

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

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

Procedures: Resettlement Agency Permanent Housing Placement Services Pilot

Operational Procedures for Securing Housing and Accessing HomeBASE

This document describes the operational procedures for the Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI), Executive Office for Housing and Livable Communities (HLC), Resettlement Agencies (RA's), EA Providers, and Regional Administering Agencies (RAA's) to collaborate to exit 400 families from EA shelter by December 31, 2024. This operational procedure document is subject to periodic reviews and updates from ORI and HLC in their sole discretion.

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Definitions

- **Eligible Family**: Families eligible to receive Permanent Housing Placement Services from a Resettlement Agency are those families residing in the Commonwealth, newly arrived in the U.S. within the last five years, eligible for Emergency Assistance Shelter, and those which meet the specific criteria outlined in the RA rehousing contract:
 - Families must require work authorization, ESOL, or other immigration-related aid.
 - Families must have arrived in the U.S. within one year of entering EA shelter or been placed in shelter for less than one year.
- **Permanent Housing Placement Services**: Services provided to assist eligible families in securing stable housing and becoming economically self-sufficient.

Purpose

The Resettlement agencies will work in collaboration with ORI, EOHLC, and Emergency Assistance shelter providers to assist and stabilize Eligible Families in EA shelter in order to secure their exit from the shelter system and placement in Permanent Housing. This SOP applies to all activities related to identifying, supporting, and placing eligible families in permanent housing under the RA Permanent Housing Contract.

1. Identification of families for RA Rehousing program.

- I. RA's may identify families that they have previously served as part of legal services contracts who currently reside in EA shelter.
 - a. RA's will submit families who they would like to serve through the linked [prioritization form](#).
 - b. If an RA has additional slots to serve families that it cannot fill by identifying families it has already been serving, the RA may submit a request for referrals to HLC.

- II. If RAs wish to receive additional referrals from shelter sites beyond those in category I, above, they should reach out to HLC. HLC will work with EA Providers to identify Eligible Families to refer for Permanent Housing Placement Services provided by Resettlement Agencies.
 - a. HLC will provide an [RA Referral Form](#) to all EA Providers (not limited to hotel sites) to identify families who might benefit from Permanent Housing Placement Services.
 - b. HLC will review families to ensure they are an Eligible Family.
 - c. EA providers will share the eligibility letter (NFL9) or Placement letter with the RA once approval has been made by HLC to support HomeBASE application.
- III. If RAs wish to receive additional referrals from pre-shelter sites beyond those in category I above, they should reach out to HLC. HLC and ORI will coordinate efforts to refer families from pre-shelter locations.
 - a. HLC will identify and refer families in Pre-Shelter to RA's.

2. Approval Process for Referrals:

- I. HLC will review the listed families submitted through the EA provider [RA Referral Form](#) and the RA's [prioritization form](#), in order to approve those who meet eligibility criteria.
- II. HLC will use the RA's geographic service area to decide which RA receives referrals for each site. In this event:
 - a. The number of referred families shall not exceed the number of requested referrals made by the RA.
 - b. The RA may decline to serve any family who has been referred. If an RA declines to serve a family, the RA shall let ORI and HLC know in writing using the identified points of contact in this SOP.
- III. HLC will send an email including ORI, RA, EA Provider and RAA confirming the approved list with the family's NFL 9 eligibility letter (or provide a list of missing required documentation) within a reasonable timeframe from when the prioritization form is received.
- IV. If the family is missing any documentation necessary for the HomeBASE application, the RA will work with the family to secure this missing y documentation to support the HomeBASE application in being approved.
- V. When HLC approves a family to be served, the **RA will assign the family in IEDM.**
- VI. The RA will seek approval through the normal channels --outlined below in section 4-- to go on-site to provide services to a family from the EA provider (if any) after being introduced.

3. Actions following a family's approval and assignment through IEDM

- I. Some families may still need assistance with the EA application, or may be missing information necessary for the HomeBASE application following their assignment to an RA in IEDM. In this event:
 - a. The RA is responsible for collecting documents to support EA application and notifying their HLC contact for processing.
 - b. The RA is also responsible for collecting documents for the HomeBASE application and sending them to the RAA.
- II. RA will be aware of and work in accordance with [Shelter Program Rules \(mass.gov\)](#) to assist the family's continued compliance with EA rules.

- III. RA must communicate with EA provider regarding access to the site and family. The RA will work with the EA provider and communicate when they will be on site and ideally establish a schedule for these visits.
 - a. For emergency access, the RA will reach out to the EA provider to schedule and copy the identified ORI and HLC point of contacts identified in this document.
 - b. If the RA identifies regular challenges with access at a particular site, the RA can notify ORI and HLC who will support in troubleshooting.

