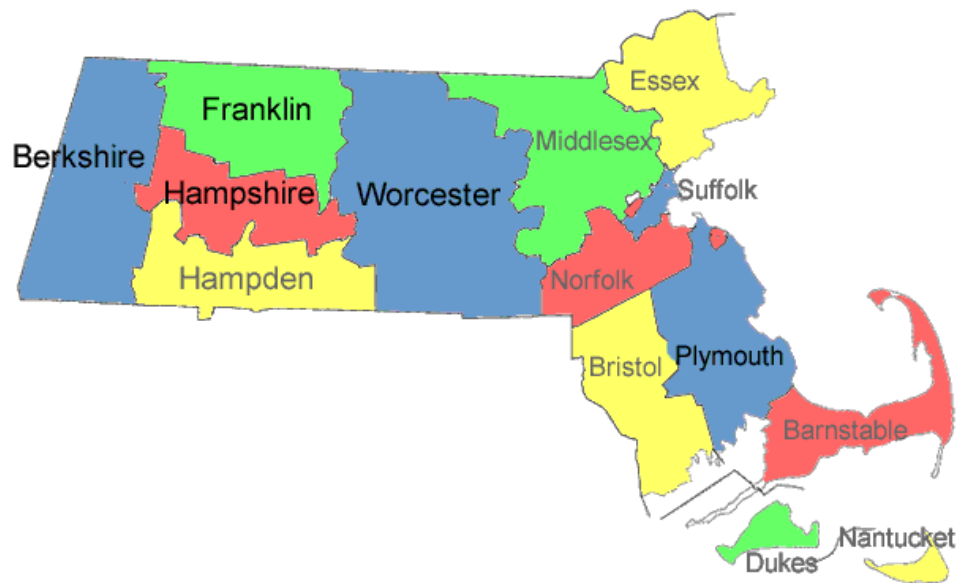


MTW Activity Plan

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



DHCD's MTW program is operated through the terms and conditions established in its Moving to Work Demonstration Agreement, and any amendments which may be added. DHCD, its subcontracted administering agencies, and MTW participants are bound by all MTW statutory and regulatory requirements regarding operation, modification, and/or termination/transition of this each MTW program activity.

Date Posted: January 5, 2021

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CHAPTER 1 : FAMILY ECONOMIC STABILITY PROGRAM

The Family Economic Stability (FES) Program serves families in Greater Boston, Massachusetts, and is currently administered by Metro Housing|Boston. These program guidelines are applicable to the Metro Housing|Boston program and its participants enrolling after July 1, 2014. DHCD may elect to expand the program to other areas of the state.

The MTW pilot programs were approved by HUD in 1998, and have been in place since then. In 2009 the program was changed slightly to strengthen program outcomes; a two-year extension period was added, and the homeownership bonus payment was changed. In the 2012 MTW Annual Plan, DHCD requested and received permission from HUD to modify the program in order to better serve the participants.

The following are the FES program goals for participants:

- Increased earned income
- Measurable career/employment progress
- Improved credit rating /financial literacy skills
- Increased asset base
- Development of a three-year Housing Stability Plan

The basic program components are outlined below. Further policy information on these components can be found in the body of this section.

- Rent Subsidy
 - Flat subsidy
 - Time limited – five years, no extensions
 - Flexible amount based on family's goals
 - Stability Rent Escrow savings program phased in during Years Four and Five
- Support Account
 - \$1800 a year to support completion of economic stability goals
- Escrow Savings Account
 - Each participant is eligible to accrue up to \$800 per year in escrow funds. These funds will be leveraged by deposits into individual savings held by participants

1.1 RENT SUBSIDY

FES provides participants with a “flat subsidy” that is not tied to household income. As participants increase their earned income, as required by the program, their rent subsidy should not decrease. Conversely, if participants lose their jobs, their subsidy should not increase. FES staff and participants should work closely together to manage employment stability to help avoid the sudden loss of income.

At enrollment, participants should be supported in their housing search and selection to determine the most affordable unit based on family size, and to consider the challenges of a flat subsidy when searching for housing.

Stability Rent Escrow Phase: Years Four and Five

In Years Four and Five, a fixed portion of rental subsidy dollars will be redirected to an escrow account that resembles the escrow accounts utilized for participants in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Tenant share of rent will increase and the difference in HAP will be deposited into an account maintained by DHCD's designee. Participants must be tenants in good standing to accumulate escrow.

During Years Four and Five of participation in the program, if a participant is still enrolled full-time in an education program and wishes to continue to receive a higher rent subsidy, he/she may elect to do so for an additional nine months, solely with the express approval of DHCD.

1.2 OUTREACH, REFERRALS, AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Metro Housing|Boston is required to submit an outreach and referral plan to DHCD prior to enrolling participants in the program. This plan will document how the agency will reach as broad a base as possible to ensure open and available access to the program on an ongoing basis.

DHCD expects Metro Housing|Boston to reach out to community colleges, job training programs, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, immigrant services agencies, childcare providers, community health centers, and other organizations serving the target population.

1.3 APPLICATION PROCESS

All applications received will be evaluated for basic eligibility including an FES assessment. Applicants will be notified of eligibility. There is no right to appeal the denial of participation, except as outlined in this chapter.

1.4 WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT

Applications received after all slots have been filled will be date- and time-stamped in the order they are received and placed on the waiting list in chronological order based on date and time received.

When slots become open on the waiting list, the appropriate number of people, according to the date and time they were placed on the waiting list, should be evaluated for basic eligibility, and if they meet the initial eligibility criteria, they should be notified that they may be eligible for FES, outlining the steps for selection as described above.

1.5 ELIGIBILITY

All participants must meet the following eligibility requirements in order to enroll in the program:

- Employment Status – All FES participants must be:
 - Working and earning wages at least part-time (12 hours a week or more); or
 - Imminently employed (offer has been made) and/or with recent work history (within the last 6 months); or
 - Enrolled in a full-time job training program with placement and ongoing employment assistance.
- Have a Child Under the Age of 18 in the Household:

The Head of Household must have a child, or be the legal guardian of a child, under 18 years of age who is a member of the household. Exception: A household with a child between the ages of 18-22 who is receiving services under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71B would qualify for FES.

- **Demonstrated Commitment to the Goals of the Program:**
Commitment to work with a variety of service agencies to obtain the supports they identify as necessary in order to move forward (One Family Scholars, Career Center services, vocational counseling etc.). Participants may be required to complete a pre-program workshop prior to joining the program.
- **Live in Non-Subsidized Housing:**
Staff must verify that the housing unit does not have a federal or state subsidy attached to the unit.
- **Income-Eligible:**
75% of all participants must earn less than 30% of AMI. All other eligibility requirements of DHCD's HCV program apply to pilot participants as well. All participants must meet the "but for this assistance" threshold – i.e., all participants must require the rental assistance in order to move from "at-risk" and unstably housed to stable and able to actively address education/training deficits to improve their long-term economic stability.
- **Tenant in Good Standing:**
The participant must be a tenant in good standing at the time of FES enrollment in order to qualify for FES, and continue to remain as a tenant in in good standing as a requirement for ongoing participation in the FES program. Good standing requires the following conditions be met:
 1. The household is current in payment of rent, charges, and fees owed to the property owner.
 2. No household member has committed any material violations of the lease for at least one year.
 3. Any current eviction proceedings must be not be due to the fault of the participant, as defined by the RAFT eligibility guidelines.
 4. If a participant has been residing in a shelter or other temporary housing provided by or supported by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, he/she must provide verification from a stabilization worker that he/she is in compliance with program requirements.
- **Additional Eligibility Considerations:**
Families losing their RAFT or HomeBASE assistance are eligible for FES, as per the PH Notice 2013-16, regarding Applicants for State-Aided Public Housing or MRVP receiving HomeBASE assistance. Families coming off RAFT/HB are eligible for FES as long as they are documented as being participants in good standing while still in their housing program – e.g. no active lease violations, current on tenant share of rent, in compliance with all program requirements, etc.

Documentation of compliance with all eligibility requirements will be included in each participant file.

1.6 INCOME AT VOUCHER ISSUANCE

At voucher issuance, household income must be sufficient to ensure that the tenant share of the rent is no more than 40% of the household's gross monthly income.

1.7 PROGRAM OPERATIONS

1.7.1 Case Management and Services

The FES program requires frequent and intensive staff interaction with participants. Metro Housing|Boston staff are expected to fully engage with participants in the program for the duration of their time in FES: case management meetings are likely to be weekly to bi-weekly for the first six months of the program. Some services and FES activities may also require regular participation in peer support groups.

Once an applicant has been determined eligible, has attended a required workshop as determined by Metro Housing|Boston, and has signed all FES program documents, participation begins. Staff should anticipate taking no more than 60 days from notification of eligibility to the completion of a customized Service Plan. All participants are required to have met a meaningful set of goals and to have a matching Service Plan that will also require the full five years of the program – the Service Plan will establish a path to those goals.

Participation in career planning and financial literacy coaching participation is mandatory for continued eligibility in FES. Career planning services may be accessed through a variety of service providers, but financial literacy coaching will be provided by the partner Metro Housing|Boston selects.

1.7.2 Service Plans

Service Plans will address immediate and long-term (five-year) goals and will be created through a partnership of the participant and FES staff. The plan must take into consideration all the goals of FES, including improved financial literacy skills and financial stability and career and employment gains. The plan will focus solely on the person enrolled in FES rather than other household members, though goals may certainly include how the development of skills and assets available through participation in FES will benefit other household members directly or indirectly.

During the course of the program, Service Plans may be revisited at any time and changes may be made that reflect evolving interests, opportunities, and resources available to the participant. Service Plan changes cannot alter or eliminate any of the required services and outcomes. Services are not voluntary but the plan should be flexible and goals may be modified over five years.

When a change in Service Plan is requested by either participant or FES staff, it should be made in writing and include the requested changes and the reason for the change. A decision about whether or not the change will be granted should be made as soon as a meeting can be held with the participant, collect information relevant to the request, or no later than within 14 business days of the request. The decision and any amendment to the Service Plan must be in writing and placed in the participant's file. Participants do not have the right to appeal the decision of the Service Team regarding a Plan change request.

