



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

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

**PHN 2024-21**

To: Local Housing Authority (LHA) Executive Directors  
From: Ben Stone, Undersecretary of the Division of Public Housing and Rental Assistance  
Date: November 8, 2024  
Re: Notice of Funding Availability Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP) FOR State-Aided Public Housing and Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)

**NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA)  
For EOHL**

**DOCUMENT TITLE: SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM (SSP) FOR STATE-AIDED PUBLIC HOUSING AND MASSACHUSETTS RENTAL VOUCHER PROGRAM (MRVP)**

**DATE: 11/7/2024**

**COMMBUYS Bid #: BD-25-1076-OCDD-005-109127 AGENCY DOCUMENT #: EOHLC2025-28 SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM FOR STATE-AIDED PUBLIC HOUSING AND MASSACHUSETTS RENTAL DIVISION: PUBLIC HOUSING AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE**

Please Note: This is a single document associated with a complete Bid (also referred to as a "Notice of Funding Availability" ("NOFA"), Procurement, or Solicitation) that can be found on [www.COMMBUYS.com](http://www.COMMBUYS.com). All Bidders (also referred to as Respondents or Applicants) are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all information, forms and requirements for the entire Bid, which are all incorporated into the Bid. Bidders may also contact the OSD Help Desk Helpdesk at [OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov](mailto:OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov) or the OSD Helpline at 1-888-MA-STATE. The Helpline is staffed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday Eastern Standard or Daylight time, as applicable, except on federal, state and Suffolk County holidays.

The terms of [815 CMR 2.00](#), State Grants, Federal Grant Awards, Federal Subgrants and Subsidies are incorporated by reference into this NOFA. Contract and fiscal requirement terms used in this NOFA shall have the meanings defined in [815 CMR 2.00](#).

**2025 SSP Program for State-Aided Public Housing and MRVP**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) is committed to supporting the efforts of residents in state-aided public housing and participants in the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) to make measurable gains in employment, financial capability, and education. In FY 2025, EOHLC will make three new awards of up to approximately \$100,000 annually for an initial contract duration period of up to five years in competitive grants to Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) and/or Regional Administering Agencies (RAAs) to expand the Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP) for state-aided public housing and MRVP. Contract awards are subject to satisfactory performance and the availability of funding. New housing agencies selected in FY25 must have at least 100 total units of state-aided family housing, MRVP vouchers, or some combination of the two. Note that applicant(s) who are selected under this NOFA who also have sites with a current award must adhere to the guidelines in this NOFA moving forward.

Since launching in 2020, the SSP program has served over 240 participants at six LHAs and three RAAs. Participants work with a self-sufficiency coach to set and complete goals centered around economic mobility. As participants' income increases and their rent goes up, they are able to escrow the increased amount of rent, up to \$20,000. This combination of individualized, participant-led coaching with earned escrow savings supports participants' path towards self-sufficiency in a manner that treats participants as the experts in their own lives.

We anticipate that the funding for grant awards will be available annually for an initial five years, with the option to renew the contracts for one contract renewals, at each contract renewal term, at EOHLC's discretion, all subject to the availability of funding and satisfactory performance. EOHLC also reserves the ability to review program costs periodically and increase awards as needed and as funding allows.

### **EOHLC is seeking up to three additional sites in FY 2025 to serve residents of state-aided public housing and/or MRVP participants.**

The three required elements of the SSP program for all awardees (new **and current** awardees) are:

1. Coaches, to be employed by the LHA/RAA or a partner agency, who provide employment, education, and asset building support for all SSP program participants based on a Contract of Family Participation created with the participant.
2. Partnerships with local service providers to provide employment, financial literacy, and education services that support SSP participants to meet desired outcomes.
3. An escrow account for all SSP participants. As participants increase income from employment and their rent increases, the difference between the baseline rent and new rent is placed in an escrow account on their behalf. Participants can use their escrow funds to further their employment, education, and asset building goals. The amount held in escrow is capped at \$20,000. The escrow funding is not part of the NOFA but will come from the money set aside from the increased tenant rent.

### **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

For new awards in FY25, SSP grants are limited to LHAs or RAAs in Massachusetts who own and/or administer at least 100 units of state-aided family public housing (Chapter 200 or Chapter 705 programs), MRVP vouchers, or some combination of the two programs.

