



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

Charles D. Baker, Governor ♦ Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor ♦ Chrystal Komegay, Undersecretary

PUBLIC HOUSING NOTICE 2016-05

To: All Local Housing Authority Executive Directors
From: Sarah Glassman, Associate Director, Public Housing & Rental Assistance
Re: Accessible Unit Initiative for FY16
Date: March 30, 2016

DHCD is committed to the goal of having 5% fully accessible units across the entire state-aided portfolio and making yearly progress toward this end. We are therefore pleased to announce that \$1M in funding is available in FY16 for bringing family and elderly public housing units up to the standards of current Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) codes (and Fair Housing Act and Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards where applicable). The funding for this initiative is separate and above the existing 1% Formula Funding set-aside for reasonable accommodations and the DHCD compliance reserve.

In FY14, DHCD granted \$2.5M under this initiative, which resulted in 21 new accessible units (conversions of existing units) at LHAs that previously had none at their family and/or elderly state-aided developments.

Eligibility Criteria: Due to limited funding availability, DHCD will only be granting awards to LHAs that meet the following threshold criteria:

- **LHA has zero fully accessible units** to serve the population for which they are applying (e.g. zero accessible elderly or zero accessible family units); and
- **No pending capital projects to create accessible units** for the proposed population;

And/Or

- **LHA has prior, pending, and/or potential litigation or administrative complaints** concerning lack of accessible units at developments.

Application Process: LHAs should complete the attached application form and email to Nathaniel.Thomas@state.ma.us by 5pm, Friday, April 22, 2016. Please write “Accessible Unit Application – LHAname” in the subject line. Late submissions will only be reviewed as funding permits.

Funding Availability and Award Limits: There is \$1M available for this initiative in FY16, and DHCD anticipates repeating this initiative annually. In order to fund as many units as possible, awards will be limited to:

- A maximum of \$100,000 total development cost (TDC) per elderly unit
- A maximum of \$250,000 TDC per family unit

LHAs may pursue an accessible unit project that exceeds this per unit cost limit only if they can apply formula funding or other funds to make up the difference. Please note that the per unit award limit applies to both new construction and renovation projects.

DHCD will only fund accessible unit projects that bring the LHA up to the 5% baseline. For example, if an LHA has 100 elderly units, then an award will cover *a maximum* of five accessible elderly unit projects. However, most LHAs will not get funding for more than 2 units per program.

Preconditions for funding: In order to receive an award under this initiative, an LHA must incorporate the accessibility project into an updated ADA/Section 504 self-evaluation/transition plan. LHAs must submit a copy of the existing plan with their application. For more information on self-evaluation/transition plans, please see guidance on DHCD’s Fair Housing and Civil Rights information webpage: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/fair-housing-and-civil-rights-information.html>.

Criteria for Prioritizing Awards: DHCD anticipates that there will be more requests for funding than there will be funds available. Applications will, therefore, be evaluated according to the following considerations:

- LHA’s supply of accessible units (% available for each population served);
- Prior, pending, and/or potential litigation or administrative complaints concerning lack of accessible units at developments;
- Need/demand for accessible units, as demonstrated by waitlist and/or local/regional data;
- Ability to convert unit for a reasonable cost, per estimated scope;
- Total number of units that would be taken offline in renovation and would require tenant relocation;
- Consistency with LHA’s ADA self-evaluation and transition plan;
- LHA’s capacity to successfully manage and execute capital improvement projects; and
- LHA’s ability to leverage other non-DHCD funding sources for the project.