
HOUSING AUTHORITY

**COMMUNITY SERVICE/
SELF-SUFFICIENCY POLICY:**

EXEMPTIONS

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Who Is Exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency in Massachusetts?

Family exemptions

A resident is *exempt* from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency if someone in the **family** receives . . .

The resident does not have to be receiving one of those benefits to be exempt if a member of the family is receiving the benefit.

- **TAFDC,**
- **SSI,**
- **EAEDC,**
- **certain subsidized child care,**
- **the state Earned Income Credit,**
- **or**
- **Veterans' Services benefits.**

Individual exemptions

A resident is *exempt* from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency if the resident is . . .

- **60 or older,**
- **disabled and meeting certain standards,**
- **needed to care for a disabled family member,**
- **the caretaker of a child under two,**
- **a teen parent (applies if age 18 or 19) in an education, training or work program,**
- **a pregnant woman in the last 120 days of pregnancy,**
- **a foster parent (in some situations), or**
- **engaged in a countable "work activity."**

Community Service/Self-Sufficiency Exemption Checklist

(Complete this form for each household member 18 years of age or older)

Name of household member: _____

Address of household member: _____

Date of review: _____

Name of staff reviewer: _____

Family exemptions:

Note: You do not need to answer every question. If you mark YES to ANY question, then the entire family is exempt.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Does the resident or any member of the resident's family/household receive TAFDC and the family is not being sanctioned for failure to comply with work requirements? | Yes | No |
| 2. Does the resident or any member of the resident's family/household receive SSI? | Yes | No |
| 3. Does the resident or any member of the resident's family/household receive EAEDC? | Yes | No |
| 4. Does the resident or any member of the resident's family/household receive child care subsidized by the Office of Child Care Services ("OCCS") or the Department of Education's Community Partnerships for Children? | Yes | No |
| 5. Does the resident or any member of the resident's family/household receive the state Earned Income Tax Credit? | Yes | No |
| 6. Does the resident or any member of the resident's family/household receive state Veteran's Services benefits? | Yes | No |

Individual exemptions:

Note: You do not need to answer every question. If you mark YES to ANY question, then the individual is exempt.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Will the resident be sixty years of age or older before the next annual recertification? | Yes | No |
| 2. Is the resident disabled? (Check one) | Yes | No |

- a. Does the resident receive SSDI disability benefits? _____
- b. Does the resident receive Masshealth due to disability? _____
- c. Does the resident have a disability that meets the TAFDC standard for disability exemption? (See attached verification of disability form) _____
3. Does the resident need to care for a disabled family member? Yes No
4. Is the resident a parent or caretaker of a child under the age of two who lives in his/her home? Yes No
5. Is the resident within the last 120 days of pregnancy? Yes No
6. Is the resident a teen parent age 18 or 19 and attending full-time high school or a full-time GED training or work program that totals at least 20 hours per week? Yes No
7. Is the resident on TAFDC and exempt from its work program? Yes No
8. Is the resident a foster parent taking care of a foster child with serious care needs as determined by the Department of Social Services? Yes No
9. Is the resident engaged in the following types of work activities at least 8 hours per month? (check one) Yes No
- Paid work including self employment _____
 - On the job training _____
 - Job search and job readiness _____
 - Vocational and job skills training
Job related education (such as GED) _____
 - Paid or unpaid childcare for someone who is doing public housing community service or TAFDC community service _____

Explanation of Family Exemptions

1. Who is exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency requirements because a family member is receiving TAFDC?

Any family in which at least one member receives TAFDC (Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children) is exempt unless the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) has found the family to be in noncompliance with TAFDC. *This means that all adult household members who are on the lease are exempt, including members of the family who are not receiving TAFDC.*

2. Who is exempt because a family member receives SSI?

Any family in which at least one member receives SSI (Supplemental Security Income) is exempt. *All adult household members who are on the lease are exempt, including members of the family who are not receiving SSI.*

3. Who is exempt because a family member receives EAEDC?

Any family in which at least one member receives EAEDC (Emergency Aid to Elders, Disabled and Children) is exempt. *All adult household members who are on the lease are exempt, including members of the family who are not receiving EAEDC.*

4. Who is exempt because a family member receives subsidized child care?

Any family in which a member receives subsidized child care through the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) or the Department of Education's Community Partnerships for Children program is exempt. *All adult household members who are on the lease are exempt, including members of the family who are not receiving subsidized child care.*

5. Who is exempt because a family member receives the state Earned Income Credit?

The Earned Income Credit is extra money for working people who earn low or moderate incomes. The state Earned Income Credit is an additional 15 percent credit on top of the federal Earned Income Credit. Any family in which a member is raising a child and working will therefore receive the state Earned Income Credit and is exempt from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency. *All adult household members on the lease are exempt, including members of the family who are not eligible for the state EIC.*

6. Who is exempt because a family member receives Veterans' Services benefits?

Any family in which at least one member receives Veterans' Services benefits is exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency. *All adult household members who are on the lease are exempt, including members of the family who are not receiving Veterans' Services benefits.*

7. Examples of family exemptions for residents who are not receiving TAFDC or other benefits for themselves.

Example 1: Joe is 20 years old and lives with his parents who receive TAFDC for his sister who is 9. His parents are not being sanctioned for noncompliance with TAFDC and are therefore exempt from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency. Joe is also exempt because he is a member of a family receiving assistance.