For new awards in FY25, EOHLC will also consider funding a regional approach that incorporates multiple LHAs or RAAs who own or administer more than 100 units of state-aided family housing and/or MRVP vouchers **combined**. EOHLC will review more favorably proposals that provide a reasonable expectation of participant uptake in the program and explain how the LHAs will feasibly share staff. EOHLC will only consider regional proposals from agencies that are relatively near each other.

**NOTE: EOHLC is seeking three additional sites in FY 2025 to serve residents of state-aided public housing and MRVP participants.**

EOHLC reserves the right to re-open this procurement and/or to add additional contractors at any time during the contract award term(s). In addition, if over the term(s) of the contract award(s), EOHLC determines that additional contractors should be added, these may be drawn from the qualified applicants that responded to this NOFA and were not awarded contracts.

### **Eligible Use of Funds**

LHAs/RAAs can apply for the funds under the following eligibility guidelines:

- New Applicants in FY25
  - For new awards in FY 2025, an LHA or RAA may apply for **a full-time staff person** who will be expected to **serve between 35-50 participants at one time**. Funding requests can be **up to \$100,000** with up to \$90,000

- available for staffing costs based on appropriate salary rates within the agency and then an additional \$10,000 for flexible funds.
  - EOHLC may increase awards over the initial five year period of the award, and any contract renewals, at the discretion of EOHLC and subject to funding availability.
- Existing Awardees
  - Existing awardees will continue to operate under the staffing and enrollment configurations already in place under their existing award. However, existing awardees will need to adhere to updated program design and reporting requirements (see remainder of document).
  - Existing awardees receiving funds for a part-time SSP coach may apply for a funding increase on the condition that the SSP coach position will become full-time. Existing awardees should justify this request based on current and planned enrollment.

An LHA/RAA can choose to hire an *internal staff person* or use the funds to pay for *a staff person at a partner agency* (this can be another LHA/RAA or a nonprofit agency) with the coaching expertise required to serve the needs of residents.

All contract awards are subject to the Commonwealth’s Bill Paying Policy and the applicable Commonwealth Terms and Conditions.

## Program Design

The program will constitute up to a **three-year** commitment for SSP participants **with the opportunity to renew for two additional years, one year at a time, subject to EOHLC approval**. One participant per household may enroll at a time. Participants work with coaches to create an Individualized Goal Plan (IGP), containing **up to** three SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals at a time. This program views the participants as experts in their own lives and as such, all goal setting should be directed by the participant. Coaches will support participants in the application of the SMART goal model, connection to community resources, and creating/managing the escrow accounts. As the participant completes a goal, they may set new goals until they have reached their escrow cap. In order to be considered in compliance, a participant must have at least one active goal, have met with their coach within the past 90 days, and remain current on their rent (public housing) or a participant in good standing (MRVP). Participants who have fallen behind in rent may enter into a payment plan with the LHA in order to re-gain compliance. Similarly, participants will have 45 days from closure of their **last** goal in their IGP to set a new goal or exit the program. Participants who are out of compliance for over 45 days will exit the program and forfeit their escrow. Renewal will be based on a participant needing more time to meet their goals and/or reach their escrow cap. Completion of the program will be defined by the participant being in compliance, as defined above, and achieving their goals as stated in the IGP.

The ability to escrow is one of the main advantages of the program. Participants may access their escrow on an interim basis to support them to meet their SMART goals. Participants may have set goals for themselves, such as credit repair or debt reduction, that would benefit from an interim escrow disbursement. In order to access the escrow on an interim basis, a participant will need to indicate how the funds support one or more of their goals and must have completed at least one interim goal.

## Program Metrics

LHA/RAAs who receive funding to operate the program will be required to measure the following metrics on an individual basis through a web-based tool provided by EOHLC. Both new and existing awardees are required to track and report these metrics.

