



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

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

To: All EA Shelter Providers
From: Virginia Griffin, Director of Emergency Assistance (EA) programs
Date: February 23, 2024
RE: Uses of SRI, including \$500 Exit Bonus for Housing Search Workers

Given the intense demand for shelter, all providers should be using their Strategic Rehousing Initiative (SRI) funds as flexibly as possible to help families exit to stable housing.

- On November 9, 2023, EOHLC announced that there are \$15M of funds available for SRI and Enhanced Diversion (ED).
- On January 24, 2024, EOHLC later sent out written notice clarifying that there is not a cap on how much SRI or ED funding a family may access.

Today, EOHLC is announcing a new **\$500 Exit Bonus** program for EA housing search workers and case workers, effective March 1, 2024, through to June 30, 2024 (or until SRI funds are exhausted, whichever is sooner). This Exit Bonus program will be re-evaluated for Fiscal Year 2025.

- EOHLC has approved the use of SRI funds to provide a \$500 compensation bonus for every family that exits EA.
- This \$500 bonus will be paid directly to the housing search workers and/or case manager(s) who were directly involved with securing the family's exit.
- While we understand many providers use a team approach in rehousing, this \$500 is not intended to supplement administrative costs or the wages of staff who do not directly engage with families on housing search and rehousing.
- Providers should request SRI reimbursement for bonus payments in their monthly invoices to EOHLC.
- EOHLC will verify the bonus reimbursement requests match the number of exits for each month.

In addition, EOHLC has approved the use of SRI for unforeseen stabilization costs for families who are receiving rental stipends from HomeBASE. SRI funds can be used for costs that will aid in keeping the family housed so that HomeBASE funds can be dedicated to monthly rental payments. If there are remaining funds within the HomeBASE benefit that might also contribute to the family's housing sustainability while participating in stabilization, please request a re-distribution of funds with the HomeBASE Regional Administering Agency (RAA). Use of SRI for stabilization costs must be approved by the Contract Manager prior to issuing payments.

See attachment other potential creative and flexible uses for SRI. Note, this list is not exhaustive, so if you have questions about the \$500 bonus or other potential SRI uses, please contact your EOHLC Contract Manager.

In closing, we hope that you take full advantage of the flexibility of the \$15M of SRI funding, so that more families can successfully exit shelter.

EOHLC Examples of Flexible Uses for SRI, as of February 23, 2024

Note, this list is NOT exhaustive, and SRI is meant to be used creatively and flexibly but **MUST** be used to produce an exit from shelter. If you have questions about other potential SRI uses, please contact your EOHLC Contract Manager.

- \$500 bonus payment per successful EA exit, payable to the Housing Search Worker and/or Case Manager (s) who worked directly with the family that exited.
- Rent/Payments to Landlord:
 - o 1st month's rent (if subsidized, just tenant's portion)
 - o Last month's rent (if subsidized, just tenant's portion)
 - o Security deposit
 - o Rental stipends (only in MA and not for subsidized rents)
 - o Landlord bonus payment
- Relocation out of state:
 - o Bus, train, airline tickets
 - o Gas voucher
 - o Moving truck
 - o Other one-time start-up costs
- Moving expenses:
 - o Moving truck
 - o Storage fees
 - o Furniture, up to \$2,500
 - o Other one time start-up costs
- Arrearages (e.g. utilities, rent, etc.)
- Credit Repair
- Realty fees
- Housing application fees
- Transportation expenses:
 - o Bus, train, carshare, taxi
 - o Auto related expenses
 - Repair
 - Registration
 - License
 - Other related expenses
- Childcare (training or job-related)
- Expenses related to obtaining and/or maintaining employment, e.g.:
 - o Professional licensure
 - o Securing critical documents
 - o Childcare
 - o Other related expenses

Please note that SRI and HomeBASE may not be used to cover an exact cost twice (i.e. landlord bonus paid from HomeBASE as well as a landlord bonus paid from SRI for the same family and same unit lease up). However, SRI may be used to cover a similar or exact allowable expense under the HomeBASE program, to stretch and offset the HomeBASE benefit. Example:



Example of allowed pairing:

SRI Covered Expenses:

1st month, last month, security deposit, moving truck and utility arrears.

HomeBASE Covered Expenses:

Furniture, landlord bonus, broker fee, and rental stipends.



Example of pairing that would not be allowed (with overlapping expenses covered):

SRI Covered Expenses:

1st month, last month, security deposit, moving truck and utility arrears.

HomeBASE Covered Expenses:

Furniture, 1st month, last month, security deposit, landlord bonus, broker fee, and rental stipends.

Quick refresher on allowable expenses under the HomeBASE Program:

- First month's rent
- Last month's rent
- Security deposit
- Broker's fee
- Bonus payment to landlord (equal to one-month rent)
- Monthly rental stipend (*only in MA and not for subsidized rents*)
- Relocation out of state
- Furniture (*up to \$2,500.00*)
- Moving expenses
- Utility and rental arrears (*up to \$5,000.00*)
- Education or training activities to further economic stability (*as approved by EOHLC case by case*)

If there is a cost that will produce an exit from the shelter, but falls outside this list of allowable HomeBASE expenses, please consult your Housing Search Specialist and HLC will determine if an exception can be made.

We Strongly Encourage Your Teams to Be Creative With Rehousing Solutions!