1.7.3 Housing Stability Plans

The development of the Housing Stability Plan is distinct from the Service Plan, and focuses on creating a road map for housing security when the five-year program ends. Discussion of future housing stability begins at enrollment.

1.7.4 Continuing Participation Requirements

Participants will have the following responsibilities and will be terminated from the FES program if they fail to meet the following obligations:

- Complete all program application documents and provide the FES staff with all supportive documentation necessary to determine initial and ongoing income eligibility;
- Provide authorization to release and share information as necessary;
- Attend all required meetings and trainings;
- Maintain employment as required in the Service Plan;
- Establish and work toward goals in all three areas: employment/career, financial literacy, and future housing stability;
- Increase earned income each year as outlined in participant goals and benchmarks, unless otherwise indicated as part of Service Plan activities, hardship status, and/or accepted and documented mitigating circumstances. These circumstances must appropriately documented in participant file;
- Establish and complete Housing Stability Plan;
- Report all program progress to the appropriate partner(s) for data collection;
- Comply at all times with the terms of their lease; and
- Allow and provide DHCD and Metro Housing|Boston staff with all information to perform ongoing program evaluation and monitoring.

Ongoing Participation and Tenancy Status

If the participant must enter into a repayment agreement with the property owner during program participation, he/she must be fully meeting the terms of that agreement in order to remain in FES. If there are other non-compliance issues related to his/her housing status, the participant must be actively working to correct those issues to remain in the program.

1.8 SUPPORT ACCOUNT

Participants are eligible for a maximum of \$1800 per year for expenses related to maintaining employment and continuing education goals as developed in their Service Plan. Use of the Support Account is not required, but participants should be encouraged to use the funds to offset unexpected expenses. Participants must be in compliance with all aspects of their Service Plan in order to access these support funds.

The support accounts facilitate savings, and allow for participants' access to as much of the escrow funds as possible. Under certain circumstances, support funds may be accessed under the Hardship Policy to offset loss of earned income. This must be done in accordance with the Hardship Policy section of this document. Support funds cannot be used to pay rent arrearages.

1.8.1 Use of Support Account

DHCD establishes the following guidance for the appropriate use of the supports budget:

Appropriate uses for the supports budget include but are not limited to:

- Transportation (e.g. public transportation, private auto expenses),
- For working participant(s) and/or children), work wardrobe or uniforms,
- English as a Second Language classes/Adult Basic Education/GED programs or testing,
- Training programs or expenses,
- College tuition or expenses,
- Expenses for professional credentials (licenses, certification, professional insurance, etc.) or continuing education expenses,
- For participants with children, support funds may also be used for child care, before- or after-school care, summer camp, or other appropriate supports for their children, if these supports are needed to help the participant meet their program requirements.

Assistance with Rent: If the participant is enrolled in school or training full-time and is unable to work the required number of hours necessary to pay the tenant share of rent, support funds may also be as part of the rent subsidy. DHCD must approve the participant's request to use support funds for this expense. Support funds cannot be used to pay rent arrearages.

Accessing More than \$1800: Under certain circumstances, at DHCD's discretion and only upon the express approval of DHCD, a participant may access more than \$1800 per year for support funds in order to meet education or training goals. These circumstances include when:

- A participant has not accessed support funds in earlier years;
- A participant has consistently met all other FES goals identified in his/her Service Plan; and
- There are no other financial resources available to address the expense.

1.9 ESCROW SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Each participant is eligible to earn up to \$800 per year in matching escrow funds. These funds will be leveraged by participants' deposits into dedicated savings accounts held by the participants, and verified by Metro Housing|Boston staff using third-party documentation no older than 30 days at the time of the annual meeting.

Each dollar of participant savings will leverage four dollars in escrow. These individual savings (\$200 per year) must be in the account at the time of completion of the FES program in order to receive the full \$800 per year. Total escrow available upon completion of the program is not to exceed \$4000 (\$800 per year for five years).

Escrow savings accounts are not required, but all participants should be encouraged to open and maintain the required balance in the account. The \$200 each year can be saved in a lump sum (such as through a portion of a tax return) or in regular deposits.

- Participants may not use an existing savings or checking account for this purpose. In order to receive escrow funds, participants must open a dedicated "FES Escrow Account" where the participant's deposits will be held.

- DHCD does not restrict access to participants' savings accounts (i.e., funds may be used by the participant during the year), but the savings deposits must be in the account at the time of each Annual Meeting.
- All participants' savings that have leveraged escrow during program participation must be in the account at graduation.

Savings will be verified by the administering agency's staff during the annual meeting, and agency staff will request escrow funds from DHCD to deposit into an account maintained in accordance with DHCD accounting guidelines.

1.10 REVIEWS, TERMINATIONS, AND APPEALS

Metro Housing|Boston must provide a termination and appeal process that is compliant with state and federal law, and with DHCD FES guidelines. Participation in FES services is required but there may be instances in which a participant is temporarily unable to meet the terms of the program's requirements. For participants who may have difficulty meeting some of the program's obligations, FES staff must create a process by which they can address the problem and explore possible solutions to avoid the participant's program termination.

FES staff must provide a reasonable review process for a participant who is making a good faith effort to engage in the program. This includes providing a temporary hardship extension prior to termination when a participant is experiencing an unanticipated circumstance which temporarily prevents the participant from meeting his or her obligations under FES, but is expected to be able to complete all program goals over the five-year program period.

Unless there are mitigating circumstances documented in the participant's file and approved by FES staff, or if a participant is enrolled full-time in education or training as described above, failure to meet the annual income increase goals will result in termination from the FES program.

1.10.1 Requesting a Review

An applicant can request a review when:

- The applicant is determined eligible but upon verifying information for the program, is determined ineligible.
- The applicant is determined eligible based on initial eligibility screening but is then determined ineligible based on assessment during the selection process.

Reasons for Non-Acceptance

After the applicant is initially determined to be eligible, Metro Housing|Boston may determine that an applicant for participation does not meet the minimum eligibility or qualification standards upon verifying information for the program for any of the following reasons and will include these in a written notice of ineligibility if applicant is being denied participation in or acceptance to FES:

- **Incomplete Documentation:** Applicant failed to provide all required supporting documentation by the deadline set for information for application.
- **Over Income:** Total household income exceeds program enrollment or continuing eligibility income limits.
- **Not an Eligible Household:** Applicant or household does not meet the program definition of eligible FES household.

- Assessment: Applicant does not meet the selection criteria during an assessment process.

The written notice will contain the specific reason(s) for which the applicant is being denied and an explanation of how the decision may be reviewed.

1.10.2 Application Denial Review Process

Reviews will be performed with a Metro Housing|Boston staff person familiar with the program but other than the person who made or approved the particular case being reviewed or a subordinate of this person. Requests for a review must be submitted in writing by the applicant. Requests must be made in writing within 15 calendar days of the notice of ineligibility.

A review must then be conducted within 15 calendar days of the request for review. The applicant must be in attendance along with the staff, and the meeting can happen in person or over the phone. The review should be recorded and the written review finding should be mailed to the applicant or participant, recorded, and a written finding placed in the applicant or participant's file. The finding may not be appealed to DHCD or further appealed to Metro Housing|Boston beyond what is described herein.

1.10.3 Terminations and Appeals

Participant Non Compliance

The participant may be terminated when they have failed to comply with the terms of the Service Plan. This includes:

- Failing to meet obligations as outlined in the Service Plan including maintaining employment and meeting other goals agreed to by the participant;
- Failing to meet tenancy requirements such as rent and utility payment obligations;
- Being convicted in drug/criminal activity;
- Threatening DHCD or partnership staff, property owner or owner's employees or agents, or others;
- Being evicted from a unit for nonpayment of rent or other for cause reason;
- Vacating a unit without notifying DHCD or its designee;
- Committing fraud against the housing program, FES, or any other public assistance program.

For all terminations from FES, the termination shall be effective as of the date of the termination notice. Metro Housing|Boston will follow DHCD guidance for communicating with property owners about terminations.

Any hardships or reasonable accommodations requested or made should be made in accordance with DHCD policy and FES guidelines and should be documented in the participant's file.

Participants who are not in compliance with the program requirements as defined above, will be notified in writing of the violation and will be asked to participate in a meeting with the Metro Housing|Boston FES staff to develop a Corrective Action Plan with specific tasks for the participant.

The participant will be given 60 days to comply with the Corrective Action Plan. Should the participant not comply with the Corrective Action Plan, there will be a termination meeting with the FES staff and program director.

Metro Housing|Boston will provide any participant terminated from the program with the opportunity to appeal this decision directly to DHCD, in order to assure that he/she receives maximum due process. There is no further internal appeal process at the Metro Housing|Boston level.

Metro Housing|Boston should inform the client that he/she may appeal this decision directly to DHCD within 15 days from the date of the notification. The client should be advised to include any written documentation supporting his/her appeal in their appeal request to DHCD. Once Metro Housing|Boston staff notify the client that he/she has been terminated, Metro Housing|Boston is required to terminate the rental subsidy effective 30 days from the date of notification and the rental assistance subsidy will stop at that time.

Upon receipt of a termination appeal from a client, DHCD's hearing officer will request that Metro Housing|Boston submit a statement briefly outlining the steps taken to provide the participant with adequate opportunity to maintain their participation.

DHCD's Office of Chief Counsel will perform a paper review of any appeal timely received under these circumstances and issue a determination as quickly as possible.

DHCD will continue to pay the subsidy amount to the property owner during the appeals process.

Non-Communication with FES Program Staff

Participants who do not maintain contact with the program will be sent a letter to their last known address via registered or certified mail terminating their participation from the program. The following circumstances warrant terminating participants for failure to maintain adequate contact with the program:

- Three documented attempts to contact the participant via phone calls, letters, emails and/or home visits;
- Three documented missed scheduled meetings with the participant without reasonable excuses or advance warning to program staff; or
- No contact from the participant with the program staff or 60 days.

Each of these incidents must be documented in written format and maintained in the participant's file.

Termination Due to Lack of Funding

DHCD may immediately terminate this program in whole or in part at any time due to lack of funding or expiration of authorizing legislation. Households cannot appeal a denial of eligibility or termination of services that is due to a lack of funding for FES.

If DHCD terminates an FES program due to funding or other non-participant-related constraints, all participants will be issued their escrow balance and will be graduated from the program.