Demographics
Name
Date of birth
Race (HUD)
Ethnicity (HUD)
Gender
Enrollment

Date of enrollment
Date of exit
Exit reason
Exit from public housing (if applicable)
Escrow dispersed
Escrow payment category
<b>Goals</b>
Date goal set
Target achievement date
Goal text
Goal category
Date goal closed
Goal Achieved?
<b>Meetings</b>
Meeting Date
Meeting Type
Meeting Duration
Notes (optional)
<b>Baseline/Annual/Exit Assessment</b>
<b><i>Household</i></b>
# Adults 18 and over
# Children 6 – 17
# Children 5 and under
Total Annual Household Income (Benefits + Earned Income)
Total Annual Household Income (Earned Income Only)
Household Tenant Rent
<b><i>Individual</i></b>
# of meetings with coach this year (in-person or virtual, minimum 10 minutes)
Total Annual Individual Income (Benefits + Earned Income)
Total Annual Individual Income (Earned Income Only)
Receiving TANF
Receiving SNAP
Receiving SS/SSI
Receiving Unemployment
<b><i>Employment</i></b>
Employment status
<b>If Employed:</b>
Industry
Health Insurance
Goal job/Bridge job/Career ladder
Full time/Part Time
Average hours per week

<b><i>Financial Well-being</i></b>
Do you have a bank account?
Do you have a savings account
Are you able to save at least \$10 a month?
Escrow amount #
Upload escrow bank statement (annually)
<b><i>Education</i></b>
Highest level of education
Are you currently enrolled in education
<b>If Yes:</b>
Program type
Full time/Part time
Area of study
Did you graduate from an education program since the last assessment
<b>If Yes:</b>
Degree type

SSP program staff from each LHA/RAA will be required to attend virtual quarterly cohort meetings.

EOHLC may also determine at any time during the term of the contract that additional information and/or actions may be required.

Please note that the NOFA includes a description of the minimum anticipated scope of services, which EOHLC may modify or expand, as outlined herein. EOHLC may negotiate changes to the original performance measures, quantities, contract term length, and requirements identified in this NOFA at any time, to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, policies, and program goals. EOHLC may negotiate and execute contract amendments with the awarded applicant(s) which EOHLC reasonably determines are within the scope of this NOFA and necessary to result in best value to the Commonwealth, which may include, among other things, related services.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

All applicant organizations must submit materials to EOHLC comprised of the following, as applicable: **Submission Materials**

### **Existing Grantees: Current Funding Grant Renewal Requirements**

**Existing Grantees wishing to renew their grant at their current funding level should submit the following:**

- **A one-page cover letter** accepting the terms of the new NOFA and transmitting the application, signed by the LHA or RAA Executive Director.
- **A board vote** of application approval, as evidenced by a certified extract from the minutes of the board meeting (only applicable for LHAs).

### **Existing Grantees: Increased Funding Grant Renewal Requirements**

**Existing Grantees which currently hold a \$70,000 SSP grant may apply to increase funding to \$100,000 on the condition that the SSP coach position moves from part-time to full-time. To apply for this increased funding please submit the following:**

- **A one-page cover letter** accepting the terms of the new NOFA, commitment to make the SSP coach a full-time position, proposal to increase enrollment to justify a full-time position, signed by the LHA or RAA Executive Director.
- **A board vote** of application approval, as evidenced by a certified extract from the minutes of the board meeting (only applicable for LHAs).

### **New Grants in FY25: Grant Application Requirements**

**Please submit an application no longer than ten, single-sided, single-spaced pages with the following information:**

- **A one-page cover letter** transmitting the application, signed by the LHA or RAA Executive Director.
- **A board vote** of application approval, as evidenced by a certified extract from the minutes of the board meeting (only applicable for LHAs).
- **A narrative** describing why the LHA/RAA is interested in and well-suited to develop a plan to implement the program, including the three key components (coaches, partnerships, and escrow), in your state-aided family portfolio and/or with MRVP households. Applicants should highlight their prior experience:
  - Implementing economic mobility or coaching programs including specific information on enrollment numbers, experience with goal setting, program retention and graduation rates.
  - Recruiting participants for programs.
  - Leveraging outside partners, resources, and funds to provide services to SSP program participants.
  - Demographics of LHA/RAA households and how they relate to recruitment and program plans. This should explain how the program site will achieve participation targets, including separate recruitment strategies and anticipated recruitment rate for MRVP and state-aided public housing family programs.
- **Completion of Appendix A** excel chart that asks for number of state-aided public housing units, MRVP units and budget allocations.
- **A draft budget** showing how the requested funds would be spent on SSP and the leveraged funds the LHA/RAA will use to augment the EOHLC funds. This budget should include an estimate of how many participants will come from MRVP households versus state-aided family public housing households.
- **A description of capacity to measure** the metrics outlined in the Program Metrics section of this NOFA. Please explain how you will use the data and reports from the EOHLC web-based system to drive performance.
- **A list of staff and qualifications**, current or to be hired, who would be assigned to this project. Clearly identify their proposed roles in developing and implementing the SSP program and their relevant experience with providing the type of supportive services.
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### **Scoring Criteria**

