



# HomeBASE FAQs

This document summarizes current policy of the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) on the HomeBASE program and provides guidance from current EOHLC policy on questions about the administration of the HomeBASE program. It is a reference guide to the HomeBASE Administrative Plan and Regulations and is not intended to supplant the more detailed guidance in these documents.

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## HomeBASE Award Limits, Distribution of Funds, & Allowable Expenses

### Question #1: How much HomeBASE funding may families receive?

The HomeBASE benefit allows families to access -up to \$30,000 across a 2-year (24-month) . These funds can be used to rapidly rehouse families and resolve homelessness.

### Question #2: How should families' benefit distribution plans be calculated?

The distribution of HomeBASE funds is determined by case managers, based on each family's needs and the goal of best supporting the family in maintaining housing stability over a 24-month period. These case managers may be working in a shelter or for diversion providers.

EOHLC recommends spending \$15,000 or less of a family's benefit in Year 1 to ensure the family will have enough HomeBASE benefits reserved for Year 2. If the family needs more than \$15,000 of funding in Year 1, EOHLC encourages providers to consider using Strategic Rehousing Initiative (SRI) or Enhanced Diversion (ED) funds to supplement HomeBASE, if possible. SRI funds must be used by shelter providers to help a family exit shelter to stable housing and/or to keep a family in stable housing once exited. ED funds must be used by diversion providers to help a family divert from shelter to stable housing, or to keep a family in stable housing to avoid shelter entry. More guidance on SRI can be found in the [SRI administrative plan](#), and more guidance on ED funds can be found in the [ED administrative plan](#).

If a family's unique circumstances require greater funding in Year 1, and supplemental flexible funding is not available or applicable, HomeBASE benefits may exceed the recommended \$15,000 for Year 1 provided they stay within the \$30,000 limit for Year 1 + Year 2.

EOHLC has developed a [HomeBASE Rental Stipend Calculator](#) to assist providers in creating a benefits distribution plan for families who will receive monthly rental stipends.

### Question #3: What expenses are eligible to be covered by HomeBASE?

HomeBASE can cover a variety of expenses to help a family move from shelter and into permanent housing. In certain situations, the funds can be used for other expenses to support the family's economic stability as well. Key categories of allowable HomeBASE expenses include:

#### **Rental Stipends**

These are one of the largest and most common uses for HomeBASE benefits. In general, EOHLC expects families to pay a minimum of 30% of their gross income (pre-tax income) towards their share of rent.



Rent is paid directly to the property owner by a Regional Administering Agency (RAA). The property owner should be informed of HomeBASE rules, benefit type, and level of assistance. This is slightly different in the cases of co-shares, sublets, and home-shares, which are detailed below.

Rental stipends **CANNOT** be used for families moving into state or federally subsidized housing or for out-of-state moves. These families can still access HomeBASE for moving assistance, as outlined below.

### **Co-Share, Subletting, and Home-sharing Rental Stipends**

Rental stipends can be paid if a family is moving from shelter into a housing opportunity in which: they are moving in with another EA family; they are moving into a rented apartment as a subletter; or they are moving into a house or apartment where the owner is also living.

In these situations, EOHLC still expects families to pay a minimum of 30% of their gross income towards their share of rent. Additional limitations apply:

- If a family is subletting from a renter, HomeBASE may cover *only* up to 50% of the monthly rental costs. For example, if the contracted rent on the lease is \$4,000 a month, the maximum that HomeBASE may cover is \$2,000 a month. Written, notarized, permission from the apartment's landlord, confirming additional occupants, is also needed.
- If a family is moving into a co-share (in other words, multiple EA families are moving into one apartment and are both named on the lease), HomeBASE must cover an equal portion of the monthly rental costs for each EA family receiving the benefit. For example, if the contracted rent on the lease is \$5,000 a month and three EA families are on the lease, the maximum that any one family's HomeBASE may cover is \$1,667 a month.
- If a family is moving into a home-share (in other words, an apartment unit or house that the owner also lives in), HomeBASE may cover *only* up to 50% of the monthly mortgage costs. For example, if the mortgage payment is \$4,000 a month, the maximum amount that HomeBASE may cover is \$2,000 a month. A homeowner must also provide safe living space and adequate bedrooms per family

### **Landlord Incentives**

- HomeBASE may be used to pay landlord bonuses that are equivalent to up-to one month of the contract rent. Note, funds used here count against the family's \$30,000 two-year limit, so if applicable EOHLC encourages the use of SRI or ED funds for these purposes.



