



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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NO. 2008-0600-3A

**INDEPENDENT STATE AUDITOR'S REPORT
ON CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE
AVON HOUSING AUTHORITY
JULY 1, 2005 TO OCTOBER 31, 2007**

**OFFICIAL AUDIT
REPORT
FEBRUARY 25, 2008**

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In accordance with Chapter 11, Section 12, of the Massachusetts General Laws, we have conducted an audit of certain activities of the Avon Housing Authority for the period July 1, 2005 to October 31, 2007. The objectives of our audit were to assess the adequacy of the Authority's management control system for measuring, reporting, and monitoring the effectiveness of its programs, and to evaluate its compliance with laws, rules, and regulations applicable to each program. Based on our review, we have concluded that during the 28-month period ended October 31, 2007, the Authority maintained adequate management controls and complied with applicable laws, rules, and regulations for the areas tested.

AUDIT RESULTS

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PRIOR AUDIT RESULTS - RESOLVED

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Our prior audit (No. 2006-0600-3A) of the Avon Housing Authority disclosed several instances of noncompliance with the State Sanitary Code and the Department of Housing and Community Development's Property Maintenance Guide. Specifically, our previous audit disclosed that a) 21 instances of noncompliance with Chapter II of the State Sanitary Code existed at the Authority's state-aided housing units, b) modernization requests remained unfunded by DHCD, and c) the Authority did not have an official written preventive maintenance plan to inspect, maintain, repair, and upgrade its existing housing units. Our follow up audit disclosed that the Authority has taken action to address all three prior audit results, as discussed below.

a. Results of Inspections - Compliance with State Sanitary Code

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Our prior audit of the Authority, which covered the period July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2005, noted 21 instances of noncompliance with the State Sanitary Code. DHCD's Property Maintenance Guide, Chapter 3(F), requires that inspections of dwelling units be conducted annually and upon each vacancy to ensure that every dwelling unit conforms to minimum standards for safe, decent, and sanitary housing as set forth in Chapter II of the State Sanitary Code. Our current review determined that the Authority has taken corrective action and has applied for funding from DHCD to address the issues noted in our prior audit report. Based on this action, we believe that the Authority has taken adequate steps to comply with DHCD requirements pertaining to safe and sanitary housing.

b. Modernization Initiatives Funded

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Our prior audit found that although the Authority had applied to DHCD for funding for capital modernization projects for its state-aided properties, this request was not funded by DHCD during the audit period. The Authority subsequently reapplied for modernization funds and received a letter dated September 17, 2007 from DHCD stating

it was awarding the Authority \$315,000 in technical assistance and emergency capital improvement bond funding.

c. Official Written Property Maintenance Plan Established

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Our prior audit found that the Authority did not incorporate DHCD's Property Maintenance Guide into its policies and procedures, and that the Authority did not have an official preventive maintenance plan to inspect, maintain, repair, and upgrade its existing housing units. Our current review determined that the Authority has taken corrective action and has implemented a preventive maintenance program that adheres to DHCD's Property Maintenance Guide.

INTRODUCTION

Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

In accordance with Chapter 11, Section 12, of the Massachusetts General Laws, we have conducted an audit of certain activities of the Avon Housing Authority for the period July 1, 2005 to October 31, 2007. The objectives of our audit were to assess the adequacy of the Authority's management control system for measuring, reporting, and monitoring the effectiveness of its programs, and to evaluate its compliance with laws, rules, and regulations applicable to each program.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with applicable generally accepted government auditing standards for performance audits and, accordingly, included such audit tests and procedures as we considered necessary.

To achieve our audit objectives, we reviewed the following:

- Tenant-selection procedures to verify that tenants were selected in accordance with Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) regulations.
- Annual rent-determination procedures to verify that rents were calculated properly and in accordance with DHCD regulations.
- Vacancy records to determine whether the Authority adhered to DHCD procedures for preparing and filling vacant housing units.
- Accounts receivable procedures to ensure that rent collections were timely and that uncollectible tenant accounts receivable balances were written off properly.
- Procedures for making payments to employees for salaries, travel, and fringe benefits to verify compliance with established rules and regulations.
- Property and equipment inventory control procedures to determine whether the Authority properly protected and maintained its resources in compliance with DHCD requirements.
- Contract procurement procedures and records to verify compliance with public bidding laws and DHCD requirements for awarding contracts.
- Procedures for making payments to landlords under the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program to verify compliance with contract provisions and that rental charges by landlords were consistent with established rules and regulations.
- Cash management and investment policies and practices to verify that the Authority maximized its interest income and that its deposits were fully insured.

- Site-inspection procedures and records to verify compliance with DHCD inspection requirements and that selected housing units were in safe and sanitary condition.
- Modernization awards to verify that contracts were awarded properly and that funds were received and disbursed in accordance with the contracts, and to determine the existence of any excess funds.
- DHCD-approved operating budgets for the fiscal year in comparison with actual expenditures to determine whether line-item and total amounts by housing program were within budgetary limits and whether required fiscal reports were submitted to DHCD in a complete, accurate, and timely manner.
- Operating reserve accounts to verify that the Authority's reserves fell within DHCD provisions for maximum and minimum allowable amounts and to verify the level of need for operating subsidies to determine whether the amount earned was consistent with the amount received from DHCD.
- The Authority's progress in addressing the issues noted in our prior report (No. 2006-0600-3A).

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