


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

Mitt Romney, Governor ♦ Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor ♦ Jane Wallis Gumble, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Local Housing Agencies Administering the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)

FROM: Carole E. Collins,  Director, Bureau of Housing Management

RE: AHVP Fiscal Year 2006 Budget and Related Program Activity

Date: August 17, 2005

As you are aware, the recently passed state budget for Fiscal Year 2006 appropriated \$3M for AHVP, an increase of \$700,000 over last year's budget amount. With the \$700,000 increase we anticipate program changes that could include a greater number of Vouchers and/or an increase in the ceiling rents.

To assist us in determining the most effective changes, DHCD would like input from LHAs, initially from those currently participating, either as an issuing or hosting LHA, in the AHVP. We have prepared a response form for your use (see enclosed). In reviewing the response form, you will note that we are attempting to determine the level of interest in program participation. Simply we are seeking to learn whether the LHA will continue in its present capacity and at its current level or whether the LHA has an interest in increasing its participation.

A 2005 AHVP Fact Sheet is enclosed for your reference. However, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ann Cwartkowski at (617)-573-1222. Decisions regarding participation as an issuing LHA may affect the executive director's salary determined in accordance with the Executive Director's Salary and Qualification Schedule as the number of bedroom units (BRUs) and programs may be impacted causing a change in the calculation.

The response form has sections that are pertinent to an issuing LHA and sections that are pertinent to hosting agencies. Because there has been a freeze on reissuing Vouchers during the past several years and many changes in local administration, there may be some confusion whether your LHA is an issuing or hosting LHA. To assist you in determining which sections are applicable to your LHA, I am enclosing a listing of LHAs having an AHVP allocation and the LHA's allocation. Authorities on the enclosed list are considered issuing LHAs. If you administer AHVP in your community but are not included on the enclosed list your participation is as a host agency.

If you are an **issuing LHA**, please indicate whether the LHA is willing to continue issuing AHVP Vouchers. If so, also indicate whether additional Vouchers can be used. If the LHA is not willing to continue issuing Vouchers, please indicate whether the LHA will host AHVP lease-ups in its jurisdiction.

If you are a **host agency**, please indicate whether the LHA will continue to host AHVP lease-ups in your jurisdiction. If so, also indicate whether the LHA could use an allocation of AHVP Vouchers of its own.

Regardless of your planned participation, please complete the enclosed AHVP Update Form and **return it to Ann Cwartkowski at fax phone number (617)-573-1340 no later than Wednesday, August 31, 2005.**

Thank you for your anticipated attention to this matter.

Enclosures

ahvp\AHVP FY 06 memo

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM (AHVP)
Update Form

Local Housing Agency: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Signature of Executive Director: _____

I. ALTERNATIVE HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM (AHVP) INFORMATION

A. Does your LHA currently have an allocation of AHVP Vouchers?

Yes _____ No _____

B. If **Yes** please complete all of the following questions in this Section B:

Is your LHA willing to continue issuing AHVP Vouchers?

Yes _____ No _____

How many additional AHVP Vouchers beyond the LHA's current allocation can the LHA use?

Number _____ N/A _____

How long will it take for your LHA to be ready to issue new AHVP Vouchers?

Weeks (#) _____ Months (#) _____ N/A _____

If your LHA is not willing to continue issuing AHVP Vouchers, are you willing to continue participating in the program by hosting AHVP lease-ups in your jurisdiction?

Yes _____ No _____

C. If you answered **No to question A** because your LHA does not currently have an allocation of AHVP, please complete all of the following questions in Section C.:

Is your LHA willing to continue participating in the AHVP as a hosting agency?

Yes _____ No _____

Can your LHA use its own allocation of AHVP Vouchers?

Yes _____ No _____ N/A _____

How many AHVP Vouchers can your LHA use?

Number _____ N/A _____

If awarded an allocation of AHVP Vouchers, how long will it take for your LHA to be ready to issue new AHVP Vouchers?

Weeks (#) _____ Months (#) _____ N/A _____

Completed by _____ Date _____

Functional Title _____

II. The following sections should be completed if you currently have an allocation of AHVP Vouchers that you want/need to maintain or increase, or if you do not currently have an allocation but are interested in being awarded one.

A. CHAPTER 667 WAITING LIST DATA

1. Please provide the number of applicant households on your current Chapter 667 Waiting List:

	<u>1 br</u>		<u>2 br</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
Elderly	_____	+	_____	=	_____
Non-Elderly Handicapped	_____	+	_____	=	_____*
TOTAL CHAPTER 667 WAITING LIST APPLICANTS	_____	+	_____	=	_____**

2. The **percentage (%)** of your total Chapter 667 Waiting List applicants that the Non-Elderly Handicapped applicant total represents, by dividing “*” (above) by “**” (also above) = _____.