Escrow Upon Termination from FES

Deposits in an escrow account shall not be made to or on behalf of a participant who is the subject of eviction proceedings brought by the property owner unless and until the participant prevails in court in the eviction case. If the property owner prevails in court in the eviction case, Metro Housing|Boston staff shall terminate the household's participation in the FES program, as outlined above. If the case results in an agreement for judgment, the agreement shall specify whether participation in FES is to be terminated.

When a participant is terminated from FES, all amounts in the DHCD escrow account for the participant shall be returned to DHCD through the annual reconciliation process.

1.11 INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

The administering agency is required to provide FES staff with appropriate levels of supervision and oversight. This requires regular quality control file reviews that include not only compliance review of file completeness, participant eligibility, and all other documentation, but also reviews of participants' housing stability plans, career and employment goals, and other "non-housing" elements of the program.

MTW program staff are encouraged to work in close partnership with FSS staff, and to participate in the Program Coordinating Committee at each agency.

1.12 ONGOING CONSIDERATIONS

1.12.1 Leasing

Each tenancy will be governed by a lease signed by the property owner and the participating individual. The lease should be the standard form used by the property owner, in keeping with all applicable laws of the Commonwealth. The lease will have as an attachment a Tenancy Addendum. A copy of the lease will be reviewed by Metro Housing|Boston staff prior to the execution of the abbreviated housing assistance payments contract between DHCD and the property owner that outlines the terms of payment of the rental subsidy, as well as the owner's and DHCD's respective obligations. A copy of the lease and all attachments will be retained in the participant file.

1.12.2 Required Annual Status Review Meeting

There are no annual or interim recertifications in this program. Instead, participants will have an Annual Status Review meeting on the anniversary of their enrollment in the program. At this meeting, participants will be required to provide third-party verification that they are current on their rent and will be required to present third-party verification of their income. Metro Housing|Boston will use EIV to verify all reported income. Participants will also be required to show third-party documentation of their continued progress in meeting their Stability Plan goals, including not limited to, college transcripts, enrollment forms, and other documentation as deemed appropriate. Note: This meeting is in addition to required ongoing meetings with FES staff.

Annual Meeting Minimum Requirements

1. Verification of Household Income
 - Metro Housing|Boston will use EIV to determine total household earned income.

- All adults, over the age of 18 will be required to verify income.
 - Income from full-time students will be excluded.
 - If the total household income exceeds 75% of Area Median Income for the Metro Boston area, the household will enter a six-month Stability Phase, at the end of which the participant will be graduated from the program. At that time, all earned savings escrow and rent escrow will be paid to the participant upon verification the/she is a tenant in good standing with the property owner.
2. Verification of household savings to determine escrow match.
 3. Verification of enrollment in, participation in, and/or graduation from post-secondary education or job training programs.
 4. Annual Review of Housing Stability Plan for progress, issues, and goals for coming year.
 5. Annual Review of Service Plan for progress, modifications, and new goals.

1.12.3 Rent Reasonableness

There will be no requirement for a “rent reasonableness” certification, nor will DHCD perform any rent reasonableness determinations. Metro Housing|Boston will provide the participant with the latest rent reasonableness data maintained by the housing agency for its Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, and will encourage the participant to take this information into consideration when selecting a unit.

1.12.4 Housing Quality Standards Inspections

All units leased using HUD HCV subsidy funds must be inspected and meet Housing Quality Standards. Because this is a new requirement for an existing program, it shall be applied in the following fashion:

- An HQS inspection will be conducted prior to leasing and subsidy payment for all new enrollees
- HQS inspections for existing participants will be conducted
 - If they move to a new unit, and on a biennial schedule thereafter
 - Prior to the Annual Meeting, and then on a biennial schedule thereafter

1.12.5 Regional Priorities

In Boston, priority will be given to families living in homeless shelters. Participation in FES will result in loss of homelessness status/preference for state-assisted housing such as MRVP and State-Assisted Public Housing, as well as any of DHCD’s federal rental assistance programs that require homelessness as an eligibility criterion.

1.12.6 File Maintenance

Metro Housing|Boston will maintain files in accordance with all appropriate DHCD requirements. In addition, the following program specific documents must be maintained as well.

- Application and documentation of eligibility as defined above;
- Copies of documentation of savings account balances;
- Copies of documentation for expenditures from support account;
- Copies of checks from support accounts and uses of support funds;
- Service Plans
- Housing Stability Plans;

- Documentation of all program violations and resolution of same as identified in these program guidelines; and
- Copies of Corrective Action Plans with documentation of actions taken to resolve issues.

1.12.7 Hardship Policy

During participation in FES, a participant may request a hardship waiver if he/she experiences an unanticipated loss of income that is anticipated to last longer than 90 days. This request must be approved by MTW program staff prior to submitting it to DHCD for review. If the request is granted, any unused support funds available that year will be available to pay the tenant share of rent. The Hardship Policy does not allow the support account to be used for rent or utility arrearages. If the hardship occurs in Years Four or Five, then the rent subsidy can be restored to the higher level for a period of time not to exceed 90 days. If more than 90 days are needed, Metro Housing|Boston must contact DHCD program staff to discuss next steps with the participant.

Hardships in a Declared State of Emergency

Where the Governor or his/her designee has declared an economic/health emergency, the following hardship policies will apply during that state of emergency:

- **Subsidy:** In the event of a job loss, and a resulting rent burden greater than 40% of the household income, participants may request to have their subsidy temporarily returned to their enrollment subsidy level. DHCD will review and approve these requests in consultation with Metro Housing|Boston.
- **Support Funds:** In the event of a job loss, DHCD will waive the policy prohibiting the use of support funds for rent share. (Note: In order to maintain the availability of flexible support funds to meet other needs, all other available financial supports will be reviewed before releasing support funds for this purpose.)
- **Escrow Funds:** DHCD will allow the use of accrued escrow funds to make payments for essential expenses, such as rent and utility payments, including internet access if enrolled in online classes that are part of the participant's education and/or employment plans. (Note: In order to maintain the availability of escrow funds to maintain an asset base, all other available financial supports will be reviewed before releasing escrow funds for this purpose.)

1.12.8 Continued Participation

There is no right to survivorship in this program. The subsidy is issued to a head of household who is an active participant in crafting and implementing the Stability Plan. If a participant leaves the program either voluntarily or involuntarily, the support for the household is terminated.

1.12.9 Moves

Within MA

This program is a Moving to Work initiative of DHCD and thus has limited in-state mobility only. A participant who wishes to move to a different community within Metro Housing|Boston's service area must be able to continue to meet the requirements of their Service Plan, and the move must be approved by Metro Housing|Boston staff prior to changing residences. Moving without advance

permission of the Metro Housing|Boston staff, except in the case of domestic violence, will result in being terminated from the FES program.

Out-of-State (Portability)

A participant wishing to move out of state relinquishes all future rental and other financial assistance and support from DHCD. A participant leaving the program in good standing, as determined by DHCD, may be entitled to receive the funds in his or her escrow account leveraged through his or her savings. Good standing includes but is not limited to having met the appropriate Stability goals and being a tenant in good standing with his/her property owner.

1.12.10 Program Extensions

DHCD, on a case-by-case basis, may extend the rental subsidy for an additional six months following a loss of earned income as a result of an economic/health emergency as declared by the Governor or his/her designee.

1.13 REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION

Reporting and Program Evaluation

Metro Housing|Boston and its staff will participate in all required evaluations and will be prepared to maintain additional data on participants as required by HUD and/or DHCD. Data collection tools and requirements may change over time, and Metro Housing|Boston is expected to work with DHCD to meet these requirements.

DHCD is developing an FES version of the logic model to track individual program progress. DHCD will be monitoring the following to ensure that program implementation is on track and that participants are making measurable progress on their goals. This list may be expanded or contracted as the program develops over time.

- Service Plans for each participant completed by the end of Year One.
- Goals are established and being met in all service areas
- Housing Stability Plans for each participant completed by the end of Year One, updated on a quarterly basis throughout program.
- Baseline credit scores for each participant received and recorded within 120 days of enrollment
- Baseline data on all participants entered within 30 days of enrollment
- Quarterly reports submitted on time
- Outreach and recruitment goals reached
- Enrollment at 80% of capacity within six months, maintained at 90% or better of capacity thereafter

CHAPTER 2 : YOUTH TRANSITION TO SUCCESS PROGRAM

The Youth Transition to Success Program (YTTSP) is a collaborative effort between Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). YTTSP targets DCF youth aging out of foster care, youth referred from the Year Up program, and other DCF youth who show an ongoing commitment to improving their economic stability and achieving self-sufficiency.

The goal of the Youth Transition to Success Program is to provide referred youth who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to improving their economic self-sufficiency with additional time, support, and asset development, opportunities to further or complete their goals.

2.1 MOVING TO WORK DEMONSTRATION PROJECT AUTHORITY

The Youth Transition to Success program was included in DHCD's 2011 Moving to Work Annual plan and was approved by HUD. Program modification have been included and approved in subsequent MTW Plans.

DHCD's MTW program is operated through the terms and conditions established in its Moving to Work Demonstration Agreement, and any amendments which may be added. DHCD, its subcontracted administering agencies, and MTW participants are bound by all MTW statutory and regulatory requirements regarding operation, modification, and/or termination/transition of this project. Funding for this program is subject to annual review, and dependent upon adequate federal funding for DHCD's entire HCVP portfolio.

2.2 OUTREACH AND REFERRALS

This is a targeted referral program; only youth referred by DCF or another agency are eligible for YTTSP. Where DCF services are required for participation in this program, participation in the program ends upon his/her 23rd birthday, when DCF services end.

FUP AOP Referrals

- Referred by DCF;
- Participated in FUP AOP for no less than 18 months;
- Employed for at least 12 hours per week;
- Enrolled in an education or training program at the time of referral or previously completed nine college-level credits;
- Participant in good standing under FUP AOP including no tenancy violations and current on rent;
- Income eligible for the HCV program; and
- Meet other DHCD eligibility screening requirements.

College Track Referrals

- Referred by DCF;
- Enrolled in a full-time post-secondary degree or Associate's degree program at the time of referral or previously completed nine college-level credits;
- Income eligible for the HCV program; and
- Meet other DHCD eligibility screening requirements.

