

From: DHCD | Stephanie Kan <stephanie.kan@mass.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 1:31 PM
To: Kan, Stephanie (OCD) <Stephanie.Kan@mass.gov>
Subject: FY23 Animal Guidance

FY23 Animal Guidance



DMHRSP, AHVP, and MRVP Teams,

Good Afternoon. We would like to share some recent training and guidance regarding animals in the Department of Mental Health Rental Subsidy Program (DMHRSP), the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), and the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP). DMHRSP, AHVP, and MRVP will follow Public Housing's guidance for animals residing with our participants. Public Housing recently updated its animal guidance and provided a live training, which we are sharing here.

While the updated guidance is wonderful in providing more thorough explanations of the existing policy and compiling it all in one place, **the only substantive change to the policy is that DMHRSP, AHVP, and MRVP will now formally allow for expenses, as outlined in [IRS Publication 502](#), for assistance and support animals, in addition to service animals, to be considered as medical deductions.** For the purposes of determining income for DMHRSP, AHVP, and MRVP, Administering Agencies must consider certain actual and verified non-reimbursable out of pocket expenses related to obtaining and maintaining assistance, support, and/or service animals as a medical deduction under [760 CMR 6.05\(4\)\(e\)](#) and [760 CMR 49.05\(5\)\(d\)\(3\)](#). This replaces guidance given in *PHN 2008-11 (Policy for Service Animal Expense Deductions)* and expands on the [MRVP Administrative Plan](#), respectively.

Updated guidance on animals (service animals, assistance animals, and pets), much of which mirrors guidance from HUD and the Department of Justice, is provided in [PHN 2023-01 Guidance for Animals in State-aided Public Housing](#), found at [Public Housing Admin Notices](#). This notice includes formal guidance and several charts, including how to determine the type of animal, what questions to ask and not ask, what items can be deducted, etc. In addition, you can view the slides, recording, and FAQs from the recent [Guidance for Animals in State-aided Public Housing, Feb 15, 2023 training](#) at [Training Resources for Local Housing Authorities](#). Animal deductions start on slide 30 of the presentation and minute 22 of the video. More detailed guidance is provided in the [A-Z Rent Guide](#) (aka *Rent Re-Determination A to Z*) on pages 22-27.

As you review these materials, please be reminded that, while Public Housing has additional considerations as a property owner, DMHRSP, AHVP, and MRVP will only apply the guidance as appropriate for a voucher program. Mainly, this will include determining reasonable accommodations for a service animal or assistance animal in relation to program participation and medical deductions for said animal.

As always, please contact us with any questions at any time. If you have a question related to AHVP, please reach out to Joel at joseph.deery@mass.gov. If you have a question related to MRVP, please reach out to Tom at thomas.timms@mass.gov.

Stephanie Kan
DMHRSP Coordinator
Division of Rental Assistance
Stephanie.Kan@mass.gov
617-573-1222



If you were forwarded this email and would like to subscribe to DHCD's DMHRSP mailing list, please click the button to subscribe.

Subscribe to DMHRSP
Mailing List

Department of Housing and Community Development | 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300,
Boston, MA 02114

[Unsubscribe stephanie.kan@mass.gov](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by stephanie.kan@mass.gov powered by