4. Coordination: RA & EA Provider Partnership

- I. Following the assignment of a family to an RA in IEDM, and after receipt of an email from HLC introducing the RA and EA provider:
 - a. The RA and EA Provider will work together to schedule a meeting with the RA.
 - b. The RA will be aware of and work in accordance with [Shelter Program Rules \(mass.gov\)](#)
 - c. During their first scheduled meeting, the RA and EA provider will discuss and work to find mutual alignment on the following topics, at a minimum:
 - i. Review of the family list, confirming that all families on the list are still in the shelter;
 - ii. Discuss scheduling space needs;
 - iii. Establish the roles of the RA and EA Provider;
 - iv. Schedule individual meetings with each family including the RA & EA provider, to review the Rehousing Assessment and Rehousing Plan
 - v. Establish best methods of communications between EA provider and RA
 - vi. Agree on a time and date for EA Provider and RA monthly calls
 - vii. Establish a process and points of contact to best address the needs of families collaboratively and any emergency needs between the RA and the EA Provider
- II. **Initial meeting with the family, EA Provider, & RA to initiate the Rehousing support.**
 - a. The RA or the EA provider will schedule an initial meeting with the Family, EA Provider and RA to review the family's rehousing plan.
 - b. During this meeting all parties will discuss the role of the RA and the EA Provider.
 - c. Parties will review the tools that the family can use for their rehousing, with the support of the RA, to complete and share with the EA Provider.
 - d. The RA will work with the family to communicate any family needs to support their success in finding housing

5. RA provides housing search assistance to migrant families. RA can reference HomeBASE 101 training materials, attached as [Appendix B](#).

- I. After a landlord agrees to rent to a tenant, the RA will complete a HomeBASE packet (referring to materials included in [Appendix B](#).) and submits to appropriate EA Provider. The EA provider will then upload this information into End2End data system.
 - a. The RA will submit the application to the EA Provider designated on the chart in Appendix C based on the city or town where the unit that the family is intending to move to is located.
- II. If the family's HomeBASE packet is incomplete, The EA provider will follow up with family and landlord and inform RA of missing documents.

- III. The RA will work with the EA Provider to identify the family's needs and ensure they are accounted for in the HomeBASE benefits administration plan.
- IV. RA's may seek additional flexible funding to support the family's rehousing through the Strategic Rehousing Initiative (SRI) by reaching out to the Office of Refugee of Immigrations. The FY25 SRI funds process will be outlined in a separate document.
 - a. Once a family exits shelter and signs a lease, they will receive stabilization services from *both* an RA and an EA provider or RAA. The roles and responsibilities for service provision are described in section 8 below.

6. Role of the Regional Administering Agency (RAA)

- i. The RAA is responsible for administering the HomeBASE benefit. As such, the RAA is responsible for:
 - i. informing the EA shelter and Resettlement Agency Program staff about the requirements for a complete HomeBASE benefit referral and ensuring access to all relevant forms;
 - ii. reviewing the benefit referrals and processing payments;
 - iii. payment processing until the maximum allowable benefit amount has been reached.
- ii. The RAA is responsible for assigning a stabilization worker and providing stabilization services for families being rehoused from shelter in certain case. In all other cases, the EA provider is responsible for providing stabilization services. An RAA is responsible for stabilization in cases relevant to the RA rehousing contract, if:
 - i. A family is being rehoused an unstaffed shelter location;
 - ii. A family is being rehoused outside of their EA provider's service area;
 - iii. A family is exiting from a pre-shelter site and therefore being diverted from EA shelter.
- iii. In the cases where RAAs are providing stabilization, the RA case worker should work with the RAA stabilization worker to ensure coverage and non-duplication of stabilization services. Respective roles and services are described in section 8 below.

7. Shelter Exit: New lease signed

- i. When a family has exited shelter when a lease has been signed with a lease date, the EA provider and RA each record the exit
- ii. If a Family Exits an EA Provider Hotel or Shelter:
 - a. The RA notifies the Provider about the family lease date and HomeBASE application approval
 - b. The RA Completes the activity notice and shares with the Provider, the RA updates this in IEDM.
 - c. The EA Provider enters the exit touchpoint in ETO.
- iii. The EA provider shares the Activity notice for hotels that are shelters. They also send notice to hotel management/ HLC Placement.

