

Disability Related Housing Resources

A Guide for Legislative Offices

Prepared by
Citizens' Housing and Planning Association's
Homelessness Committee Members including:
HomeStart, Inc., JRI Health, the MA Department of
Mental Health, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership,
United Disability Housing Partnership and
Vinfen Corporation.



C H A P A

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Resources for Legislative Offices

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HOUSING RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS DISABLED BY A MOBILITY OR SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

Mobility and Sensory Impairments:

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) provides assistance and services to persons of all ages living with all types of mobility and sensory disabilities to live and work independently. MRC is responsible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Community Services, and eligibility determination for the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) federal benefits programs for Massachusetts citizens with disabilities.

Housing Resources:

- The **Adult Supportive Living Program** provides case coordination services to the individual with a physical disability and an additional secondary disability to assist him or her in managing and organizing various aspects of day-to-day life. A case coordinator meets with a consumer of services on an as-needed basis and is also available via phone 24 hours a day for emergencies.
- The **Home Modification Loan Program** is a program established by the legislature to provide loans for access modifications to the primary, permanent residence of elders, adults with disabilities and children with disabilities.
- The **Home Care Assistance Program** provides homemaker services to eligible adults with disabilities who are functionally limited in meeting their own nutritional and environmental needs. The assistance of a homemaker helps individuals maintain their independence while living in the community.
- The **Mass Access Housing Registry** is a free program that helps people with disabilities find rental housing in Massachusetts, primarily accessible and barrier-free housing. People with disabilities can search the database to identify housing opportunities that suit their needs and contact the property managers directly.

CONTACTS FOR LEGISLATIVE OFFICES

Feel free to call the staff listed below with any questions regarding affordable housing and housing for people with disabilities.

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WEB AND PRINT RESOURCES ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing Search Guide for People with Disabilities

Prepared by CHAPA

www.chapa.org/pdf/CHAPAHousingSearchGuide.pdf

How to Get a Place Called Home

Prepared by AIDS Housing Corporation

www.ahc.org/resource_library/housing_advocacy.html

Affordable Housing Guidebook for Legislators

Prepared by CHAPA

www.chapa.org/Guidebook2005.pdf

Legal Tactics, Second Edition 2006

Edited by MA Law Reform Institute, published by MA Continuing Legal Education

www.masslegalhelp.org

How to Obtain Housing Assistance in Massachusetts, 2004

Published by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development

www.mass.gov/dhcd/publications/howto.htm

How to Access Resources:

MRC can provide further information on the Adult Supportive Living Program, the Home Modification Loan Program and the Home Care Assistance Program.

MA Rehabilitation Commission

(617) 204-3600, (800) 245-6543

www.mass.gov/mrc

The Mass Access Housing Registry is available online.

www.massaccesshousingregistry.org

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are multi-service agencies for people with disabilities, and housing is one of the many services they provide. There are eleven regional agencies across the state.

Independent Living Centers

Berkshire County

(413) 442-7047

www.adlibcil.org

North Shore and Cape Ann

(978) 741-0077/745-1735 TTY

www.ilnsca.org

Greater Boston

(617) 338-6665/6662 TTY

www.bostoncil.org

Metrowest

(508) 875-7853

www.mwcil.org

Central MA

(508) 755-1896

www.centerlw.org

Northeastern MA

(978) 687-4288

www.nilp.org

Cape and Islands

(508) 775-8300

www.cordonline.org

Fall River and New Bedford

(508) 679-9210

www.secil.org

South Shore

(508) 880-5325

www.iacil.org

Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin Cty

(413) 256-0473

www.stavros.org

Roxbury, Dorchester, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, Mattapan, West Roxbury

(617) 288-9431/2707 TTY

www.milecb.org

HOUSING RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS DISABLED BY MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental Illness:

Serious long-term mental illness describes disorders that cause severe disturbances in thinking, feeling and relating that result in substantially diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life. There are many types of mental illness. Serious mental illnesses include schizophrenia, depression, and manic depression. The majority of psychiatric disorders can be effectively treated. Community support services are a critical component of rehabilitation and recovery.

