



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF
HOUSING & LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

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

MRVP NOTICE: FY24-03

AHVP NOTICE: FY24-05

DMHRSP NOTICE: FY24-01

To: All Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) and Regional Non-Profits (RAAs)
Administering State Rental Assistance

From: Cecilia Woodworth, Assistant Director, State Rental Assistance Programs

Subject: **Mobile Voucher Transfer Policy for MRVP, AHVP, and DMHRSP Tenant-Based Vouchers and First-Time Leasing Fee for MRVP and AHVP Tenant-Based Vouchers**

Date: August 10, 2023

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) is updating its transfer policy for:

- Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) mobile vouchers;
- Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) mobile vouchers; and
- Department of Mental Health Rental Subsidy Program (DMHRSP) tenant-based vouchers.

The new transfer policy will allow both LHAs and RAAs (AAs) to administer mobile (aka tenant-based) vouchers across Massachusetts if they choose to. AAs must create an internal policy on where they will continue to administer vouchers. The new transfer policy will begin immediately, August 10, 2023.

Related to the transfer policy, for mobile MRVP and mobile AHVP vouchers only, EOHLC is introducing a First-Time Leasing Fee. The first time any newly issued mobile voucher leases effective on or after August 10, 2023, EOHLC will pay the AA a \$500 First-Time Leasing Fee. This fee helps to more accurately compensate AAs for their work with households prior to initial leasing.

EOHLC has also created a new State Rental Voucher Transfer Form (attached) for all state programs. Please begin to use it immediately, August 10, 2023.

State Rental Assistance Transfer Policy

EOHLC is updating its mobile (aka tenant-based) voucher transfer policy for AHVP, DMHRSP, and MRVP. EOHLC is making these changes to allow AAs to keep and continue to administer their mobile vouchers, if desired, even if the voucher holder leases up in another AAs jurisdiction. The updated policy also matches the transfer policy in Massachusetts for the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program. Lastly, with continued and expanded use of CHAMP, AAs are more likely to issue vouchers to applicants outside of their area.

General Transfer Policies

If a participant in MRVP, AHVP, or DMHRSP with a mobile voucher submits a unit outside of the AA's decided coverage area, then the AA will transfer the administration of the voucher to another AA.

Note that the AA for DMHRSP sponsor-based vouchers and MRVP and AHVP project-based vouchers will continue to be determined by EOHLC. DMHRSP sponsor-based and MRVP and AHVP project-based vouchers may not be transferred except as directed by EOHLC.

Each AA must establish a coverage area. This is the area where they are willing to administer vouchers. An AA's coverage area may be all of Massachusetts or only specific communities. This coverage area must be consistent across state rental assistance programs and all program participants. For example, if an AA decides that it will administer vouchers within two counties, it must administer all of its state mobile vouchers in those two counties.



Lynn Housing and Neighborhood Development Authority (LHAND) must administer all state rental assistance vouchers for all units located in Lynn.

Please check your agency's mobile vouchers to make sure none of them are leased in Lynn. If you do have units located in Lynn, please transfer to LHAND as soon as possible. Make sure to inform EOHLC of any successful transfers.

AAs may only transfer vouchers to other AAs that already administer that specific rental assistance program. AAs can decide to transfer to either an RAA or LHA that covers the area where the unit is located.

In general, transfers occur when a household submits a unit that is outside of an AA's coverage area. Households may also request a transfer to a more accessible AA if they've moved out of an AA's geographic area. In those cases, households shall be transferred to a more accessible RAA or LHA.

Transfers may also occur due to:

- Conflicts of interest;
- Reasonable accommodations;
- Domestic violence; or
- Direction by EOHLC.

Transfers should happen as quickly as possible because leasing is a time-sensitive process. The biggest factor in making sure that a transfer happens quickly and correctly is communication. AAs must communicate well with each other, participants, owners, and EOHLC. The guidelines below are just that—guidelines. AAs are encouraged to develop efficient procedures to transfer vouchers.

EOHLC requires that a completed State Rental Voucher Transfer Form (*attached*) be submitted to EOHLC after each successful transfer. The receiving AA must also have a complete participant file, with all vital documents, income and household information, signed forms, and complete a full recertification of the household prior to leasing.