Applications will be reviewed to determine overall consistency with the goals of the program and with EOHLC goals and objectives. Only complete applications will be reviewed.

Applications will be evaluated to determine how well positioned the LHA/RAA is to implement the program in state-aided public housing or with MRVPs. Points will be given based on how well the application meets the criteria below. An application can score a **maximum of 100 points. The minimum score needed by an applicant is 51 points.**

Scoring Guide:

0 – Does Not Meet Requirement; 3 – Meets; 5 – Exceptionally Strong Response

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Multiplier</b>	<b>Final Score</b>
Demonstrated experience of applicant and/or partners to implement economic mobility programs including specific	(required minimum score of 3)	6	

information on enrollment numbers, experience with goal setting, program retention, and graduation rates. (e.g., examples of other similar projects successfully completed).			
Evidence of ability to successfully recruit participants for programs and meet the enrollment goal. This will take into account the forecasted enrollment based on both raw numbers and review of justification statement for enrollment levels.	(required minimum score of 3)	6	
Demonstrated ability to leverage outside partners, resources and funds to provide services to residents.	(required minimum score of 3)	3	
Reasonableness of budget showing how the requested funds will be spent on the program and the leveraged funds the LHA/RAA will use to augment the EOHLC funds.	(required minimum score of 3)	2	
Explanation of how LHA/RAA will use the data and reports from the EOHLC web-based system to drive performance.		2	
List of staff (current or to be hired) who will be assigned to this project, their roles in developing and implementing the program and their relevant experience with providing coaching and services.		1	
TOTAL			

EOHLC reserves the right to request additional information from applicant LHA/RAAs during the review process and to use other available information as may be necessary in order to complete its review. Please see the General section of the NOFA below for more information. The number of awards is subject to funding availability.

### Application Submission Procedures

### Estimated Calendar

NOFA Activity	Date	Time
NOFA CB's Post Date:	11/7/2024	4:00 PM
Q&A submittal deadline (est.):	1/31/2025	4:00 PM
Q&A response deadline (est.):	2/14/2025	4:00 PM
Deadline for responses:	3/28/2025	4:00 PM
Contract/s Award (est.):	4/18/2025	4:00 PM

All times that are included in the Estimated Calendar are prevailing Eastern Time. Questions and responses must be received no later than the due date and time indicated, or they may not be evaluated. The dates and times listed may change and are not binding on EOHLC. Any change in the date and time of the submission deadline indicated will be posted on COMMBUYS. If there is a conflict between the dates in this Estimated Calendar and dates on COMMBUYS, the dates on COMMBUYS shall prevail. Any changes in this



Estimated Calendar that are made after the NOFA has been published may not result in amendments to the NOFA. Such changes may appear only on COMMBUYS.

Please submit any questions about the SSP application to [EOHLCPUBLICHOUSING@Mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCPUBLICHOUSING@Mass.gov) by **4 pm on Friday, January 31, 2025**. Answers will be posted as addendum to this NOFA by Friday, February 14, 2025.

**Electronic applications for this grant are due to EOHLC by Friday March 28, 2025 at 4 pm.** Applicants should e-mail their applications as **one pdf document** to [EOHLCPUBLICHOUSING@Mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCPUBLICHOUSING@Mass.gov). Applications submitted as multiple documents will not be considered. EOHLC staff will review the applications and anticipates granting awards by April 2025. This date, and the contract award date listed in the Estimated Calendar, are the anticipated estimated dates only. EOHLC may elect to establish an alternative contract award date and contract start date, as needed.