Example 2: Serena is 59 years old. She lives with her boyfriend Sam who 55 years old, disabled and receiving EAEDC benefits. Sam is exempt from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency. Serena is also exempt because she is a member of a family receiving assistance. If Sam begins receiving SSI, Serena will be exempt as a member of family receiving SSI.

Example 3: Juana is an immigrant who has applied for asylum. She has one child, age 1, for whom she receives TAFDC. Juana is not eligible for TAFDC because of her immigration status. She is exempt from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency because she is a member of a family that receives TAFDC.

Explanation of Individual Exemptions

1. Who is exempt because they meet the requirements for a TAFDC work exemption?

- ✓ **Even if no one in the family receives TAFDC, an individual family member who meets the requirements for a TAFDC work exemption is exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency.**

A resident meets the requirements for a TAFDC work exemption – and is therefore exempt from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency – if the individual is

- age 60 or older,
- disabled,
- needed to care for a disabled child, or a disabled spouse, sibling, half-sibling, parent, grandparent or child's other parent,
- the caretaker of a child under two,
- a teen parent under age 20 and attending full-time high school or a full-time GED and training or work program that totals at least 20 hours a week,
- a pregnant woman in the last 120 days of pregnancy,
- a non-parent relative caring for a child receiving TAFDC where the adult is not receiving TAFDC for herself,
- certain foster parents.

- ✓ **A resident who receives TAFDC and is exempt from the TAFDC work requirement is also exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency even though the resident's family is under a TAFDC sanction.**

Families in which any member receives TAFDC are usually exempt from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency based on receipt of TAFDC. In a few cases, members of a family receiving TAFDC may not qualify for a *family exemption* from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency because the family is under a TAFDC sanction, but an individual who is receiving TAFDC may qualify for an *individual exemption* from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency if the person is exempt from the TAFDC work requirements.

2. Who is exempt because they are elderly or near elderly?

A resident is exempt if she or he is 60 years old or older.

3. Who is exempt because they are blind or disabled?

SSI recipients, EAEDC recipients, TAFDC recipients and recipients of Veterans' Services benefits and the families of those recipients qualify for a *family exemption*.

If a resident is disabled and does not qualify for a *family exemption*, she or he qualifies for an *individual exemption* on the basis of disability if the resident

- is receiving Social Security benefits on the basis of disability,
- is receiving MassHealth on the basis of disability, *or*
- the blindness or disability otherwise meets the requirements for a TAFDC work exemption.

4. Who is exempt because they are taking care of a disabled or blind person?

The primary caretaker of a disabled (or blind) person is usually eligible for a *family exemption* from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency as the member of a family receiving SSI, EAEDC or TAFDC. In addition, the resident is eligible for an *individual exemption* if the resident is the primary caretaker of a disabled person (in the resident's home or the disabled person's home) and

- the disabled person is receiving Social Security or MassHealth on the basis of disability, *or*
- the disabled person's doctor verifies that the resident is needed to care for the disabled person. A *Verification that Caretaker is Required to Provide Care for a Disabled Person* form is attached. It must be completed by the disabled person's doctor.

5. Who is exempt because they are taking care of a child under two?

The resident is exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency if the resident is taking care of a child under two. In a two-parent family, only one parent can be exempt on this basis.

6. Which teen parents are exempt?

Public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency applies only to adults. Teens under the age of 18 are not subject to the public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency requirement. Most teen parents age 18 or 19 are exempt because someone in their family is receiving a benefit that makes everyone exempt.

If the resident is a teen parent age 18 or 19 who is not eligible for a *family exemption* from public housing Community Service/Self-Sufficiency, the resident is eligible for an *individual exemption* if the resident is attending full-time high school or a full-time GED or training or work program that totals at least 20 hours a week. Even if the resident does not meet these requirements for an exemption, she or he may be exempt if the resident is participating in a "work activity."

7. Which pregnant women are exempt?

A pregnant woman is exempt if she is in the last 120 days of pregnancy.

8. Which foster parents are exempt?

A foster parent who is not exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency for some other reason is exempt if he or she is taking care of a child with serious care needs as determined by the Department of Social Services.

9. Who is exempt because they are “engaged in work activities”?

The resident is exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency if he or she is engaged in certain “work activities.” “Work activities” include

- paid work (including self-employment),
- on the job training,
- job search and job readiness,
- vocational and job skills training,
- job related education (such as GED), *and*
- paid or unpaid child care for someone who is doing public housing or TAFDC Community Service/Self-Sufficiency.

If the resident is participating in a “work activity” but the PHA says his or her activities do not qualify for an exemption, the resident may nevertheless be meeting the Community Service/Self-Sufficiency requirement on the basis of that same activity.

What is an Economic Self-Sufficiency Program?