Role of Initial AA

The initial AA (the agency transferring out) must have a valid request to lease a unit (forms vary by program) before transferring a participant. Before transferring, they must confirm that the receiving AA is willing to administer the voucher.

The initial AA shall notify both the participant and potential owner via email and/or by phone that the voucher is being transferred. They should provide direct contact information for a staff member at the receiving AA. The initial AA may request owner documents, negotiate rent, or review reasonable accommodations, but is not required to do so. **All final leasing details will be decided by the receiving AA.**

The initial AA shall include the following information in the transfer:

- State Rental Voucher Transfer Form;
- Unit documents, including the program-specific unit request form;
- Any owner documents;
- Most recent voucher, signed by the participant;
- Initial program application, if applicable;
- Vital documents for the entire household;
- Verification of approved CORIs and SORIs for all Household members over age 18;
- All income information, including statements of zero income, asset verification, and verification of deductions; and
- Any other relevant information.

All transfer documents must be mailed, faxed, or securely emailed.

Role of Receiving AA

Once an AA receives a transfer, the receiving AA shall begin to process it immediately. The AA shall contact the potential owner to obtain any necessary owner information. The AA shall also notify the participant that the transfer has been received by the AA. **The receiving AA has final approval over all aspects of the leasing process, including determination of whether a contract rent is reasonable.**

Prior to move-in, the AA must gather all of the information required from the household to complete a full recertification. Any verification may occur after leasing. It is important that the receiving AA has updated releases of information and all other necessary paperwork prior to a lease being signed. Many documents are agency specific, so current documents are critical to proper program administration. The receiving AA does not need to review CORI and SORI reports for household members, unless there is cause to do so.

Once the transferred participant successfully leases with the receiving AA, the AA shall submit the completed State Rental Voucher Transfer Form to the initial AA and EOHLC, specifically Thomas Timms at thomas.timms@mass.gov.

Once the participant is successfully leased, the mobile allocation of the receiving AA will increase by one and the mobile allocation of the initial AA will decrease by one. Transfers permanently change a AAs mobile voucher allocation number. It is key that EOHLC is alerted of each successful transfer.

If a transferred participant fails to lease with the receiving AA, the receiving AA shall send the completed State Rental Voucher Transfer Form back to the initial AA. The initial AA shall reissue the voucher with an updated expiration date. EOHLC does not need to be notified of unsuccessful transfers.

First-Time Leasing Fee (MRVP & AHVP Mobile Vouchers Only)

EOHLC recognizes that AAs do a lot of work with households prior to a household signing their first lease with a newly issued MRVP or AHVP mobile voucher. But administrative fees are paid only once vouchers are leased. To help more accurately compensate AAs for their work, EOHLC is introducing the First-Time Leasing Fee.

First-Time Leasing Fees only apply to mobile MRVP vouchers and mobile AHVP vouchers. The following vouchers cannot receive an First-Time Leasing Fee:

- Project-based MRVP vouchers;
- Project-based AHVP vouchers;
- Sponsor-based DMHRSP vouchers; and
- Tenant-based DMHRSP vouchers.

The First-Time Leasing Fee is a \$500 additional administrative fee that will be paid by EOHLC to AAs when a newly issued MRVP or AHVP mobile voucher is leased for the first time.

“Newly issued” means the first time a mobile voucher is issued to a specific household. This includes newly created mobile vouchers and mobile vouchers that are being re-issued after a household exists MRVP or AHVP. The First-Time Leasing Fee is only paid when the household signs their first lease with a newly issued voucher. It does not include relocation.

To request a First-Time Leasing Fee, an AA shall enter \$500 in the Retro Admin box when requisitioning for funds under the correct allocation. The AA shall also note it in the Comments box. Please see below for an example screen shot.

Voucher Type : MOB 01 Units Under Contract : 21

A	B	C	D	E
Leased Vouchers	Subsidy Current Month (\$)	Retro/Others (\$) Enter Retro Amounts, Enter Issuance Transfer Fee in Retro Admin	Utility & Move in Fees (\$)	Comments Enter details of Issuance Transfer Fee, Security Deposits, and Other Retro
		Retro Subsidy: Retro Admin: 500 Retro Services:	Move In Fees: Utility Reimbursements:	First-Time Leasing Fee



Franklin County Regional Housing Authority (FCRHA) issues a mobile MRVP voucher to an applicant from its waiting list. The applicant finds and leases a unit in Framingham. Under the new transfer policy, FCRHA has decided it will administer vouchers anywhere in MA. Because FCRHA had a newly issued mobile voucher lease, it requisitions for an additional \$500 in the Retro Admin box under its main MRVP mobile allocation and notes “First-Time Leasing Fee” in the Comments box.

