goals, including regular coordination meetings;
- Other support services as indicated by individual families.

After nine (9) months, case management and support services will be available to the household on an as needed basis.

Families to be served must be homeless and determined eligible for Emergency Assistance shelter services in accordance with EOHLC regulations, policies, and procedures. Only families that are referred by EOHLC or its contractors shall be served under this contract. Housing Now must serve all eligible households referred by EOHLC without regard to race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, disability status, sexual orientation or gender identity, marital status, political beliefs, family compositions, veteran status, or receipt of public assistance if they are otherwise eligible for Housing Now.

The _HA will be responsible for providing the public housing units for the program, hiring and supervision of the case manager, the management of support service funds, as well as overall programmatic and fiscal oversight of Housing Now.

ATTACHMENT B
[CITY/TOWN] HOUSING AUTHORITY SCOPE OF SERVICES – Housing First model

The [CITY/TOWN] Housing Authority's (_HA) Housing Now program (HN) will operate with a Housing First model. _HA will move families from shelter to permanent public housing units and provide needs-based case management and support services to the households to ensure on-going housing stability and lease compliance. The program will serve ## families.

Families referred to the _HA Housing Now program must be from shelters funded by Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). The _HA Case Manager will be responsible for obtaining referrals from EOHLC funded shelters and will assess the family's needs to determine if the household is an appropriate fit for the program. The _HA will participate in the screening process of families and provide on-going support with the development of the family's service plan to address the service needs of the household.

Once the family is approved and accepted into the program, the family will execute a lease. Additionally, the case manager and the family will jointly develop a comprehensive service plan that identifies the service needs of the household. They are assigned a case manager who works with them to create an individualized self-sufficiency plan which includes budgeting, medical care, employment, skills training, and other areas that impact a family's stability. The case manager will be responsible for linking the family with the community resources that address these needs. The family will be provided with at least nine (9) months of intensive case management support and services. Services will include:

- Recruiting referrals and conducting eligibility screening and preliminary assessment of referrals;
- Collecting required forms and documents and maintaining participants files;
- Developing a service plan with goals and objectives for families;
- Coordinating connections with outside services;
- Tracking participant progress through periodic meetings and home visits;
- Meeting with families on a regular (weekly or monthly) basis, according to household needs;
- Coordinating move-in and lease-up with tenants and relevant housing authority staff;
- Collaboration with other housing authority programs and community providers to achieve program goals, including regular coordination meetings;
- Other support services as indicated by individual families.

After nine (9) months, case management and support services will be available to the household on an as needed basis.

Families to be served must be homeless and determined eligible for Emergency Assistance shelter services in accordance with EOHLC regulations, policies, and procedures. Only families that are referred by EOHLC or its contractors shall be served under this contract. Housing Now must serve all eligible households referred by EOHLC without regard to race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, disability status, sexual orientation or gender identity, marital status, political beliefs, family

compositions, veteran status, or receipt of public assistance if they are otherwise eligible for Housing Now.

The _HA will be responsible for providing the public housing units for the program, hiring and supervision of the case manager, the management of support service funds, as well as overall programmatic and fiscal oversight of Housing Now.