An “economic self-sufficiency program” includes any program designed to encourage, assist, train, or facilitate the economic independence of the family in public housing. This includes programs for

- job training,
- employment counseling,
- work placement,
- basic skills training,
- education,
- English proficiency,
- financial or household management,
- apprenticeship,
- community service, *or*
- substance abuse and mental health treatment programs necessary for an individual become ready to work.

The program does not need to be sponsored by the housing authority. If the activity is administered by an organization other than the housing authority, the housing authority is supposed to obtain verification from the administering organization.

A person participating in a program who is not exempt because of the housing authority’s definition of “work activities may nevertheless be meeting the Community Service/Self-Sufficiency requirement on the basis of that same activity.

Verification to Establish Exemption from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency Requirement

(Note - This portion of the exemption policy does not describe verification that the Housing Authority already has in its files. For example, it does not address receipt of SSI or proof of age)

1. Member of a family that receives subsidized child care:

A resident can verify receipt of subsidized child care in a program funded by the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) by showing the PHA her or his OCCS child care voucher or the Subsidy Application and Fee Agreement. If the resident does not have either of these documents she or he can ask the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for a copy. A list of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies is at www.qualitychildcare.org.

If the resident gets help paying for an early childhood program (public preschool, Head Start, center-based or family child care) for a child who is between 2 years, 9 months and kindergarten age and doesn't have an OCCS subsidy, the child may be in a program that receives funding from the Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) program. The resident can call the local CPC coordinator (the director of the child's program can supply the number) and ask for a letter verifying that the resident's child receives a CPC subsidy. You may also call Early Learning Services (Department of Education) at 781-338-6364 to find out if the program is a CPC program and obtain verification.

2. Member of a family that receives the State Earned Income Tax Credit:

A resident who received the state Earned Income Credit last year and is working and raising a child this year can verify receipt of the credit with the last year's state tax return. A resident who did not get the state Earned Income Credit last year and is working and raising a child this year can verify eligibility for an exemption by completing the attached *Certification of Expected Receipt of State Earned Income Credit* form which is attached.

3. Individual who is disabled

Most disabled tenants *and their families* are exempt because the disabled person receives SSI, EAEDC, TAFDC or Veterans' Services benefits which are documented to determine rent.

In addition, a tenant can verify eligibility for an individual exemption on the basis of disability by

- documentation of receipt of Social Security on the basis of disability,
- documentation of receipt of MassHealth on the basis of disability (copy of notice

from MassHealth or, if not available, resident can ask MassHealth to release the information by completing the *MassHealth Permission to Share Information Form*, available at www.state.ma.us/dma/hipaa.htm.

- medical verification that the resident meets the standards for a TAFDC work exemption using the attached *Disability Verification Form*.

4. Individual who is primary caretaker of a disabled or blind person:

No additional verification is needed to establish an exemption for the primary caretaker of a disabled or blind person, where a member of the family is receiving SSI, EAEDC, or TAFDC.

No additional verification is needed to establish an exemption for the primary caretaker of an disabled or blind person who is receiving Social Security disability benefits or MassHealth on the basis of disability (see above for documentation of receipt of these benefits).

In addition, the primary caretaker of a disabled person can verify eligibility for an exemption by providing medical verification that the resident is needed to care for the disabled person using the attached *Verification that Caretaker is Required to Provide Care for a Disabled Person*.

5. Individual who is a foster parent:

Verification that the foster parent is caring for a child with serious needs may be obtained from the Department of Social Services (DSS)

6. Individual who is engaged in work activity:

Verify employment with documentation from the job training or other qualifying program.

7. Verification to Establish Participation in an Economic Self-Sufficiency Program

If the economic self-sufficiency program is not directly administered by the Housing Authority, verification from the sponsoring agency describing the activities and the hours of participation shall be sufficient.

Useful Forms

1. Certification of Expected Receipt of Earned Income Credit
2. Certification of Inability to Comply with Community Service/Self-Sufficiency Requirements Because of Disability
3. Verification of Disability
4. Verification that Caretaker is Required to Provide Care for a Disabled Person

Certification of Expected Receipt of State Earned Income Tax Credit

This form, together with verification that the resident has earnings, certifies that the resident and all members of the resident's family are exempt from Community Service/Self-Sufficiency requirements.

1. I am working and Social Security taxes (FICA) are being deducted from my paycheck.

Yes _____.

2. (a) I am raising two or more children in my home and my family income is less than \$33,178.

Yes _____.

or

- (b) I am raising one child in my home and my family income is less than \$29,201.

Yes _____.

3. I understand that I am eligible for the state Earned Income Credit for this year and I intend to apply for it on my state tax return.

Yes _____.

Signed under the pains and penalties of perjury on this date.

NAME

DATE

**Certification of Inability to Comply with
Community Service/Self-Sufficiency
Requirements Because of Disability**

1. I am receiving Supplemental Security Income benefits, Social Security Disability Benefits or MassHealth on the basis of disability.

2. Because of my disability I am unable to comply with Community Service/Self-Sufficiency requirements.

Signed under the pains and penalties of perjury on this date.

NAME

DATE