DCF will ensure that referred applicants are YTTSP-eligible and will forward the Referral Form/Certificate of Eligibility to DHCD, and DHCD will forward to the appropriate administering agency.

Where applicable, DCF will refer applicants to its designees no less than three months before the expiration of the FUP AOP voucher. Where DCF refers non FUP AOP-eligible youths for participation in YTTSP, there are no referral time frames.

When verification of eligibility is complete, DHCD's designee will conduct an applicant briefing and complete the required program participation documents. DCF Outreach staff will be required to attend all of DHCD's designees' YTTSP-related meetings with their clients and help them find and maintain suitable and safe housing.

2.3 PROGRAM COMPONENTS

YTTSP is budgeted for a total of 35 participants.

FUP AOP Referred Participants

- Rent Subsidy Features
 - Time-limited – up to 42 months and/or as long as eligible for DCF services (depending on the length of time in FUP AOP and age at YTTSP referral)
 - Based on 80% of the HUD Fair Market Rents
 - Remains the same for Years One and Two
 - Stepped down 15% each year in remaining years
- Escrow Account – up to \$800 per year leveraged by individual savings
- Support Account – up to \$500 per year available to support the completion of Transition Plan Goals
- Ongoing support from DCF Adolescent Outreach Program

College Track Participants

- Rent Subsidy Features
 - Time-limited – up to 60 months (depending on age at the time of referral)
 - Based on 80% of the HUD Fair Market Rents
 - Remains the same for Years One and Two
 - Stepped down 15% each year in remaining years
- Escrow Account – up to \$800 per year leveraged by individual savings
- Support Account – up to \$500 per year available to support the completion of Transition Plan Goals
- Ongoing support from DCF Adolescent Outreach Program

2.3.1 Employment Requirements in a Declared State of Emergency

In the event that the Governor or his/her designee has declared an economic/health emergency, YTTSP employment requirements will be suspended (but not requirements to pay tenant share of rent) if a participant experiences a job loss or reduction in hours as a result of the emergency. In the event that third-party verification is not available, DHCD will process the change using a self-certification and will follow up with third-party verification and confirmation from DCF staff.

2.3.2 College/Job Training Enrollment in a Declared State of Emergency

In the event that the Governor or his/her designee has declared an economic/health emergency, if a current YTTSP participant can document that they are unable to meet online enrollment requirements of their educational institution, DHCD will waive enrollment in college as a requirement for ongoing participation until a later time, as determined by DHCD.

2.3.3 Program Extensions in a Declared State of Emergency

In the event that the Governor or his/her designee has declared an economic/health emergency, any YTTSP participant who is scheduled to graduate from the program during the six-month period starting from the declaration of emergency will be eligible to receive rental subsidy for an additional six months from their planned graduation date. DHCD may consider longer extensions if necessary to allow participants to complete their educational program.

2.4 ELIGIBILITY

This is a targeted referral program, only youth referred by DHCD authorized referring agencies DCF are eligible for YTTSP. Where DCF services are required for participation in this program, participation in the program ends, when DCF services end.

FUP AOP Referrals:

- Referred by DCF;
- Participated in FUP AOP for no less than 18 months;
- Employed for at least 12 hours per week;
- Enrolled in an education or training program at the time of referral;
- Participant in good standing under FUP AOP including no tenancy violations and current on rent;
- Income eligible for the HCV program; and
- Meet other DHCD eligibility screening requirements.

College Track Referrals:

- Referred by DCF;
- Enrolled in a full-time post-secondary degree program at the time of referral;
- Income eligible for the HCV program; and
- Meet other DHCD eligibility screening requirements.

2.5 LEASING

Each tenancy assisted by YTTSP will be governed by a lease signed by the property owner and the participating individual. The lease should be the standard form used by the property owner, in keeping with all applicable laws of the Commonwealth. A copy of the lease will be reviewed by DHCD's designee's staff prior to the execution of the housing assistance payments contract between DHCD and the property owner that outlines the terms of payment of the rental subsidy, and the owner and DHCD's respective obligations. YTTSP participants are not eligible for a utility allowance. A copy of the lease and all attachments will be retained in the designee's file.

2.6 HQS INSPECTIONS

Biennial inspection policies apply to units leased under the Youth Transition to Success Program.

2.7 RENT REASONABLENESS

There will be no requirement for a “rent reasonableness” certification, nor will DHCD perform any rent reasonableness determinations. However, DHCD considers assisting youth with making sound housing choices that weigh location, affordability and safety is a critical element of life skills training provided by DCF. DHCD’s designee will provide the participant with the latest rent reasonableness data maintained by the housing agency for its Housing Choice Voucher Program, and will encourage the participant to take this information into consideration when selecting a unit. The participant will be able to select the unit which best fits its budget and needs, including proximity to employment, childcare, transportation, and support systems.

2.8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE

YTTSP rental assistance will be a flat subsidy determined by DHCD based on HUD Fair Market Rents. Each year, the monthly rental stipend will be reduced by 15%. All subsidy terms are reviewed with participants and DCF or Year Up workers at the time of referral to the program. A YTTSP participant may choose to lease a unit that is less expensive than the subsidy amount, in which case he/she will not be required to pay a tenant share of rent. The participant will be responsible for all utility costs. When a participant enrolls in the program, rents will be determined for each year of participation. They will be based on FMRs at the start of the program.

For College Track DCF referrals, the rental subsidy will hold at the initial level through the second year of program participation. Thereafter, the subsidy will decrease 15% per year for the remaining three years.

Rental subsidy charts for the term of the program are prepared at the time of eligibility and maintained in the participant file.

2.9 ANNUAL STATUS REVIEW MEETING

There are no annual or interim reexaminations in YTTSP. Instead, YTTSP participants will meet with DHCD’s designee’s staff, accompanied by DCF Outreach staff, at initial enrollment, and at the start of Years Two and Three. At these meetings, participants will be required to provide third-party verification that they are current on their rent and will be required to present third-party verification of their income. The designee will use EIV to verify all reported income. Participants will also be required to show third-party documentation of their continued progress in meeting their Transition Plan goals, including not limited to, college transcripts, enrollment forms, and other documentation as deemed appropriate.

2.10 HARDSHIP POLICY

During participation in YTTSP participants may request a hardship waiver if he/she experiences an unanticipated loss of income that is anticipated to last longer than 90 days. This request must be approved by DCF Outreach Program prior to submitting it to DHCD for review. If the request is granted, any unused support funds available that year will be available to pay the tenant share of rent. The hardship policy does not allow the support account to be used for rent or utility arrearages.

Hardships in a Declared State of Emergency

Where the Governor or his/her designee has declared an economic/health emergency, the following hardship policies will apply during that state of emergency:

- Subsidy: In the event of a job loss, participants may request to have their subsidy temporarily returned to their enrollment subsidy level. In the event that third-party verification is not available, DHCD will process the change using a self-certification and will follow up with third-party verification and confirmation from DCF staff.
- Subsidy: Until the state of emergency is lifted, rent subsidies will not be reduced in Years Three or Four.
- Support Funds: In the event of a job loss, DHCD will waive the policy prohibiting the use of support funds for rent share. (Note: In order to maintain the availability of flexible support funds to meet other needs, all other available financial supports will be reviewed before releasing support funds for this purpose.)
- Escrow Funds: DHCD will allow the use of accrued escrow funds to make payments for essential expenses, such as rent and utility payments, including internet access if enrolled in online classes as part of their education/training program. (Note: In order to maintain the availability of escrow funds to maintain an asset base, all other available financial supports will be reviewed before releasing escrow funds for this purpose.)

2.11 CHANGES IN FAMILY COMPOSITION

Changes in family composition may not be made without prior written approval from DHCD and the referring agency. Documentation of DHCD and referring agency approval of changes in family composition will be retained in the file.

2.12 ESCROW ACCOUNT

Each YTTSP participant is eligible to accrue up to \$800 per year in escrow funds. These funds will be leveraged by deposits into savings accounts held by YTTSP participants, and verified by DCF staff using third-party documentation. Each dollar of participant savings will leverage four dollars in escrow. These individual savings (\$200 per year) must be in the account at the time of completion of the YTTSP program in order to receive the full \$800 per year.

Total escrow available upon completion of the program is not to exceed \$4,000 (\$800 per year for five years).

Escrow accounts are not required, but all participants should be strongly encouraged to open and maintain the required balance in the account. The \$200 can be saved in a lump sum (such as through a portion of a tax return) or in regular deposits.

Each year, following the annual meeting with participants, DHCD's designees will request the amount of escrow dollars YTTSP participants have earned, and deposits those funds into the escrow account for that participant. Participants will accrue interest on these funds during the program.

2.13 SUPPORT ACCOUNT

YTTSP participants are eligible for a supports budget of up to \$500 per year for expenses related to maintaining employment and continuing education goals as developed in the DCF Transition Plan. Use of the Support Account is not required, but participants should be strongly encouraged to use the funds to off-set unexpected expenses.

Any unused support funds will be recaptured by DHCD. DCF and DHCD's designees' staff are urged to encourage YTTSP participants to use these funds for the above purposes and unforeseen expenses. The support accounts are intended to facilitate savings, and allow for YTTSP participants access to as much of the escrow funds as possible. Under certain circumstances, support funds may be accessed under the hardship policy to offset loss of earned income. See the Hardship Policy section of this plan. Support funds cannot be used to pay rent arrearages.

Appropriate uses for the supports budget include but are not limited to:

- Transportation (public transportation, private auto expenses, for working participant(s) and/or children),
- Work wardrobe or uniforms,
- English as a Second Language classes,
- Adult Basic Education/GED programs or testing,
- Training programs or expenses,
- College tuition or expenses,
- Expenses for professional credentials (licenses, certification, professional insurance, etc.) or continuing education expenses,
- For YTTSP participants with children, support funds may also be used for child care, before- or after-school care, summer camp, or other appropriate supports for their children.

All support fund checks will be made payable to the vendors.

2.14 TRANSFERS AND PORTABILITY

The YTTSP is a Moving to Work initiative of DHCD and thus has in-state mobility only. A participant who wishes to move to a different community within Massachusetts must be able to continue to meet the requirements of their referring agency. All moves must be approved by DCF and submitted in writing to DHCD's designee by DCF staff prior to changing residences.