MRVP Only – Transfers and First-Time Leasing Fees

Once an AA that has transferred a newly issued voucher to another AA and receives confirmation that the voucher has successfully leased, the initial AA that issued the voucher is able to receive a First-Time Leasing Fee. The issuing AA shall enter \$500 in the Retro Admin fee box and “First-Time Leasing Fee” in the Comments box when requisitioning for funds under the correct allocation.

An AA that leases an initially issued mobile voucher that has been transferred to them, the receiving AA, from another AA does not receive a First-Time Leasing Fee in MRVP.



Boston Housing Authority (BHA) issues a mobile MRVP voucher to an applicant from its waiting list. The applicant finds a unit in Orange. Under the new transfer policy, BHA has determined that it will not administer vouchers in Franklin County.

BHA completes the State Rental Voucher Transfer Form and transfers the voucher to FCRHA. The household signs a lease and moves into a unit two weeks later. FCRHA completes the State Rental Voucher Transfer Form and emails it to BHA and thomas.timms@mass.gov.

Because BHA had a newly issued mobile voucher lease, even though it was transferred to another AA, it requisitions for a First-Time Leasing Fee of \$500 in the Retro Admin box under its main MRVP mobile allocation.

AHVP Only – Transfers and Issuance Transfer Fees

All previously issued guidance on Issuance Transfer Fees continues to apply to mobile AHVP vouchers. An Issuance Transfer Fee is a \$1,000 administrative fee paid to an LHA when a newly issued mobile AHVP voucher is transferred and signs an initial lease with another AA.

An AA that leases an initially issued mobile voucher that has been transferred to them, the receiving AA, from another AA does not receive an Issuance Transfer Fee or First-Time Leasing Fee in AHVP.



Chelsea Housing Authority (CHA) issues a mobile AHVP voucher to an applicant from its waiting list. The applicant finds a unit in Amherst. Under the new transfer policy, CHA has determined that it will not administer vouchers in Hampshire County.

CHA completes the State Rental Voucher Transfer Form and transfers the voucher to Amherst Housing Authority (AHA). The household signs a lease and moves into a unit two weeks later. AHA completes the State Rental Voucher Transfer Form and emails it to CHA and thomas.timms@mass.gov.

Because CHA had a newly issued mobile AHVP voucher lease and it was transferred to another AA, it requisitions for an Issuance Transfer Fee of \$1,000 in the Retro Admin box under its AHVP voucher allocation.

Questions?

Any questions can be directed to the appropriate staff person below. **All State Rental Voucher Transfer Forms should be sent to Thomas Timms at thomas.timms@mass.gov.**

- AHVP Questions: Joel Deery at joseph.deery@mass.gov
- DMHRSP Questions: Stephanie Kan at stephanie.kan@mass.gov
- MRVP Questions: Micqueen Clerger at micqueen.clerger@mass.gov
- Requisitioning: Sue Holland at susan.holland@mass.gov

STATE RENTAL VOUCHER TRANSFER FORM

This form must be completed and included with **every** mobile (or tenant-based) voucher transfer from one agency to another. Please fill out as completely as possible.

Program: ☐ MRVP Type: _____ ☐ AHVP ☐ DMHRSP

MRVP Only: ☐ Eligible for First-Time Leasing Fee (Initial AA)

AHVP Only: ☐ Eligible for Issuance Transfer Fee (Initial AA)

Initial AA: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Receiving AA: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Participant: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Voucher Size: _____ Bedrooms

Unit Address: _____

Unit Size: _____ bedrooms **Lease Date:** _____ **Contract Rent:** \$ _____

Important Notes: _____

Owner: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Successful Transfer: ☐ Lease Date: _____ Unsuccessful Transfer: ☐

A copy of the completed form shall be returned to the Initial AA and, if the transfer was successful, a copy shall be sent to EOHLC at thomas.timms@mass.gov.