B. CHAPTER 667 OCCUPANCY DATA

1. Please provide the following information on your Chapter 667 tenancies (*and vacancies*) as of March 31, 2005, and

	<u>1 br</u>	+	<u>2 br</u>	=	<u>TOTAL</u>
Elderly	_____		_____	=	_____
Non-Elderly Handicapped	_____	+	_____	=	_____*
Sub-totals	_____	+	_____	=	_____
Vacancies	_____	+	_____	=	_____
TOTALS	_____	+	_____	=	_____**

2. The **percentage (%)** of your total Chapter 667 portfolio that the Non-Elderly Handicapped tenancy total represents, by dividing “*” (*above*) by “**” (*also above*) = _____.

3. **Vacancy Rates**

1. The total number of vacancies anticipated for the next twelve (12) months.

<u>1 BR</u>	<u>2 BR</u>
_____	_____

Completed by _____ Date _____

Functional Title _____

Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)

Local Housing Authority (LHA)	Telephone Number	Total Vouchers
Acton	(978)-263-5339	12
Amesbury	(978)-388-2022	3
Amherst	(413)-256-0206	12 (closed)
Andover	(508)-475-2365	3
Barnstable	(508)-771-7222	8
Belmont	(617)-484-2160	6
Brockton	(508)-588-6880	closed (26)
Brookline	(617)-277-2022	5
Cambridge	(617)-864-3020	52
Charlton	(508)-248-5067	5
Chelsea	(617)-884-5617/5618	8
Dedham	(781)-326-3543	6
Fall River	(508)-675-3500	35
Falmouth	(508)-548-1977/540-2956	4
Fitchburg	(978)-343-7025/342-5222	5
Foxboro	(508)-543-5960/5840	6
Hudson	(978)-562-9268	11
Ipswich	(978)-356-2860	9
Lynn	(781)-592-1966	10
Marlboro	(508)-624-6908	6
Melrose	(781)-665-1622	closed (9)
New Bedford	(508)-997-4800	6
Newburyport	(978)-465-7216	5
North Andover	(978)-682-3932	2
Northampton	(413)-584-4030	4
Orleans	(508)-255-0064	2
Pepperell	(978)-433-9882	2
P'town H. A./HAC	(508)-487-0434/(508)-771-5400	6
Revere	(781)-284-4394/1549	46
Sandwich	(508)-833-4979/760-2352	4
Seekonk	(508)-336-6067	2
Sharon	(781)-784-2733	2
Spencer	(508)-885-3904	12
Watertown	(617)-923-3950	6
Whitman	(781)-447-6363/5019	4
Worcester	(508)-798-4506/4500	closed (23)

2005 ALTERNATIVE HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM (AHVP)

FACT SHEET

Eligibility

Non-elderly persons with disabilities who are: (1) eligible and qualified for Chapter 667 housing, or (2) are residing in Chapter 667 housing.

Income eligibility (including income limits) is determined in accordance with 760 CMR 5.00, Eligibility and Selection Criteria regulation.

Chapter 667 residents (#2 above) transferring to the AHVP are considered "CORI proof", and their participation in the AHVP is strictly voluntary.

An AHVP participant remains eligible for continued program participation until such time as his/her rent share equals or exceeds the Contract Rent, with a 90-day "grace period" thereafter.

Tenant Selection

Is done in accordance with 760 CMR 5.00, Eligibility and Selection Criteria, as recently amended.

Up to 15% of each LHA's Voucher allocation may be issued to interested Chapter 667 residents.

Transitional Housing

As the AHVP was Legislatively intended to be considered transitional housing - to provide participants with rental assistance on a temporary (interim) basis until they can obtain permanent housing - AHVP participants:

- a. must keep a record of their (housing search) efforts to obtain suitable permanent housing;
- b. will continue to be considered "homeless" for purposes of re-application to the Chapter 667 Program; and
- c. may receive Priority 5 status - AHVP Participant - for subsequent state-aided public housing and/or rental assistance program applications by providing written verification of a current AHVP tenancy at the time of the subsequent application.

"Active" Voucher Timeline

Voucher shall be active for a period of 120 days from the date of (re-)issuance, except that the 120 day time period may be suspended for one time period of thirty (30) days or less if the Voucher Holder, for reasons of hardship, is unable to search for suitable housing. Evidence of hardship must be submitted to the LHA in order for the consideration of this suspension of time.