- HomeBASE may be used to reimburse providers to pay landlords a “holding payment” equivalent to up-to one month of contract rent for a vacant unit. This payment should be accompanied by a signed pre-lease agreement that the landlord will rent to the HomeBASE family. In the HomeBASE context, the holding payment is best utilized in instances where there is a backlog in processing times for a unit where a lease is already signed. Holding payments can be applied to the landlord bonus, but cannot be paid in addition to the landlord bonus. The HomeBASE benefit start date should still be the original lease date, and families may not move into units until HomeBASE has been approved, regardless of whether a holding payment has been paid. If there is a signed lease, the landlord can receive a landlord bonus, **not** a holding payment. Note, funds used here count against the family’s \$30,000 two-year limit, so if applicable EOHLC encourages the use of SRI or ED funds for these purposes.

### **Furniture, Utilities, and Debt**

HomeBASE may be used to cover a standard set of move-in costs that help a family begin new tenancies or renew current leases. Note, funds used here count against the family’s \$30,000 two-year limit. Common uses of these funds include:

- Furniture: Up-to \$2,500 can be used on furniture purchased by the EA shelter provider or RAA. These funds can be used to purchase beds and cribs and a dining table and chairs. Note that there are restrictions and exceptions that apply to different types of furniture, these are outlined in the HomeBASE Administrative Plan. Providers are allowed to apply for a waiver to the \$2,500 cap on behalf of the family. If applicable, EOHLC encourages providers to use SRI and ED funds for furniture expenses rather than HomeBASE.
- Outstanding debt preventing lease up or lease renewal: Up-to \$5,000 can be used to pay outstanding debt (rent/utility arrears) if the arrears are preventing the family from moving into a new unit or from renewing their current lease

### **Moving Assistance**

HomeBASE may be used to cover moving expenses for families moving *within* the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and for families moving *outside of* the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (but within the United States and its territories). **HomeBASE may not be used on out-of-country moving costs.**

- In-state moves. Families are eligible for one in-state move every 24 months, with infrequent exceptions. In-state eligible moving assistance expenses include the costs (with invoice):
  - Tenancy start-up costs: first months’ rent/ last month’s rent/ security deposit;
  - Storage costs and moving vans;



- Bus tickets; or
  - Brokers fees (additional conditions apply).
- Out-of-state moves. Out-of-state moving costs for bus or air travel and tenancy start-up costs (first/last month's rent and security deposits) are eligible to be covered by HomeBASE with the following conditions:
  - Providers must opt for the most cost-effective options available;
  - No ongoing assistance is available beyond moving costs;
  - Out-of-state moves to U.S. territories may be covered by HomeBASE funds; and
  - Out-of-state moves trigger a lifetime cap on any HomeBASE use.

### **Education, employment, other goals**

In certain circumstances, families may use HomeBASE to meet stabilization goals and requirements related to education, employment, or training. These payments must be approved by EOHLC *before* they are made, and they must be made directly to the vendor.

## **Question #4: Does HomeBASE cover costs for out-of-state and out-of-country moves?**

As noted above, out-of-country moves are **NOT** eligible expenses to be used with HomeBASE. Certain out-of-state moving costs may be covered but trigger a life-time cap on any HomeBASE use. These costs and their conditions are described in the answer to question 4 above.

## **HomeBASE Application Documents & Requirements**

### **Question #5: What documents does a family need to provide for a complete HomeBASE application?**

A family needs to provide the following documents for their HomeBASE application:

- A signed stabilization and Participant Agreement;
- A lease signed by both the landlord and tenant;
- A breakdown of funds (see the [Rental Stipend Calculator tool](#) for guidance); and
- Proof of EA eligibility

Details on each of these documents can be found on the next page.

