



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111

DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor

JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.
Secretary

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
Lieutenant Governor

JULIA E. KEHOE
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2008-74
December 31, 2008

To:  **Transitional Assistance Office Staff**
From:  **John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations**
Re: **Housing Opportunities for EA Families**

Background

Field Operations Memo 2008-69 informed TAO staff about the recently established Interagency Housing Solutions Team Command Center (HSTCC) at the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) where DHCD and DTA staff are matching families temporarily placed in DTA-funded shelters or in hotel/motels with the right housing resources. The team is working to rapidly rehouse families in sustainable housing. By providing the EA family with Toolbox and stabilization services for the first 12 months of tenancy, the sustainability of the housing is enhanced. Sustainable housing may be either market-rate housing or subsidized housing.

The team has identified housing search protocol that must be followed by all parties for this effort to be successful.

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to remind case managers, homeless coordinators, shelter providers, and housing search providers to fully explain to the EA family their housing search responsibilities. Therefore, a copy of this memo is being distributed to all shelter providers and housing search providers.

**Field Operations
Memo 2008-69**

Refer to Field Operations Memo 2008-69 for further information about the HSTCC. HSTCC is working very closely with staff from the housing search providers and TAOs to target housing applications where the EA families have the highest likelihood of becoming tenants and of being able to maintain a successful tenancy.

**EA Family
Housing Search
Responsibilities**

Anyone who has contact with the EA family, whether it is the case manager, homeless coordinator, shelter provider or housing search provider, must advise the EA family that:

Units from the
HSTCC

- when an appropriate unit within 20 miles of the EA family's home community has been identified by the HSTCC team, the EA family must cooperate in the housing application process by completing the application, providing necessary documentation, and attending all meetings. If the EA family does not cooperate, the housing search provider will submit the documentation along with a request for a finding of noncompliance to the TAO's Homeless Shelter Outreach Liaison. When housing is offered, unless the EA family can show good cause for not accepting it, the expectation is that the family will sign a lease. Failure to accept the housing will result in a request for a finding of noncompliance; and
- if the management company or the public housing authority denies the EA family's application, the EA family must appeal the decision with the management company or the public housing authority.

Public Housing
Applications

The case manager, homeless coordinator, shelter provider and housing search provider must advise the EA family that:

- the EA family must apply for and fully cooperate with the application process for public housing at all housing authorities that are within 20 miles of the EA family's home community, unless there is domestic violence or other safety issue that would affect that application.
 - if there is only one housing authority within the 20-mile radius, the EA family should be advised to select at least one other housing authority outside of the 20-mile radius;
 - if, based on the EA family's location on the waiting list, it most likely will take years before an apartment is offered, the EA family should be encouraged to file an application at another housing authority;
 - when the EA family's home community is in another state or country or the family applies at a TAO that does not cover the EA family's home community, the 20-mile limit will be determined from the TAO where the EA application was filed;
 - the EA family may apply at any other public housing authority where, if offered an apartment, the EA family would accept the offer. If the family rejects an offer for housing without good cause, a request for a finding of noncompliance will be submitted to the TAO's Homeless Shelter Outreach Liaison; and
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**EA Family
Housing Search
Responsibilities
(continued)**

- the EA family must withdraw any public housing application that has been completed at a housing authority beyond 20 miles of the family's home community, unless the family would accept the housing if it were offered. If the family rejects the offer for housing without good cause, a request for a finding of noncompliance will be submitted to the TAO's Homeless Shelter Outreach Liaison. Refusing housing at any public housing authority negatively impacts the family's status on all other public housing authority waitlists.

Refer to Field Operations Memo 2007-40 for further information.

**Housing Search
Provider
Responsibilities**

The housing search provider will assist the EA family in applying for public housing or removing its name from a public housing list where the family would not accept a unit. The housing search provider will follow-up on the EA family's application, ensure all documentation has been provided, and track the progress. This information will be updated monthly in the "Subsidized Housing Search" section of the EA Self-Sufficiency Plan.

**Removing Name
From Waiting
Lists**

When a family is permanently housed using a Section 8 subsidy or MBHP voucher, the family should remove their name from all other waiting lists, whether at public housing authorities or private management companies. The housing search provider and family are aware of all of the places where the family is on a waiting list. A notification form (Attachment A) has been created for the family and/or the housing search provider to use as notification to remove the family's name. This action should be part of the exit interview with the housing search provider. A copy(ies) of the notification form(s) should be attached to the Self-Sufficiency Plan that is forwarded to the case manager or homeless coordinator.

Note: If the family is moving into public housing, the family should not remove its name from any Section 8 waiting list.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

Waiting List Removal

Date

To _____

(Housing Authority or Management Agent)

Address _____

Please remove my name from your waiting list as I am permanently housed.

Signature

Print Full Name

SSN

C: Housing Search Provider
DTA Case Manager or Homeless Coordinator