A youth wishing to move out of state relinquishes all future rental and other financial assistance and support from DHCD. A participant leaving the program in good standing, as determined by DCF, will be entitled to receive the funds in his or her escrow account leveraged through his or her savings.

2.15 FILE MAINTENANCE

DHCD's designees will maintain files in accordance with all appropriate DHCD requirements. In addition, the following program specific documents must be maintained as well.

- Referral Form from referring agencies
- Copies of documentation of savings account balances
- Copies of documentation for expenditures from support account
- Copies of checks from support accounts
- Copy of rent subsidy chart sent with referral

2.16 TERMINATION

DCF will make termination decisions based on the participant's ongoing compliance with the DCF Outreach Transition Plan/contract. In the event of program non-compliance, DHCD and its designees will not initiate termination proceedings. DHCD and its designees will communicate with DCF and DCF will be responsible for initiating termination proceedings only after attempts at resolution have failed.

- a. DCF will be responsible for presenting termination decisions pertaining to compliance with DCF Transition Plans/contracts. Transition Plans will include lease compliance and all tenancy-related issues. Youth will be notified in writing of the violation and will be asked to participate in a meeting with a DCF program worker and supervisor to develop a corrective action plan with specific tasks for the participant;
- b. The youth will be given 60 days to comply with the corrective action plan;
- c. Should the youth not comply with the corrective action plan there will be a termination meeting with DCF staff;
- d. DCF may extend the timeframe of the corrective action plan or may approve the termination of the youth from the program. Written notice of DCF's decision will be provided to the youth, DHCD, and DHCD's designee within 10 business days of the meeting;
- e. YTTSP requires the client to be in good standing with DCF and in compliance with their Transition Plan, termination by DCF will result in termination from the program;
- f. Once DHCD's designee receives notification from DCF that the client has been terminated, DHCD's designee is required to terminate the rental subsidy effective 30 days from the date of notification and the HAP subsidy will stop at that time.

2.17 CONTINUED PARTICIPATION

There is no right to survivorship in the YTTSP. The subsidy is issued to a head of household who is an eligible participant in the YTTSP program. When a participant leaves the YTTSP either voluntarily or involuntarily, the support for the household is terminated.

2.18 REPORTING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

DHCD's designees and DCF will participate in all required evaluations and will be prepared to maintain additional data on participants as required by HUD and/or DHCD.

2.19 BENCHMARKS

DHCD anticipates that up to 35 DCF-referred participants per year will be enrolled in this program. All successful participants will demonstrate improvement in their educational and/or employment levels. All successful participants will develop strong tenancy histories. DCF Outreach Program case management support will also strengthen participants' financial management skills.

DCF will monitor changes in educational attainments and increases in income, as appropriate. These changes will be reported to DHCD's designee on a quarterly basis for entry into DHCD's housing software.

CHAPTER 3 : YEAR UP LAUNCH VOUCHER PROGRAM

3.1 OVERVIEW

The Year Up Launch Voucher program (YU Launch) is a collaborative effort between the Department of Housing and Community Development, Year Up of Greater Boston, and Metro Housing|Boston.

The Year Up Launch Voucher program serves Year Up-referred youth ages 18 – 24, living in the Boston area, who have been accepted or are enrolled in the Year Up program and are housing unstable. The policies and procedures set forth in this plan will achieve an important DHCD program objective: to ensure that the economic self-sufficiency goals of youth in this program are met as required by the HUD Moving to Work statutory obligations. The Year Up Launch Voucher program was included in DHCD's FY2018 Moving to Work Annual plan and approved by HUD. In addition, DHCD and Year Up will monitor the program's effectiveness in its primary purpose – helping participants meet their economic self-sufficiency goals. Funding for this program is subject to annual review, and dependent upon adequate federal funding for DHCD's entire Housing Choice Voucher portfolio.

3.2 RENT SUBSIDY FEATURES

- a. Time-Limited – up to 60 months
- b. Income-Limited – if a participant reaches 81% of area median income (AMI) prior to the 60 months being elapsed, the voucher will be terminated
- c. Remains the same for Years One and Two, and stepped down 15% each year in remaining years (80% of FMR in Years One and Two, 65% in Year Three, 50% in Year Four, and 35% in Year Five)
- d. Escrow Account – up to \$800 per year leveraged by individual savings
- e. Support Account – up to \$500 per year available to support the completion of Transition Plan Goals
- f. Ongoing support from Year Up services team

3.3 TIME AND INCOME LIMITATIONS

The maximum period of time that voucher program participants may receive rental assistance is 60 months. A voucher program participant will cease to be eligible once the participant reaches 81% of AMI, even if this is before 60 months has elapsed.

3.4 SUBSIDY

The YU Launch rental assistance is a flat subsidy determined by DHCD based on household composition and regional housing costs. The rental subsidy starts at 80% of current fair market rent (FMR) for Years One and Two of the program and is reduced in each remaining year by 15%.

A YU Launch participant may choose to lease a unit that is less expensive than the subsidy amount, in which case they will not be required to pay a tenant share of rent. However, if a tenant leases an apartment for less than the subsidy amount, the tenant will not receive the difference. The tenant will be responsible for utilities required of them by their lease with the owner. All subsidy terms are to be reviewed with participants and Year Up staff at the time of referral to the

program. At enrollment, participants will receive a subsidy chart with their subsidy amounts for the full term of their time in the program.

3.5 ESCROW ACCOUNT

Each YU Launch participant is eligible to accrue up to \$800 per year in escrow funds. These funds will be leveraged by participant deposits into their YU Launch savings accounts. Up to \$200 annually will be matched with \$4 in escrow for every \$1 saved on their own in a personal savings account. These individual savings must be in the account at the time of completion of the YU Launch program in order to receive the full \$800 per year. Total escrow available upon completion of the program is not to exceed \$800 per year. Documentation of savings (up to \$200 per year) through bank statements must be provided at each annual meeting, and included in the participant file; a participant cannot put \$800 in their savings account in the last year and receive the match.

Saving to earn escrow is not required, but all participants should be strongly encouraged to open a personal savings account and maintain the required balance in the account in order to access escrow in the future. The \$200 can be saved in an annual lump sum (such as through a portion of a tax return) or in monthly deposits of \$16.67 per month (suggested). The savings account can be added to a participant's existing savings or checking account.

Each year, following the annual meeting with participants, Metro Housing|Boston will request the amount of escrow dollars YU Launch participants have earned, and deposit those funds into the escrow account, held by them until successful completion of the program, for that participant. Participants will accrue interest on these funds during the program.

3.6 SUPPORT BUDGET ACCOUNT

YU Launch participants are eligible for a support budget of up to \$500 per year for expenses related to maintaining employment and continuing education goals. Use of the support budget account is not required, but participants should be strongly encouraged to use the funds to offset unexpected expenses. Support budget accounts are intended to facilitate savings, and allow for YU Launch participants to access as much of the escrow funds as possible. Under certain circumstances, support budget funds may be accessed under the hardship policy to offset loss of earned income. See the Hardship Policy section of this plan. Support budget funds cannot be used to pay rent arrearages.

DHCD establishes the following guidance for the appropriate use of the support budget to assist the participant in making good decisions in consultation with the Year Up Student Services staff. Appropriate uses for the support budget include but are not limited to: transportation (public transportation, private auto expenses, for working participant(s) and/or children), work wardrobe or uniforms, college fees or related expenses, expenses for professional credentials (licenses, certification, professional insurance, etc.) or continuing education expenses. For YU Launch participants with children, support funds may also be used for child care, before- or after-school care, summer camp, or other appropriate supports for their children. All checks must be made payable to the vendors.

3.7 ONGOING SUPPORT FROM YEAR UP

For each Year Up student eligible for and admitted to the Program, Year Up will assess individual needs, and evaluate performance, from admission to graduation and beyond. Periodic reviews occur at seven week intervals during the Year Up program; thereafter, Year Up staff will ensure

ongoing contact with the participant for as long as the person is receiving the housing subsidy (at least quarterly). Year Up will assist with the following support services post-referral:

- Provide additional resources as needed, (e.g. behavioral wellness, support groups, legal/financial assistance, transportation, child care referrals, etc.).
- Interact with the property owner and the voucher program participant on all issues related to the participant's tenancy once the participant has found and leased a unit.
- Prepare the participant for the required annual meeting with the participant and Metro Housing|Boston, at which the participant will be required to provide third-party verification that they are current on their rent as well as third-party verification of their earned income and/or enrollment in a degree program and proof of savings, and attend the annual meeting with the participant.
- Process a hardship waiver for a participant who experiences an unanticipated loss of income that is expected to last longer than 90 days or if they must temporarily withdraw from Year Up with good cause. This request must be approved by Year Up prior to submitting it to DHCD for review. If the request is granted, any unused Year Up support funds available that year will be used to pay the participant's tenant share of the rent. The hardship policy does not allow the support account to be used for rent or utility arrearages.
- Re-evaluate the voucher participant's Transition Plan at least six months prior to the end of the subsidy to ensure the participant is prepared to assume the full contract rent or secure stable housing without a subsidy.

3.8 ELIGIBILITY

This is a restricted referral program and only youth referred by Year Up are eligible for YU Launch. Further, since Year Up program compliance is required for participation in this program, participation in the program ends when compliance with Year Up's program ends. A YU Launch eligible youth is one that Year Up has certified as meeting all five of these requirements:

- a. Be between the ages of 18 and 24;
- b. Be a participant in good standing with Year Up;
- c. Be income eligible as defined by Housing Choice Voucher Program income limits (gross income cannot exceed 80% of AMI);
- d. Be housing-unstable, as defined by no fixed place to live, and/or rent-burdened, as defined by paying more than 40% of gross income in rent; and
- e. The participant must be the head of their household with no other adult members of the household unless it is the participant's partner, or immediate family member. The participant, partner, or immediate family member must be parent or guardian to any dependent child. Total household gross income will be used to determine initial and ongoing income eligibility

Once a Year Up participant graduates from Year Up, they are no longer required to meet the Year Up program requirements; however, they are required to meet with their Year Up case manager at least quarterly for as long as they are receiving the housing subsidy.