### **Question #6: What documents does a landlord need to provide for a complete HomeBASE application?**

Landlords must provide the following forms:



- W-9 Form;
- Proof of ownership (e.g., deed, real estate tax bill, water/sewage bill);
- Direct deposit information; and
- Photo Identification.

Details on each of these documents can be found on the next page.

HomeBASE Application – EOHLC Required Family Documents
<b>Stabilization and Participant Agreement</b> – <i>The Stabilization and Participant Agreement is comprised of the following documents:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HomeBASE Data Collection Summary Form</li><li>• Stabilization Agreement Program Participant Obligations</li><li>• Voluntary Authorization to Release Information</li><li>• Appeal Rights</li><li>• Single Incident Reasons for Termination Form</li><li>• HomeBASE Host Family or Guest Household Assistance Agreement (this is in all packets but is only required if the family is in a co-share, subletting, or home sharing arrangement)</li></ul>
<b>Additional HomeBASE Required Documents</b> – <i>The following documents are required in addition to the Stabilization and Participant Agreement.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signed Lease</li><li>• Breakdown of Funds (download the <a href="#">Rental Stipend Calculator</a> tool for guidance)</li><li>• Proof of EA Eligibility<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ EA Provider Shelter Letter (for families entering HomeBASE from EA shelter if the family's shelter entry was before April 11, 2025; must include the date the family entered shelter, and family members on the grant),</li><li>○ NFL-9A (for families entering HomeBASE from Diversions, or entering HomeBASE from EA shelter if their shelter entry date was on or after April 11, 2025)</li></ul></li></ul> <p>Shelter letter (letter confirming a family was residing in shelter and is now leaving – DV/BSAS referrals only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>
<b>Case-dependent required documents.</b> <i>The following documents are only required in specific cases where HomeBASE is being used for the noted expenses. These documents need to be uploaded in End 2 End if applicable.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rent share letter from a housing subsidy provider (sent by subsidy provider to shelter provider. Only applicable if family is receiving a housing subsidy)</li><li>• Proof of arrears from a landlord or utility provider (if applicable)</li><li>• Furniture invoice (provided by shelter provider, if applicable)</li><li>• HomeBASE Host Family/Guest Household Agreement (if co-sharing, scanned from the stabilization and participant agreement and uploaded)</li><li>• Letter of Compliance (LOC) with Massachusetts Lead Law, or Letter of Interim Control, which addresses urgent lead hazards and is valid for up to two years (valid for one year with</li></ul>



an option to renew), is also acceptable. LOCs do not expire and are considered valid so long as the conditions of the home remain the same. *(these must be provided **only** if a building pre-dates 1978 **and** the family has a child under six years old).*

#### HomeBASE Application – EOHLC Required Landlord Documents

- W-9 Form (required for tax identification purposes, [more details on the IRS website](#))
- Proof of ownership (e.g., deed, real estate tax bill, water/sewage bill);
- Direct deposit information, needed for rental stipend payment (account and routing number, bank letter, or voided check)
- Photo Identification (e.g. Driver's License, Passport, Commonwealth issued ID card)

### Question #7: Can RAAs require additional documents?

RAAs may collect additional documentation—including documentation to prove compliance with municipal and other state laws-- provided the collection of additional documentation does not delay the submission and processing of the family's HomeBASE application. This additional documentation may vary based on the requirements of the municipalities in specific regions.

EOHLC encourages providers and RAAs to remove any documentation requirements that are not absolutely necessary for the HomeBASE application prior-to move in, in order to minimize delays in HomeBASE processing. EOHLC does not want a family's approval for HomeBASE to be contingent upon documents that EOHLC does not require

### Question #8: When should the lease begin for HomeBASE purposes?

The lease start-date should begin on the date that the landlord and family agree to when they initially sign the lease. This should reflect the date the family plans to move into the unit, after the HomeBASE application is approved. Lease start dates should not be modified after a lease has been signed, except in extremely rare circumstances. All contracted providers should work to ensure that the family moves into the unit on the lease start date.