Additionally, as always, upon submission of an RFPP, the 120 day time period shall be suspended pending lease-up of the proposed unit. If the lease-up is unsuccessful, the Voucher shall be re-activated for that portion of the 120 day time period remaining as of the submission date of the RFPP.

Unit Inspection

Unit must be inspected by the local Board of Health or other local code enforcement entity certifying that the Contract Unit is in compliance with Article II of the State Sanitary Code and (if applicable) certification from a Certified Lead Inspector verifying that the Unit is in compliance with applicable lead paint law. **Neither a Voucher Payment Contract nor a Lease can start before the Contract Unit is certified as being in compliance with the State Sanitary Code.**

Rent Limits

The total rent charged (Contract Rent) by the landlord, regardless of the inclusion/exclusion of utilities, cannot exceed the applicable Ceiling Rent for the Voucher holder's household/unit size and community of residence. However, in those instances where it can be documented that an owner's expenses to adapt a unit warrant a higher rent level, an LHA may approve a rent which is 10% higher than the applicable Ceiling Rent. **In no case will DHCD allow an LHA to pay a Contract Rent exceeding the Ceiling Rent when the expenses for adaptation of the unit occurred prior to the AHVP tenancy.**

Tenant Rent Share

The Tenant Rent Share is determined in accordance with 760 CMR 6.00, Occupancy Standards and Tenant Participation for State-Aided Housing - based on **25%** of household income when some/no utilities are included in the rent, and **30%** of income when all utilities are included. If a tenant pays separately for the cost of HEAT, a deduction in an amount set and published by the Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) shall be given.

Leasing and Contracting Documents

1. Voucher - sets out the rights, duties, and obligations of the Voucher holder, and serves as a contractual agreement between him/her and the LHA.
2. Request for Program Payment (RFPP) - notifies the LHA that a Voucher holder has located a landlord who is willing to rent to him/her under the AHVP, and sets out the (a) proposed Unit address, (b) number of bedrooms in the Unit, (c) party responsible for payment of each utility, (d) owner's name and address, and (e) total proposed monthly rent to be charged.
3. Lease - is the twelve (12) month legal agreement between the tenant and owner which defines each party's duties and responsibilities. The Lease is self-renewing unless termination is enacted by the tenant and/or owner in accordance with the terms of said Lease. The Lease runs concurrently with the Voucher Payment Contract.
4. Voucher Payment Contract - is the twelve (12) month legal agreement between the LHA and property owner which defines each party's duties and responsibilities. The Voucher Payment Contract is self-renewing unless termination is enacted by the owner in accordance with the terms of said Contract. The Voucher Payment Contract runs concurrently with the Lease.

Tenant Termination of AHVP Tenancy

Terminating prior to the lease expiration date must be for good cause or through mutual consent. The tenant must provide the owner with one calendar month's written notice when he/she terminates for good cause. **Good cause includes the securing of Suitable Permanent Housing by the tenant.**

Turnover/Tracking

As Voucher allocations were based on the relative need of each Agency receiving an award, a system for tracking those participants relocating outside the issuing community is necessary. This is to ensure that as a participant's Voucher turns over it is returned to the original issuing Agency for re-issuance to that Agency's next eligible AHVP applicant.

Administrative Fee

Is \$25.00 per Voucher per month.

Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)

Local Housing Authority (LHA)	Telephone Number	Total Vouchers
Acton	(978)-263-5339	20
Andover	(508)-475-2365	5
Barnstable	(508)-771-7222	10
Brockton	(508)-588-6880	closed (40)
Cambridge	(617)-864-3020	80
Charlton	(508)-248-5067	10
Chelsea	(617)-884-5617/5618	10
Fitchburg	(978)-343-7025/342-5222	10
Foxboro	(508)-543-5960/5840	6
Hudson	(978)-562-9268	11
Ipswich	(978)-356-2860	9
Lynn	(781)-592-1966	20
Marlboro	(508)-624-6908	6
Melrose	(781)-665-1622	closed (9)
New Bedford	(508)-997-4800	10
Newburyport	(978)-465-7216	10
Orleans	(508)-255-0064	2
P'town H. A./HAC	(508)-487-0434/(508)-771-5400	10
Revere	(781)-284-4394/1549	70
Sandwich	(508)-833-4979/760-2352	closed (10)
Seekonk	(508)-336-6067	2
Sharon	(781)-784-2733	5
Spencer	(508)-885-3904	20
Springfield	(413)-785-4500	5
Watertown	(617)-923-3950	6
Westfield	(413)-568-9283	10
Whitman	(781)-447-6363/5019	4
Worcester	(508)-798-4506/4500	closed (23)