



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Charles D. Baker, Governor ♦ Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor ♦ Jennifer D. Maddox, Undersecretary

**Public Housing Notice 2022-04**

TO: All Local Housing Authorities

FROM: Ben Stone, Director, Division of Public Housing

RE: Guidance on Income Exclusions from Rent Determinations in State-Aided Public Housing - COVID-19 Essential Employee Premium Pay Program & Transitional Support Services Stipends

DATE: February 15, 2022

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This guidance directs LHAs how the one-time direct payments from the COVID-19 Essential Employee Premium Pay program should be treated for purposes of rent determination in state-aided housing and a reminder of how the Transitional Support Services stipends should be treated for purposes of rent determination in state-aided housing.

1. Direct Payment to Individuals from the COVID-19 Essential Employee Premium Pay program  
– **Exclude from Income for Rent Determination**
2. Transitional Support Services (TSS) stipends for families transitioning from TAFDC  
– **Exclude from Income for Rent Determination**

1. Direct Payment to Individuals from the COVID-19 Essential Employee Premium Pay program

Governor Baker announced On February 8, 2022 [the COVID-19 Essential Employee Premium Pay program](#). The program will disburse \$500 payments pursuant to the “COVID-19 Essential Employee Premium Pay program” passed in the legislature’s American Rescue Plan Act bill in December. For the first round of disbursement, Massachusetts residents will be eligible for the payment if their 2020 income from employment was at least \$12,750 and their total income put them below 300% of the federal poverty level. No one who received unemployment payments in 2020 will be eligible in the first round. Eligible individuals will receive a check without needing to take any direct action.

Following on previous DHCD guidance, due to the temporary, one-time nature of this benefit, DHCD deems that these payments are “gifts” under 760 CMR 6.05(3)(a) and should be **excluded from income for purposes of rent determination for public housing**. Residents do not need to report this income to housing authorities. This applies to the first round of payments and any subsequent rounds made from the COVID-19 Essential Employee Premium Pay program.

## 2. Transitional Support Services (TSS) stipends for families transitioning from TAFDC

The Department of Transitional Assistance offers stipends will help a household adjust to the loss of a TAFDC benefit. [Transitional Support Services](#) (TSS) stipends are available to a household once they no longer receive TAFDC because of earnings from a job. Recipients will receive two types of TSS stipends: a Work-Related Expense stipend and a Transportation stipend. TSS progressively declines over a four-month period, and recipients are mailed you a letter each month when TSS stipends are issued.

The stipend amounts should be **excluded from income for tenants in state-aided public housing**.

As 760 CMR 6.05(3), Exclusions from Gross Household Income states:

“... (q) Transitional support services stipends for work related expenses such as transportation received from the Department of Transitional Assistance by former clients whose benefits terminated due to earnings.”

If you have any questions, please contact your Housing Management Specialist.