In cases where this is not feasible, or a unit is being held, please be aware that SRI and ED funds may be used for "holding payments" to pay for one month of rent on a vacant unit to reserve this unit for a family. These payments should be made *prior to* the family signing a lease.

If a lease is signed between a family and a landlord, then the family should be in the unit by the start of the lease.

### Question #9: How should a landlord submit their documents and their application?



The HomeBASE application has a tenant side and a landlord side. The application process begins when a family secures a signed lease, requests HomeBASE funds to rent a landlord's unit, and a case manager submits a HomeBASE application on the family's behalf.

Following these steps on the family and provider side, the landlord should complete the following steps to submit their documents and HomeBASE application:

1. Once the family's tenant application is submitted, the landlord will receive an email with a link to the state's HomeBASE application portal and a code to enter on the landlord application.
2. The landlord must create a profile on the online portal.
3. Then, the landlord must fill out their part of the application and enter the code exactly to ensure it will be matched to the correct tenant application.
4. The landlord will need to upload the required documents to provide proof of their identity and that they own or manage the unit.

Please note, if the landlord does not have access to the online portal or requires assistance, they may request that the provider submits the landlord application on their behalf through a guest portal option. The End2End training covers how providers can submit landlord applications, and recordings of these trainings can be accessed on the [Rapid Rehousing Portal](#).

5. Once both the tenant and landlord portions of the application are submitted, they will be reviewed for final approval by the RAA. Decisions can be expected to take 7-8 business days.

Providers may share the [Landlord Flyer](#) with landlords and families to help them better understand the program and the landlord's role.

### **Question #10: If two EA-eligible families decide to co-share a unit, can they still use HomeBASE? Would both families submit separate HomeBASE applications?**

Two EA-eligible families who decide to share a unit (both on the same lease) may still use HomeBASE funds. These families would each need to submit separate HomeBASE applications (a total of two applications). Because they are two different EA families, each family is eligible for the full amount of the HomeBASE benefit.

### **Question #11: Does EOHLC require collection of the certificate of occupancy to allow a landlord to rent to a family using HomeBASE?**





EOHLC expects that any apartment unit that a landlord is renting to a family is in compliance with the state sanitary code, including lead paint laws. EOHLC expects that landlords will follow all applicable municipal, state, and federal laws.

More information can be found in the [Massachusetts Attorney General's Guide to Landlord and Tenant Rights](#).

Documentation of compliance, like a certificate of occupancy, does **NOT** need to be provided to EOHLC prior to a family and landlord being approved for HomeBASE.

The only documents that a landlord must provide are outlined in question 7 above.

### **Question #12: What lead compliance documents are required for a unit for HomeBASE?**

EOHLC requires a Letter of Compliance (LOC) with Massachusetts Lead Law if the unit being rented was built before 1978 and the family has a child under six. An LOC indicates that lead hazards in the unit have been removed or covered.

A valid Letter of Interim Control, which addresses urgent lead hazards and remains valid for up to two years (valid for one year with an option to renew), is also acceptable documentation. LOCs do not expire and are considered valid so long as the conditions of the home remain the same. Landlords can find records of inspections and LOCs on the Department of Public Health database, [Lead Safe Homes 2.0. More details on Massachusetts Lead Law requirements can be found on the Massachusetts Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Program website](#).

## **Application Status & Processing**

### **Question #13: How long does the HomeBASE application process take once the family has identified a unit? How long should it take to submit the application?**

Once a family has identified a unit, the provider should aim to complete and submit the family's application within 7-8 business days. Providers should begin collecting a family's documentation as a part of their housing search case management to minimize delays in completing the application once a unit has been identified.

### **Question #14: How long should it take for an RAA to process a HomeBASE application?**



RAAs should aim to process a HomeBASE application within 7-8 business days after the tenant and landlord applications have been submitted and matched.