[OBJ]

EOHLC reserves the right at any time and without penalty to cancel or recommence this NOFA, narrow or amend its scope, or reject any and all responses if EOHLC determines that a fair and open competitive procurement has been compromised or that doing so is in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

## General

EOHLC reserves the right to use other available information regarding an applicant's history, experience and past performance as a EOHLC grantee or borrower (as applicable) when evaluating applications, which may include whether the applicant has:

- Met prior work plan objectives in a timely and proper manner in accordance with an approved budget, and otherwise performed effectively;
- Complied with the terms and conditions of previous contracts;
- Conducted due diligence, closed loans and constructed program/projects in accordance with applicable requirements;
- Maintained compliance with applicable programmatic and legal requirements for any required period of affordability, and;
- Has a significant balance of unutilized credits.

All responses and information submitted in response to this NOFA are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law. All written correspondence and materials submitted to EOHLC during this process, including as part of the response to this NOFA, become the property of EOHLC upon their receipt and will not be returned to the submitting parties. Except as provided in the Public Records Law, all materials submitted to EOHLC are subject to release as public records. In no event shall EOHLC, or any of their agents, representatives, consultants, directors, officers, or employees, be liable to an LHA/RAA for the disclosure of all or a portion of a response or related information submitted in connection with this NOFA.

By submitting their NOFA application, the Applicant agrees to the terms of the NOFA, and affirms that they are not subject to any state or federal debarment order.

This NOFA does not commit EOHLC to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an LHA's/RAA's response to this NOFA or to enter into a contract for services. EOHLC may (i) accept or reject any and all proposals received as a result of this NOFA; (ii) contract for some, all or none of the services offered by LHAs/RAAs in response to this NOFA; (iii) negotiate with one or more of the qualified LHAs/RAAs; or (iv) cancel, in part or in its entirety, this NOFA if it is in the best interest of the Commonwealth to do so.

EOHLC reserves the right to make amendments to the NOFA after initial publication. Any such amendment will be posted to COMMBUYS. It is each LHA's/RAA's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for any amendments, addenda or modifications to this NOFA, and any Q&A records related to this NOFA. EOHLC accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to LHAs/RAAs who submit a response based on an out-of-date NOFA or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

Applicants may not alter the NOFA language. Modifications to the NOFA are prohibited and will be disregarded.

Selected LHAs/RAAs must ensure that all client/participant data is held in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements, including but not limited to, M.G.L. c. 66A, M.G.L. c. 93H, M.G.L. c. 93I, the applicable Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, and the Enterprise Information Security Policies and Standards published by the Executive Office for



Technology, Services and Security (EOTSS), such that the confidentiality and security of the Commonwealth program data is protected.

EOHLC shall maintain sole and exclusive ownership rights to the Commonwealth Data and Commonwealth Personal Data to be provided under any contract award resulting from this NOFA, including but not limited to all of its MRVP and state-aided public housing participant files and data that may be assembled, created, or used by the selected applicant(s) in the performance of work under the contract award(s). For the avoidance of doubt, the selected applicant(s) shall serve as a “holder” of the data under M.G.L. c. 66A, M.G.L. c. 93H, M.G.L. c. 93I, and the applicable Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, but shall have no rights in or to the Commonwealth Data or Commonwealth Personal Data other than the limited, revocable, and non-transferrable right to use such files and data solely as required for the selected applicant(s) to meet their obligations under contract award with EOHLC.

The selected applicants(s) must provide all contracted services in a non-discriminatory manner, and in conformance with applicable state and federal regulations, and with any administrative guidance, policies, and other requirements provided by EOHLC, including but not limited to the applicable sections of 760 CMR 49.00, the MRVP Administrative Plan, applicable Public Housing Notices, M.G.L. c. 121B, 760 CMR 4.00, et al., 760 CMR 5.00, et al., 760 CMR 6.00 et al., and 760 CMR 8.00 et al.

Massachusetts shall have exclusive and sole jurisdiction and venue for any state or federal actions arising from, relating to, or in connection with the NOFA.

Applicants with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of NOFA information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. An LHA/RAA requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the respondent’s disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the NOFA.