



# *The Alternative Housing Voucher Program*

DHCD Line Item 7004-9030 (AHVP)

**FY'16 budget request:** \$7.1 million

## **What it is:**

Established in 1995, the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) provides rental vouchers to applicants with disabilities who are not elderly and who have been determined eligible for Chapter 667 (elderly and disabled) housing. DHCD's Division of Public Housing and Rental Assistance administers this program.

## **How it works:**

A tenant will pay either 25 or 30% of their net income to the landlord, depending on whether or not all utilities are included in the rent; and the state's local housing authority will pay the remainder.

## **Who is eligible:**

Those applicants who are eligible under the Ch. 667 elderly/handicapped state public housing program, but who are under the age of 60.

## **Application process:**

Applicants can apply at any one of the 23 local housing authorities that have received an allocation of Alternative Housing Vouchers. If eligible, their names will be placed on a waiting list. Once their name reaches the top of the list, the applicants will be given a briefing on all aspects of the program. During the briefing, the applicant will receive an AHVP Voucher which allows 120 days to locate appropriate housing. The vouchers can be used throughout Massachusetts only.

## **Current program status:**

Through September 2014, 420 households were under lease; the line item is funded at \$3.55 million. *The program was originally funded at \$4 million in 1995 to support 800 vouchers!* Advocates are seeking a **\$3.55 million increase, for a total of \$7.1 million**, in order to restore the original number of vouchers. A shortage of affordable housing continues to beset adults with disabilities, especially people who are forced to reside in nursing homes for a lack of housing. The federally-funded Money Follows the Person initiative in Massachusetts, which will support nursing home diversions, has increased the need for more units. **As of October 2014, 134 nursing home residents under 60 were enrolled in MFP and needed housing. DHCD also reports an AHVP waiting list of 2,131 people for 17 reporting PHAs.** For Section 8, the waiting list includes 99,516 applicants, of whom 30,952 are people with disabilities.

## Where AHVP vouchers are issued:

| Local Housing Authority (LHA) | Total Vouchers |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Acton                         | 16             |
| Andover                       | 5              |
| Barnstable                    | 8              |
| Brockton                      | 63             |
| Cambridge                     | 77             |
| Charlton                      | 13             |
| Chelsea                       | 8              |
| Fitchburg                     | 3              |
| Hudson                        | 5              |
| Ipswich                       | 3              |
| Lynn                          | 18             |
| Marlboro                      | 4              |
| Melrose                       | 2              |
| New Bedford                   | 25             |
| Newburyport                   | 3              |
| P'town H. A./HAC              | 4              |
| Revere                        | 98             |
| Sandwich                      | 18             |
| Sharon                        | 6              |
| Spencer                       | 42             |
| Westfield                     | 7              |
| Whitman                       | 2              |
| Worcester                     | 4              |

Vouchers are used in communities beyond those where the issuing housing authority is located, but use tends to concentrate in nearby locales. Due to funding cuts and increasing rents, the current number of available vouchers is approximately half the number originally available through the program.

For more information, contact Allegra Stout or Bill Henning at the Boston Center for Independent Living: 617-338-6665, [astout@bostoncil.org](mailto:astout@bostoncil.org) or [bhenning@bostoncil.org](mailto:bhenning@bostoncil.org) or Kelly Turley at the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless: 781-595-7570 x17 or [kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org).