RAAs are only able to process complete HomeBASE applications, which contain fully accurate required information. RAAs will be able to process HomeBASE packets more quickly if they receive complete applications. Providers should ensure they are submitting accurate, complete applications to avoid any delays in processing. Landlords should also ensure they are submitting their application with the correct tenant match code to avoid any delays in the landlord and tenant applications being matched and reviewed.

### **Question #15: How should RAAs be prioritizing their processing of HomeBASE applications?**

RAAs should prioritize the processing of HomeBASE applications in the following order:

- (1) **High Priority:** Families who have received a Bridge Shelter lease bridge extension or a Rapid Shelter imminent housing extension. These families will be marked as “High Priority” in E2E.
- (2) **Standard Priority:** All other families in order from soonest to latest lease start date, regardless of whether the family is entering HomeBASE from Bridge Shelter, Rapid Shelter, BSAS/DV Referral, or Diversion. These families will be marked as “Standard” priority in E2E.

Note, families in Bridge and Rapid Shelters are both eligible for short extensions to stay in shelter if they have signed leases and their HomeBASE applications are submitted and processing. These extensions both have “ticking clocks” that increase the urgency of having HomeBASE processed in a timely manner. In Rapid Shelters, this extension is up to 30 business days; in Bridge Shelter this extension is up to 14 business days. The heightened urgency around these cases is the reason for prioritizing these particular HomeBASE packets.

### **Question #16: Who should a family contact to follow up on the status of their HomeBASE application?**

A family should follow up with their shelter provider housing search worker to check on the status of their HomeBASE application. Provider housing search workers (or diversion provider in the case of front door or Rapid Shelter) should ensure the family’s application has been fully completed and matched to the landlord application in the online application system (E2E) to avoid and processing delays.

If the housing search worker is unable to verify the status of an application by checking E2E or has not received a response from the RAA, they should reach out to their EOHLC Housing Search Specialist for additional support.



### **Question #17: Who should a landlord contact to follow up on the status of a HomeBASE application?**

Landlords are able to track the application status by logging into the online E2E portal using their case number or name. If they have questions or need help submitting their portion of the application, they can contact their tenant's housing search worker or diversion provider in the case of diversion (likely the person who accompanied the family to see the unit).

## **Application Approval & Family Move-in**

### **Question #18: When can a family that is using HomeBASE move into a unit?**

A family must receive approval from the RAA before they move into a unit. If a family moves into a unit before the RAA approves HomeBASE, they risk losing access to the program. Once the family receives approval, they may move into the unit on their lease start date. When the RAA approves the application, the family and the provider who submitted the application will both receive a Payment Disbursement Notice by email, either from [noreply@salesforce.com](mailto:noreply@salesforce.com) or directly from the RAA, notifying them that the application is approved and the payments are being disbursed. Payments will not be disbursed until an RAA approves a HomeBASE application.

The landlord receives a similar email from [noreply@salesforce.com](mailto:noreply@salesforce.com) indicating application approval and notifying the landlord of payment.

### **Question #19: The family has not received RAA approval yet, and the lease start date has passed. How should a provider approach this situation?**

The provider should be regularly checking the status of family applications in E2E, ensuring that the applications have been matched to the landlord application and is assigned to the RAA. The provider should also check emails to see if the RAA has requested any missing documents or corrections to the application. Documentation issues should be resolved with urgency, as missing or incomplete documentation prevents a family's HomeBASE application from processing. Once providers have confirmed that a family's application has been matched and confirms they have not received any emails from the RAA, the provider should email their EOHLC Housing Search Specialist (HSS) with the E2E case number and lease start date and your HSS team member will assist with follow up.

### **Question #20: When should a HomeBASE rental payment/stipend be made to the landlord?**



HomeBASE payments should be paid on time to meet the terms of the lease. This is typically, but not always, on the first or fifteenth of the month. RAAs should plan to issue checks a few days before the rental due date, to ensure timely payment to landlords. In the event where a lease specifies a rental due date that is not the first or fifteenth of the month, an RAA will need to adjust their payment processing to meet the terms of the lease (this may mean that an RAA is making weekly or more frequent check runs/electronic payments). To ensure that payments are made on time, RAAs should plan to issue checks a few days before the end of the month.