3.9 OUTREACH AND REFERRALS

Referrals for vouchers ended in August 2018. Year Up Student Services staff will identify possible referrals from a pool of youth conditionally accepted to Year Up or currently enrolled in the Year Up Program:

- Identified student applicants in Admissions Decisions Forum
- Current Learning & Development (L&D) and Internship students

Eligibility criteria will be the following:

Criteria	Program Compliance	Hardship	Housing Search Efforts
Identified Student Applicants from Decision Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Points (100 points or more for Downtown or Quincy campus; 75 points or more at RCC • Have met contract expectations three weeks in a row • Have no more than three late assignments • Sustaining Core Values • Currently has (or is in the process of securing) part-time job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing is not stable/sustainable/safe • Condition has persisted for greater than 60 days • Would not be able to attend YU over time without stable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing must be within voucher catchment area of Metro Housing. A limited number of rental subsidies will be granted to participants residing in Brockton • Is a sustainable commute from YU
L&D Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Points (100 points or more for Downtown or Quincy campus; 75 points or more at RCC • Have met contract expectations three weeks in a row • Have no more than three late assignments • Sustaining Core Values • Currently has (or is in the process of securing) part-time job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing is not stable/sustainable/safe • Condition has persisted for greater than 60 days • Would consider leaving YU if does not have stable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing must be within voucher catchment area of Metro Housing. A limited number of rental subsidies will be granted to Participants residing in Brockton • Is a sustainable commute from YU

Criteria	Program Compliance	Hardship	Housing Search Efforts
Internship Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Points (100 points or more) • Have met contract expectations three weeks in a row • Have no more than three late assignments • Sustaining Core Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing is not stable/sustainable/safe • Condition has persisted for greater than 60 days • Would consider quitting YU if does not have stable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing must be within voucher catchment area of Metro Housing. A limited number of rental subsidies will be granted to Participants residing in Brockton • Is a sustainable commute from YU

Identified students must also complete an application process in a timely manner.

The YU Launch Decision-making Committee will ensure that referred applicants are YU Launch eligible; a Student Services team member will forward the Referral Form to Metro Housing|Boston, with email notice to DHCD’s Director of Economic Prosperity Policy and Programs. Metro Housing|Boston will include the Rent Subsidy chart for that participant’s time in the program with the referral. The referral form and the rent subsidy chart must be in the participant file at Metro Housing.

3.10 VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICANT BRIEFING

Once Metro Housing|Boston receives the completed referral form from Year Up, the referred applicant will be invited to attend an eligibility briefing at Metro Housing|Boston. This briefing will require the applicant, along with the Year Up staff to attend an in-person meeting at Metro Housing. When verification of eligibility is complete, Metro Housing|Boston will conduct an issuance briefing. The issuance briefing explains, in detail, the process for leasing a unit and the ongoing program requirements.

Participants may not enter into a lease where they have a roommate or are renting a room in a multi-bedroom apartment. Participants may enter into a lease for an SRO unit. Participants may enter into a lease with their spouse or domestic partner; other familial relationships (for example, a brother and sister both enrolled in Year Up) will be taken under consideration on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Economic Prosperity Policy and Programs. Only one subsidy may be issued per household even if more than one household member is enrolled in Year Up. The gross income of all adults in the household will be used to assess eligibility.

Metro Housing|Boston must ensure through inspection that the housing meets HUD criteria. Participants, who are leaseholders and heads of household, who are rent burdened, may continue to rent their apartment through this program. Participants choosing to continue renting their current apartment must allow Metro Housing to conduct a thorough inspection to ensure that the housing meets HUD criteria.

DHCD will hold a phone conference with YU and Metro Housing|Boston to discuss the first three rental subsidies that are issued. The goal of these conversations will be to understand the

participant's reason for receiving the subsidy and hear back from Year Up and Metro Housing about the ease or complexity of the process.

3.11 LEASING

Each tenancy assisted by YU Launch will be governed by a lease signed by the property owner and the participating individual. The lease should be the standard form used by the property owner, in keeping with all applicable laws of the Commonwealth. A copy of the lease will be reviewed by the Metro Housing|Boston staff prior to the execution of the abbreviated housing assistance payments contract that outlines the terms of payment of the rental subsidy, and the owner and DHCD's respective obligations. Metro Housing|Boston will execute the abbreviated housing assistance contract.

YU Launch participants may not add new members to their household. In the event that a participant is adding their minor child and is parent of that child, Year Up will notify DHCD and DHCD, in partnership with Year Up will determine if the household can be expanded. Documentation of DHCD and Year Up approval must be maintained in the Metro Housing|Boston file. Adding participants to the household without approval is considered a program violation and is grounds for termination by Year Up.

YU Launch participants are not eligible for a utility allowance.

Metro Housing|Boston will use Earned Income Verification (EIV) to verify all reported income.

3.12 RENT REASONABLENESS

There will be no requirement for a "rent reasonableness" certification, nor will DHCD perform any rent reasonableness determinations. However, DHCD considers assisting youth with making sound housing choices that weigh location, affordability, and safety a critical element of support provided by Year Up. Metro Housing|Boston will provide the participant with the latest rent reasonableness data maintained by the housing agency for its HCV program, and will encourage the participant to take this information into consideration when selecting a unit. The participant will be able to select the unit which best fits its budget and needs, including proximity to employment, childcare, transportation, and support systems.

3.13 HQS INSPECTIONS

Biennial inspection policies apply to all units leased under the Year Up Launch Voucher Program.

3.14 CONTINUED PARTICIPATION

There is no right to survivorship in the YU Launch. The subsidy is issued to a head of household who is an active participant in Year Up. When a participant leaves the YU Launch, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the support for the household is terminated.

3.14.1 Annual Status Review Meeting

There are no annual or interim reexaminations in YU Launch. Instead, YU Launch participants will have a status review meeting with Metro Housing|Boston staff, accompanied by Year Up staff, at initial enrollment, and 45-60 days prior to their initial lease effective date anniversary each year thereafter (an "annual meeting").

The purpose of the annual meeting is to review the reduced rental subsidy amount that will go into effect for the coming year, to verify savings in order to calculate escrow match, and to verify enrollment in Year Up, a degree program, or employment. At these meetings, participants will be required to provide third-party verification of:

- a. Up-to-date rent payments (in the form of a letter from the owner or a copy of the tenant ledger);
- b. Enrollment in Year Up, a degree program, or proof of employment (in the form of pay stubs to verify income); and
- c. Verification of Savings (in the form of a bank statement or passbook).

Participants will also complete a family certification form to verify their family composition and a HUD 9886 form to so that Metro Housing|Boston can verify income through EIV.

3.14.2 Accessing Support Budget Funds

Support Budget funds must be requested using a form, created by Year Up and approved by DHCD that is signed by both participant and Year Up; the form is sent to DHCD, who approves the use of support funds. DHCD forwards the approval to Metro Housing|Boston who is responsible for disbursing the funds for the participant, writing checks directly to a vendor or third party.

3.14.3 Year Up Participation and Case Management

In order for YU Launch voucher recipients to remain in compliance with the Year Up program, they must adhere to the Year Up Contract including: maintaining a point-level of 100 points or higher at the Downtown and Quincy campuses, and 75 points or higher at the RCC Campus, have fewer than 10/8 absences during L&D and Internship respectively, and remain true to Year Up's Core Values (respect and value others; build trust and be honest; engage and embrace diversity; be accountable; strive to learn; work hard and have fun).

YU Launch voucher recipients have ongoing access to Year Up's Student Services Team to address case management/housing concerns, challenges, inquiries, etc., on an as needed basis. At minimum, all voucher recipients will meet quarterly with a Student Services representative or Student Services staff member.

3.15 PORTABILITY

The YU Launch is a Moving to Work initiative of DHCD and thus has in-state mobility only. A participant who wishes to move to a different community within Massachusetts must be able to continue to meet the requirements of the Year Up Program, and the move must be approved by Year Up and submitted in writing to Metro Housing|Boston by Year Up staff prior to changing residences.

A youth wishing to move out of state relinquishes all future rental and other financial assistance and support from DHCD. A participant leaving the program in good standing, as determined by Year Up, will be entitled to receive the funds in their escrow account leveraged through his or her documents savings account.

3.16 HARDSHIP POLICY

During participation in YU Launch, participants may request a hardship waiver if they experience an unanticipated and no-fault loss of income that is likely to last longer than 90 days, or if they temporarily withdraw from Year Up with good cause. This request must be approved by Year Up Student Services and then submitted to DHCD for review. If DHCD approves the request, they will notify Metro Housing|Boston of this and any unused support funds available that year will be available to pay the tenant share of rent. Because the hardship policy does not allow the support budget account to be used for rent or utility arrearages, participants in danger of losing their income must contact their support team immediately for assistance, before they are behind on the tenant share of rent.

3.17 TERMINATION

Year Up will determine continuing eligibility for the program, and will determine when a participant is to be terminated from YU Launch. Termination will be based on failure to comply with Year Up's program requirements. The process for termination will be as follows:

- The participant will be required to attend a meeting to discuss program compliance with a member of the Student Services Team and develop a corrective action plan with specific tasks for the participant.
- The participant will be given 30 days to comply with the Corrective Action Plan (CAP).
- Should the participant not comply with the CAP there will be a termination meeting with the Director of Student Services and/or the Director of Community Partners. This meeting may result in an extension or revision of CAP, or immediate termination.
- If the result is termination, the participant will be notified in writing that they are no longer eligible for the services required to maintain the housing program voucher. A Year Up Student Services Director will also notify DHCD and Metro Housing|Boston, in writing, of the participant's status.
- Once Metro Housing|Boston receives notification from Year Up that the participant has been terminated, Metro Housing|Boston is required to terminate the rental subsidy effective the last day of the month at least 30 days – one full calendar months' notice - from the date of notification and the Housing Assistance Program subsidy will stop at that time. Metro Housing|Boston will send written notification of the termination of the Housing Assistance Program to the participant and the property owner.
- Metro Housing|Boston's written notification to the participant will include the participant's right to appeal the decision to terminate Housing Assistance Program payments directly to DHCD within 15 business days from the date of the notification.
- Upon receipt of a termination appeal from a participant, DHCD's hearing officer will request that Year Up submit a statement briefly outlining the steps Year Up took to provide the participant with adequate opportunity to maintain their participation.
- DHCD's Office of Chief Counsel will perform a paper review of any appeal under these circumstances and issue a determination as quickly as possible.

