



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

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

To: Regional Administering Agencies (RAAs)
From: Maryssa Schneider McLean, Director, Division of Rental Assistance
Re: Revised Initial Voucher Term and Extension Policies
Date: September 12, 2024

Through this notice, and effective as of the date of this notice, EOHLC hereby amends §§ 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 of its [Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan](#) (Admin Plan). This amendment is intended as an administrative efficiency, allowing standardized determinations of extension requests and reducing repetitive requests, and also a fiscal measure to better enable us to forecast results from searching vouchers and assist in managing our budget. As such, this guidance supersedes §§ 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 of the Admin Plan and will also be incorporated into upcoming versions of the Admin Plan.

1. Section 5.5.1: Voucher Term

§ 5.5.1 of EOHLC's Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan (Admin Plan) is hereby amended to change the initial voucher search term from 60 days to 120 calendar days. The family must submit a completed Request for Tenancy Approval within 120 days voucher issuance.

2. Section 5.5.2: Extensions of Voucher Term

Further, because EOHLC is increasing the initial voucher term, EOHLC is removing the automatic 30-day extension provided for in § 5.5.2. When necessary, RAAs may grant one 60-day extension, up to a total of 180 calendar days, as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability or due to reasons beyond the family's control, such as:

- Serious illness or death in the family;
- Other family emergency;
- Obstacles due to employment;
- Whether the family has already submitted requests for tenancy approval that were not approved by EOHLC or the RAA; or
- Whether family size or other special requirements make finding a unit difficult.

The presence of any these circumstances does not guarantee that the 60-day extension will be granted. Any request for the 60-day extension must include the reason(s) the extension is necessary, and EOHLC **will require**¹ the RAA to obtain documentation, including documentation of housing search activities, to support the family's request.

¹ This is also a change from prior policy, which stated that EOHLC or the RAA "**may require** the family to provide" supporting documentation.

After 180 days, RAAs may grant extensions only in cases of reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

All requests for extensions to the voucher term must be made in writing and submitted to the RAA prior to the expiration date of the voucher (or extended term of the voucher).

RAAs must record and track any approved extensions in Tenmast or subsequent voucher management software.

While this new policy still allows for RAA discretion in granting extension requests, it is intended to install parameters around the broad flexibility that EOHLC has historically messaged and allowed for.