## Other Questions

### **Question #21: A family found a unit, but the landlord said they need proof the family has been approved for HomeBASE. How should a provider approach this situation?**

Providers can send confirmation that the family is eligible to receive HomeBASE funding by sending a 'Letter of Intent'. This is a tool to help get an apartment under lease. When a family is undergoing a housing search, providers can update this letter with information about the RAA that will be providing HomeBASE and provide it to the landlord along with the HomeBASE Landlord Flyer to better clarify the family's eligibility for HomeBASE and what this means for the landlord. **Providers should not change the text of the letter beyond the indicated fields.**

You can also share the [HomeBASE flyer for Landlords](#) to help inform the landlord of the program to support getting an apartment under lease.

### **Question #22: Can the RAA make changes to the distribution of funds without discussing with the participant and the provider?**

No, the RAA should always communicate with the provider submitting the request. The RAA should review the proposed amount of assistance to ensure that the monthly rent is covered by the family's payment toward rent, HomeBASE rental stipend, and any other funding sources that may be available to ensure housing stability for minimally 24-months,.

### **Question #23: What happens when a family's HomeBASE runs out of funds? Can the family return to shelter?**

A family is **not** eligible for EA shelter or to reapply for HomeBASE for 12 months after receiving their last HomeBASE benefit payment. Following this time period, the family can return to EA shelter if they apply and are found eligible.



Families are expected to actively engage in HomeBASE stabilization services to avoid situations where they may run out of funds. This may not be avoidable in all cases. In the event where a family is about to exhaust their HomeBASE benefit, there are a few other programs which may be accessible:

- **Rental Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)**: RAFT is a flexible financial benefit for households with incomes at or below 50% AMI who are facing imminent risk of homelessness. Eligible payments include but are not limited to moving costs, rent arrears, utility arrears, rental stipends, and financial incentives to a primary tenant who agrees to host a household who would otherwise become homeless. Families may apply for RAFT after their HomeBASE benefit runs out.
- **Strategic Rehousing Initiative (SRI)**: SRI is a flexible financial benefit for EA Family Shelter providers supporting families where additional funds exceeding the allowances under the HomeBASE program are necessary to rapidly exit shelter. These supplementary funds are generally capped at \$9,000 per household. SRI funds must be used to help a family exit shelter to stable housing, and/or to keep a family in stable housing once exited. Providers may submit a request for EOHLC to waive the cap in extenuating circumstances, where the amount of HomeBASE in addition to the \$9,000 cap is insufficient to secure sustainable housing. These requests may be submitted to the EOHLC Housing Search Specialist.

#### **Question #24: Can a family apply for HomeBASE if they are evicted? If so, when?**

Families that are found fully eligible for EA Family Shelter but have not yet been placed into EA Family Shelter are eligible for HomeBASE. When a new EA-eligible family elects to receive HomeBASE benefits instead of entering shelter, this is referred to as a “Diversion.”

#### **Question #25: Does a family need to have income or employment to use HomeBASE?**

No, a family does **not** need to have income or employment to use HomeBASE. A family can work to increase their income with support from a stabilization case worker while receiving HomeBASE. EOHLC encourages providers to work with families to help clarify their path to stable income.

Families accessing HomeBASE benefits have access to a stabilization case worker through their provider or RAA, and they are expected to actively engage in HomeBASE stabilization services. If a family begins HomeBASE without income or employment, their stabilization plan should include and track efforts to increase their economic stability and their ability to contribute towards monthly rental payments. Providers should help the family’s benefit distribution plan include sufficient HomeBASE benefits reserved for Year 2 by using Strategic Rehousing Initiative (SRI) or Enhanced Diversion (ED) funds to supplement HomeBASE, if possible, and accounting for the family’s progress towards increasing their income and contribution towards rental payments.