3.18 GRADUATION

Sixty days prior to the completion of the 60-month period of program participation, Metro Housing|Boston will send a letter to the participant, with a copy to Year Up, scheduling a final meeting within 30 days. The participant will be required to bring with them to that meeting documentation of savings, employment or education status, proof of income, and documentation from the property owner stating the participant is a tenant in good standing (current on rent, etc.). The property owner will also receive notification from Metro Housing|Boston that the subsidy is ending and full rent will be due from the participant with a specified effective date.

The escrow amount disbursed will be based on the accumulated escrow (escrow must be present every year, e.g., a participant cannot deposit \$600 at the end of the last year and receive three years' worth of escrow). Escrow will be paid to participant after documentation of successful completion of the program requirements. The meeting with Metro Housing|Boston, prior to the completion of the program, is a prerequisite to receiving escrow.

3.19 FILE MAINTENANCE

Metro Housing|Boston will maintain files in accordance with all appropriate DHCD requirements. In addition, the following program specific documents must be maintained:

- a. Enrollment Referral Form from Year Up
- b. Copies of documentation of savings account balances
- c. Copies of documentation for expenditures from support account
- d. Copies of checks from support accounts
- e. Enrollment EIV report and EIV income reports, in compliance with current EIV regulations regarding EIV destruction
- f. Copies of family certification forms
- g. Lease(s) – it is expected that each year a new lease, with the modified subsidy amount (which may appear in an addendum to the lease), will be executed
- h. Third-Party Verification of Tenancy in good standing from owner
- i. Rent Subsidy Chart establishing rents for term of participation
- j. A copy of the Rent Reasonableness documentation that was provided to the participant at the initial lease up
- k. Documentation of Year Up approval for additional household members
- l. Documentation of Hardship (if used)

3.20 PROGRAM PARTICIPATION LIMITS

The program maxed out at 40 participants and when those subsidies expire, the initiative will end. All successful participants will demonstrate improvement in their educational and/or employment levels. All successful participants will develop strong tenancy histories.

Year Up will monitor the following outcomes below and report to DHCD on a quarterly basis:

- a. Retain 75% of the participants through completion of the Year Up program;
- b. Ensure 85% of graduates are employed earning an average wage of \$18/hour and/or enrolled in post-secondary education within four months of program completion;
- c. Ensure 70% of graduates obtain enrollment in Year Up-related roles and industries;
- d. Ensure 70% of participants will establish and/or maintain savings accounts with balances sufficient to leverage maximum of escrow (\$1,000 savings/\$4,000 escrow).

3.21 REPORTING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Metro Housing|Boston and Year Up will participate in all required evaluations and will be prepared to maintain additional data on participants as required by HUD.

CHAPTER 4 : SUPPORTING NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY IN MASSACHUSETTS (FORMERLY YOUR CHOICE)

DHCD has established the “Supporting Neighborhood Opportunity in Massachusetts” (SNO Mass) Program in selected regions in the Commonwealth. Two regional administering agencies will pilot this program.

The purpose of this initiative is to provide significant supports and encouragement to voucher participants and applicants who wish to move to high opportunity communities.

DHCD may reach out to the following agencies for referrals to the SNO Mass program; however referrals must be current voucher holders or voucher program applicants.

- Programs that:
 - Expand educational opportunities,
 - Increase diversity, and
 - Reduce racial isolation, by permitting students in certain cities to attend public schools in high opportunity communities.
- Work force development programs that facilitate career placement for families living in, or wishing to relocate in, high opportunity neighborhoods.

4.1 ELIGIBILITY

- Families who:
 - Are existing voucher participants; or
 - Are applicants likely be selected from the waiting list within the next six to twelve months; or
 - Are referred from applicable program types; and
 - Who wish to move to high opportunity communities; or
 - Have an existing connection to an opportunity neighborhood through work or education.
- New families to the HCV program must meet all DHCD eligibility and screening requirements.
- Families may be required to develop a family plan to access opportunities in their new neighborhoods, with a special focus on positive outcome educational programs for children and available jobs for adults.
- DHCD may develop cohort groups to move to a single opportunity neighborhood to provide peer support for one another.

4.2 PROGRAM SIZE

- DHCD will target counseling services to an appropriate caseload that can be supported by the program budget. DHCD will periodically review program resources and adjust the budget higher/lower to meet or respond to demand.

- While the program is largely targeted to current voucher holders and applicants and is voluntary, DHCD may decide to allocate a limited amount of MTW vouchers (up to 50) for referrals to the program from partner organizations or initiatives. These vouchers may require participation in the SNO Mass program.

4.3 SERVICES PROVIDED

- Case management (pre- and post-move);
- Other incentives based on family need and budget availability, including but not limited to:
 - Transportation assistance,
 - Child care referrals,
 - Training stipends.

4.4 RENT SUBSIDY

The program uses the higher of approved payment standards or Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMR) to assist with higher rents in opportunity neighborhoods.

4.5 PROGRAM SUPPORTS

DHCD may offer longer search periods, down payments, security deposit assistance, or other flexible funding resources to support moves to opportunity neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 5 : EXPANDING HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES: RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

This activity supports a comprehensive redevelopment program to preserve existing state-aided low-income housing. Resources under this activity will primarily support rental subsidies and relocation costs associated with short-term housing for low-income residents during construction; no MTW funds will be used to support construction. Efforts will be made to find units that enable relocated families to remain as close to their existing housing as possible in order to limit changes in school assignments for school aged children.

DHCD-approved hearing and grievance process will be available to participants who request rent hardships and hearings will be conducted by the local PHAs. Units occupied during relocation will be inspected by local PHAs to ensure that they meet HUD Housing Quality Standards. To define the terms and conditions of the rental subsidy and relocation services, including MTW reporting requirements, DHCD will enter into MOUs with the local PHAs.

5.1 ELIGIBILITY

- Families at or below 80% of AMI at applicable state-aided public housing redevelopment projects.

5.2 PROGRAM SIZE

- Eligible families at applicable state-aided public housing redevelopment projects.

5.3 SERVICES PROVIDED

- Relocation assistance for income-eligible families;
- Security deposits for relocated families;
- Vacancy payments up to 60 days to ensure retention of units in the PHA's jurisdiction for relocated families.

5.4 SUBSIDY

- DHCD to provide rental subsidies to relocated families.
- Tenant rent will be calculated according to state public housing regulations.
- Relocation costs.

5.5 INSPECTIONS

Units occupied during relocation will be inspected by the local PHA to ensure that the unit meets HUD Housing Quality Standards.

5.6 REASONABLE RENT

Reasonable rent determinations will be completed based on a review of local community housing market conditions, including rent levels, rental vacancy rates, and other relevant factors.

CHAPTER 6 : RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES IN TRANSITION (RAFT)

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) is a critically important homelessness prevention program which targets families with who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. RAFT offers flexible financial assistance designed to meet each family's particular needs.

6.1 ELIGIBILITY

The RAFT eligibility process will consider the reasons for which someone is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, including loss of income and increased expenses for those with incomes between 30% and 50% of Area Median Income (AMI). Families eligible for assistance include the following:

- A family must be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- The household must be income-eligible. Not less than 50% of the funding will be available for families with an income at or below 30% of AMI, and a maximum of 50% for families between 30-50% AMI.
- A family must meet the basic criteria of an assessment targeting tool (RAFT Screen) developed by DHCD, which was developed using indicators for risk of homelessness.
- The RAFT eligibility process will consider the reasons for which someone is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, including loss of income and increased expenses for those with incomes between 30% and 50% of AMI.
- A family must show that RAFT assistance will stabilize the current housing situation. This means a household must have enough income after receiving RAFT to be able to stay in their current housing, obtain new housing, or otherwise avoid homelessness.
- Families with children under the age of 21 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (including HCV participants and federal public housing residents).
- Who meet the basic criteria of an assessment targeting tool (RAFT Screen) developed by DHCD.

6.2 PROGRAM SIZE

- Approximately 300 households per year.

6.3 SUBSIDY

Subsidies will be used to assist households with:

- Moving costs,
- Rent and utility arrears,
- Utility bills,
- Security deposit,

- Utility startup costs,
- First/last month's rent, and/or
- Purchase of furniture (up to \$1,000).

Subsidies will provide approximately \$2,000 of financial assistance per household, with a maximum benefit of \$4,000 per 12-month period. DHCD may revise these thresholds for consistency with RAFT benefits as provided under this state-run program.

CHAPTER 7 : SUPPORT FOR THE SECURE JOBS INITIATIVE

DHCD supports the Secure Jobs Initiative (SJI), which provides integrated case management, employment supports and housing assistance for homeless and low-income families. The goal of the SJI is to bridge the gap between housing and employment services, to offer a holistic set of services that supports families on their path to employment and addresses every barrier they face in moving forward. The SJI is administered across the Commonwealth by regional partnerships consisting of shelter providers, housing stabilization providers and employment placement and training providers.

7.1 ELIGIBILITY

- Income-eligible participants who are most “ready, willing, and able” to work as identified and referred by SJI Stabilization Workers.
- Compliance with the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and maintenance of employment through completion of the SJI program.
- For SJI participants who referred from SJI for one of the allocated vouchers, all DHCD screening and eligibility requirements will apply.

7.2 PROGRAM SIZE

- Up to 50 Housing Choice Vouchers for eligible families referred from the SJI program.
- Up to 1,000 households will receive SJI services.

7.3 SERVICES PROVIDED

- Intake and assessment;
- Development of an IEP for each participant;
- Necessary services, including:
 - Job readiness training,
 - Career counseling;
 - Skills training;
 - Job development;
 - Job search assistance;
 - Job referrals (upon completion of training or job placement);
 - Post-employment placement; and
 - As applicable, Vocational English Language Training.

7.4 SUBSIDY

- **Voucher Households Only.** Income, rent, and subsidy will be calculated per DHCD’s MTW income and rent policies.
- Hardship policies for participants who lose employment through no fault of their own.