8. Services for Families

I. EA Provider or RAA staff responsibility

- a. Responsible EA Provider staff, or RAA staff in the cases described in section 6.ii, will complete a Stabilization Service Plan with each family upon referral to HomeBASE. Through this plan the family agrees to engage in stabilization services in accordance

- with program rules. Families are required to have a signed plan on or before the date on which benefit payments are made.
- b. The EA Provider's or RAA's stabilization services will be provided for the initial 12 months along with an additional 12 months (a total of 24 months).
 - c. **The Family's Stabilization Plan, which the family must contribute to in writing and follow, and which the EA Provider or RAA stabilization worker is responsible for supporting** focuses on advancing the following activities and goals:
 - i. Progress towards financial responsibility
 - ii. Ongoing lease compliance
 - iii. Housing search activities
 - iv. Check-ins with stabilization staff
 - v. Job placement and training activities (if un- or underemployed)
 - vi. Maintaining primary healthcare contacts for all family members
 - vii. School attendance and an achievement plan for each child
 - viii. Family budgeting training program
 - ix. Opening and maintaining bank account
 - x. Working toward GED or HiSET (if applicable)
 - xi. Filing federal and state income tax returns yearly & on time
 - b. To support the family in achieving the stabilization plan, the relevant EA Provider and RAA staff will follow guidance outline in the HomeBASE Admin Plan.

II. Resettlement Agency responsibility

- a. The RA will coordinate with the EA Provider/RAA to support stabilization services.
- b. The RA will provide 12 months of specialized stabilization support to the household, as outlined in the RA Rehousing contract.
- c. The RA will notify the EA Provider/RAA of any critical tasks that require followup
- d. The Key specialized services RA is responsible for providing include, and not limited to:
 - i. Career Services and Employment services (Year 1)
 - ii. Driver license assistance
 - iii. Connecting to Childcare
 - iv. Legal Services and/or immigration support

Frequently asked Questions:

If a family is issued a Length of Stay notification

- The EA Provider will share with the RA if a family they are working with is issued a notification letter about Length of Stay.
 - The family with the RA support will need to follow the [guidance here](#).
 - The family will have three months from the date of notification to find new permanent housing option
 - Additional information on the Length of Stay policy can be found here mass.gov/EAShelterLOS

If a Family refuses housing or request to move out of state

- If family refuses rehousing option then this could *potentially* result in good cause as defined in [760 CMR 67 \(mass.gov\)](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/760-cmr-67).
 - The RA will notify the EA Provider of the non-compliance issues in a timely manner. CC the contacts at HLC & ORI noted in this SOP.
 - The EA provider will submit the non-compliance and keep the RA informed of the investigation and outcome.
 - Non-compliance can result in shelter termination. The investigation can take up to two weeks for the family to be notified if they are at risk of losing their shelter.

If a Family would like to move out of State

- If a family requests to move out of state HomeBASE funds can *only* be used to assist with travel expenses, which include bus tickets and air fare. When a family is requesting to move outside of Massachusetts, EA shelter, Diversion or RA staff must verify that the family has secured a place to stay by obtaining a copy of the lease or tenancy agreement, contacting the prospective landlord or the tenant/resident that the EA family will be staying with, or through other means. HomeBASE will only pay once for a family to move out-of-state, which will be considered a lifetime cap.
- SRI funds can also be used to assist with a family's travel expenses for out of state moves.

Phase	Resettlement Agency (RA)	HLC	EA Providers/RAA in certain cases	ORI	Eligible Families
Identification of families	Identify families from legal contract and submit to the RA prioritization form prioritization form	Identify families in Pre-shelter and shares with RA;	Identify families and submit to the EA provider request form: request for Resettlement Agency Support form	Coordinate referrals	Provide necessary information to EA provider to support Eligibility
		Reviews all families identified by EA provider and RAs and approve family referrals;			
		HLC shares NFL 9 or Placement letters with RA			
Coordination	Avoid duplication, coordinate services	Communicate with EA providers, RAs and ORI; Ensure service integration	Supports RAs referrals	Communicate with HLC & RAs ; Ensure service integration	Participate in coordination activities with RA & EA
Housing Assistance	Assist with applications, searches, relocation	Provide HomeBASE support for any escalation needs or roadblocks	Submits the HomeBASE application, sends the Landlord link to landlord and works with RA and Landlord to ensure all paperwork is submitted to access HomeBASE	Ensure compliance	Engage in housing search and application process
Reporting	Submit monthly reports		Submit Rehousing Plans & Rehousing Assessments	Review reports	Complete Rehousing Plan & Rehousing Assessment
Partnership	Collaborate with EA providers, HLC & ORI	Facilitate communication	Schedule and participate in meetings with RA	Facilitate communication	Engage in meetings
Stabilization	Provides 12-month specialized supports and coordinates with the EA provider	Monitor stabilization services	Provides 2-3 years of Stabilization services and coordinates with RA regarding specialized services	Oversee coordination; Monitor services	Follow stabilization plans
Family Exits	Manage lease signing, HomeBASE approvals; Shares appropriate		Update exit touchpoints in ETO; Shares appropriate contact information with the family		Prepares to move and reviews contact information for the EA Provider and RA

	contact information with the family				
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