



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

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

To: LHA and RAA (AA) Executive Directors Administering State Rental Assistance Programs
From: Brendan Goodwin, Director, Division of Rental Assistance
Subject: Treatment of Unemployment Insurance Income for Rent Determination
Date: September 17, 2020

DHCD has determined that **all unemployment insurance benefits** paid out through the unemployment insurance system shall be included in income for the purpose of determination of tenant rent share in all state rental assistance programs. This includes any enhanced benefits authorized by the Federal Government in addition to those that a tenant is entitled to through the state unemployment system. All state rental assistance programs includes the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), Department of Mental Health Rental Subsidy Program (DMHRSP), and Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP).

DHCD reminds AAs that they must continue to follow regular program regulations and policies regarding interim redetermination of rent when applying this guidance to future enhanced unemployment benefits. AAs must give state rental assistance program participants at least 30 days advance written notice when increasing tenant rent share. If unemployment insurance, including any enhanced benefit, represents a decrease to net income, tenant rent share may be lowered effective on the first day of the month following reported income change without the notice period. For AHVP and MRVP participants, increases in unearned income of 10% or more shall result in an interim reexamination. For DMHRSP participants, increases in income of 30% or more shall result in an interim reexamination.

AAs should continue to disregard any temporary enhanced benefits when calculating income for the purposes of eligibility for state rental assistance programs.

While this notice allows AAs to prepare systems and policies in advance of future enhanced unemployment insurance benefits potentially authorized by the Federal Government, DHCD reserves the right to issue additional guidance on this topic.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Cecilia Woodworth, Assistant Director of State Programs, at cecilia.woodworth@mass.gov.