- Assistance with small expenses that may act as barriers to successful employment, including:
 - Licensure tests,
 - RMV fees,
 - Transportation passes,
 - Uniforms, and
 - Other expenses that may act as barriers to successful employment.

CHAPTER 8 : A BETTER LIFE PROGRAM MODEL

DHCD funds a limited number of Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to operate the “A Better Life Self-Sufficiency (ABL) Program” at state-aided public housing developments. MTW Block Grant service dollars are used to support initial program start-up, staffing, including Family Life Coaches (FLCs) and supportive services such as education and training.

8.1 ELIGIBILITY

- Low-income applicants and existing residents in state-aided public housing;
- Continued Eligibility: Participants must work, attend school, or provide community service.

8.2 PROGRAM SIZE

- Four LHAs
- The number of LHAs may be expanded as funding and needs permit

8.3 SERVICES PROVIDED

Services may be provided for up to three years, including:

- Preparation of a Service Plan with short, medium, and long-term goals and objectives necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Support with activities and goals related to:
 - Education,
 - Employment,
 - Finances,
 - Health, and
 - Personal development.

8.4 SUBSIDY

- There is are no participant subsidies under this activity.

CHAPTER 9 : HEALTH STARTS AT HOME

DHCD, in collaboration with The Boston Foundation (TBF), provides Housing Choice Vouchers to eligible participants in TBF's Health Starts at Home (HSH) initiative. TBF is a community foundation that provides grants to non-profit organizations and designs special funding initiatives to address critical challenges in the community. The HSH is a three-year initiative that brings together housing and health-care organizations to support work that demonstrates the positive benefits of stable, affordable housing on children's health outcomes.

HSH goals include:

- Highlighting the importance of affordable housing in children's health outcomes;
- Identifying promising new and existing models that can be brought to scale to improve children's health outcomes;
- Decreasing health care costs; and
- Decreasing costs related to homelessness.

The partnerships being supported in TBF's HSH initiative are listed below. This activity proposes collaboration specifically between DHCD and three of the four HSH partners:

- Building Bridges to Better Health (BB2BH)
- Chelsea Homes for Health
- Mortar Between the Bricks: Building a One-Stop, Two-Generation Foundation for Health

All HSH vouchers will be administered by Metro Housing|Boston for the first year. Following the first year, the vouchers will be administered by the appropriate regional administering agency.

9.1 ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must meet DHCD eligibility and screening requirements.
- Applicants will be selected according to the time and date of referral from one of the partner agencies.

9.2 PROGRAM SIZE

- Up to 50 Housing Choice Vouchers.
- Vouchers are not time-limited, but will not be re-issued upon turnover.

9.3 SERVICES PROVIDED

- There are no DHCD services provided under this activity.

9.4 SUBSIDY

- All MTW policies and procedures apply including income, rent, and subsidy calculations.

CHAPTER 10 : AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

DHCD supports planning grants and the development and preservation of affordable rental housing units through implementation of a new Affordable Housing Preservation and Development Fund (AHPD). AHPD funds will provide loans to eligible projects to leverage private equity and state-aided public housing capital resources. AHPD funds will not be utilized to support the development of federal public housing. In some cases, projects may be funded that involve the use of Housing Choice Vouchers, Project-Based Voucher or Project-Based Rental Assistance contracts. Any such projects will be subject to all applicable requirements established by HUD.

10.1 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- Developed rental units must:
 - Be targeted for households earning less than 80% of AMI;
 - Have deed restrictions or other legally binding covenants to ensure long-term affordability;
 - Remain affordable for at least 30 years unless otherwise approved by HUD.
- Funded rental units may be owned by a DHCD instrumentality or other public or private entities, including:
 - Existing state-aided public housing developments slated for preservation and/or redevelopment;
 - Newly proposed affordable developments involving LIHTC; or
 - At-risk affordable developments nearing the end of their compliance period.
- In the competitive process for funding, priority will go to projects that:
 - Serve public housing residents and/or include supportive services,
 - Produce or preserve a set number of total units for homeless families or individuals, and
 - Incorporate mixed uses.
- Competition applicants must:
 - Demonstrate experience in affordable housing development; and
 - Meet other DHCD eligibility requirements, including readiness to proceed, to be determined by the status of:
 - Necessary zoning and permitting approvals,
 - Architectural documents, and
 - Other funding commitments as a way to determine project readiness.

10.2 PROGRAM SIZE

- Up to 100 affordable housing units developed or preserved, not to exceed \$100,000 per unit.

CHAPTER 11 : OWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Using its MTW authority, DHCD has approved a program to increase housing choice, as well as to incentivize owners to rehabilitate their properties, provide handicap accessible units, and maintain HCV units at high HQS levels. DHCD wishes to attract owners who are willing to invest in their properties and to maintain them at above average HQS standards. Specifically, program goals include the following:

- Increasing the number of higher quality apartments under HAP contract
- Increasing the number of units under HAP contract in underserved neighborhoods and communities (as defined by DHCD)
- Attracting new owners to the HCVP
- Increasing the number of handicap accessible apartments
- Turning foreclosed properties into affordable housing units

DHCD may pilot this program at one or more regional administering agencies.

11.1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Owner Incentive Program (OIP) has a number of different financial incentives, each of which supports the objectives of the program. DHCD or its designee will offer financial incentives to owners who meet the criteria below AND who agree to lease to the same tenant or another HCV client in the subsequent year. Participation is capped at 10 units per owner per year, and the total program will not exceed 8% of DHCD's designee's HCVP allocation (approximately 40 units). DHCD will cap the incentive received at \$1,700 per unit. The program is subject to renewal or cancellation in future years at DHCD's discretion.

11.2 FINANCIAL INCENTIVES & RELATED CRITERIA

- Summary of Available Incentives

Incentive Type	Incentive Amount	Eligible?	
		New Owner	Existing Owner
New "A" Grade Unit	\$1,200	X	X
New "B" Grade Unit	\$900	X	X
Move from "C" or "B" Grade to "A" Grade (existing units only)	\$1,200		X
Move from "C" Grade to "B" Grade (existing units only)	\$900		X
New Owner Bonus*	\$500	X	
New Construction Bonus*	\$500		X
Substantial Rehab Bonus*	\$500		X
Accessibility Bonus*	\$500		X
Foreclosure Bonus*	\$500		X
Underserved Community Bonus (only new units)*	\$500		X

*Owners are eligible for a maximum incentive of \$1700 per unit. Therefore, each unit is eligible for only one \$500 bonus.

All work must be completed with all applicable permits, inspections, and approvals.

Owners looking for additional funding sources for home modifications will be provided with a list of local, state and federal sources that may be accepting applications for specific improvements.

An agreement will be signed certifying that the incentive payments are not part of the monthly rent to owner. The rent reasonableness calculation for units involved in the program will not change, and will continue to be tied to a grade and a local rent comparable system.

DHCD reserves the right to change the amounts, terms, targeted areas or any criteria listed above during the program.

11.3 OWNER RECRUITMENT

DHCD or its designee continue to solicit owners who are likely to contribute to the program in meeting its objective by participating in the Rental Housing Association of Berkshire County (RHABC) and provide existing owners with an update of the program. DHCD or its designee's HQS inspectors may be able to assist in identifying owners or units that may qualify for the program.

11.4 APPLICATIONS

Applications will be available at the DHCD designee's office during normal business hours. Applications may also be requested by phone or email, and will be sent by mail or by fax. Applications may be submitted by mail or in person. All program applications will be reviewed by the Director of Leased Housing.

There will be no waiting list kept for this program. If an application is submitted after the program is closed, the application will be returned to the owner and the owner may reapply if and when the program opens again.

There will be no appeal rights to DHCD or its designee if an owner is denied participation in the program. Denial of an application would occur if the owner does not meet the eligibility criteria, has the maximum number of units already participating in the program, or has a history of HQS non-compliance.

11.5 PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Upon acceptance to the program, owners will submit a detailed work plan for each unit which has been accepted to the program. A baseline inspection will be conducted and photos taken of the existing unit condition. The work plan and a timeline will be finalized for each unit, and an agreement signed with the owner which outlines the obligations of the owner and DHCD or its designee.

Upon completion of the improvements to the unit, an inspection will be completed to verify the improvements and award a new grade to the unit. Owners receiving the accessibility bonus are required to provide DHCD an itemized list of costs associated with the improvements. DHCD or its designee reserves the right to inspect the unit at any point during program participation to ensure that the unit maintains the new HQS grade.

11.6 PAYMENTS

Funds are to be committed within the first 12 months of the program. The base payment of \$900 or \$1,200 will be made in quarterly installments beginning with the first HAP payment made for the unit after the post-improvement inspection has been made and provided the unit maintains the condition for which the award was originally made. The additional \$500 payment (if applicable) will be made at the end of the 12 month period, provided that the tenant remains in the unit or that another HCV client leases the unit. Payments will be terminated if at any time during the program the unit condition falls below the grade for which the reward was originally made.

11.7 SELECTION OF OWNERS

No priorities will be given for this program. Applications will be taken on a first-come, first-serve basis until funds are depleted. DHCD or its designee will open and close the application process as needed to meet program objectives.

11.8 GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

The program is currently available throughout Berkshire County; however, DHCD may expand this program to other locations in its jurisdiction.

11.9 COORDINATION WITH OTHER LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

DHCD or its designee will maintain relationship with service agencies. To support the goals set for this program, DHCD or its designee may conduct outreach to the following types of agencies:

- Family Support Agencies
- Local State Agencies
- Housing Service Providers
- Employment Support Agencies & Businesses
- Utility Companies
- Local Banks

11.10 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS/PROGRAM EVALUATION

DHCD or its designee will establish baseline unit counts and conditions before implementation of the program. Data will be collected for all indicators upon completion of the program, and some metrics (unit retention, unit grade retention, number of new units brought on by new and existing owners) will continue to be measured. Data collection will be performed using existing data fields in DHCD's housing software. Success of the program will be determined by change in the number and/or percentage of:

- The number of units which have received a grade higher than the previous HQS inspection
- The number of units which were leased in a underserved community or neighborhood (as defined by DHCD)
- The number of units which were made handicap accessible
- The number of units which were purchased under foreclosure, rehabilitated and converted to affordable housing (proper documentation verifying foreclosure purchase will be required)

- How long participating units sustain their improved condition over the life of the HCVP contract