There are currently about 24,000 clients of the Department of Mental Health (DMH), nearly one-third receive assistance with housing. The vast majority of individuals seeking services are extremely low income with SSI and/or SSDI benefits of about \$6,000 year placing them at or near the 15% AMI level. Because of new medications and therapies, many are able to live independently and seek employment.

Housing Resources:

- **Group residences** with on-site staff;
- **Multi-bedroom apartments** with flexible staffing;
- **Independent housing** that consists of SRO, studio and one-bedroom units with or without assigned case management staff.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for specialized services and supports through DMH, the adult must:

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Have a qualifying mental disorder as the primary disorder requiring treatment;
- Meet function impairment and illness duration criteria.

How to Access Resources:

These programs are administered by state and non-profit agencies. Housing Consumer Education Centers listed in the section on supported housing administer RAFT funds. MassHousing operates TPP and has regional directors.

MassHousing
(617) 854-1089
www.masshousing.com

Regional Tenancy Preservation Program Contacts

Northeast
(978) 687-7184

Worcester County
(508) 860-1057

Boston
(617) 371-3153

Southeast
(508) 427-6514

Berkshire County
(413) 443-7138

**Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin
Counties**
(413) 233-5321

RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN HOUSING FOR INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS WITH DISABILITIES

Housing Resources:

- The **Tenancy Preservation Program** acts as a neutral party between landlord and tenant, and provides clinical consultation services to the Housing Court. The program targets individuals and families where a disability is both present and directly related to the reason for eviction. TPP clinicians assess the reasons for the eviction, identify needed services, develop a treatment plan to maintain the tenancy, and monitor the case.
- The **Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)** program provides short term, limited financial assistance which will enable families to retain housing, obtain new housing, or otherwise avoid homelessness.

Eligibility:

These resources may require that applicants:

- Have a household member with a disability;
- Fall below regional income limits;
- Have two or more people in the household;
- Be at risk of homelessness.

How to Access Resources:

In each of the six DMH areas, there is a Housing Coordinator whose role is to oversee both the existing inventory of housing and assist in development of new housing.

Department of Mental Health Offices

Northeast

P.O. Box 387
Tewksbury, MA 01876
(978) 863-5045

Central MA

305 Belmont St.
Worcester, MA 01604
(508) 368-3868

Metro Boston

85 East Newton St.
Boston, MA 02118
(617) 626-9219

Western MA

P.O.Box 389
Northampton, MA 01061
(413) 587-6292

Metro Suburban

PO Box 288, Lyman St.
Westborough, MA 01581
(508) 616-3522

Southeast

165 Quincy St.
Brockton, MA 02302
(508) 897-2000

Central Office

25 Staniford St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 626-8000

Additional assistance is available through the National Alliance on Mental Illness. There are a number of local NAMI affiliates across Massachusetts listed on the NAMI site.

NAMI Massachusetts

781-938-4048

www.namimass.org

HOUSING RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS DISABLED BY MENTAL RETARDATION

Mental Retardation:

Mental retardation means significantly sub-average intellectual functioning existing concurrently and related to significant limitations in adaptive functioning. Mental retardation manifests before age 18. A person with mental retardation may be considered to be mentally ill as defined in 104 CMR (Department of Mental Health), provided that no person with mental retardation shall be considered to be mentally ill solely by reason of his or her mental retardation. The Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) provides services to more than 32,000 individuals in Massachusetts through a combination of state and provider-operated programs.

Housing Resources:

- **Services** to assist people with housing remain independent in their homes;
- **Development Centers** with 24 hour support services;
- **Residential homes** for people unable to live on their own.

Although the majority of people served by DMR live in their homes with family members, DMR provides residential and community service options to persons unable to live on their own. This system is comprised of 202 state operated homes, housing 1,016 individuals. In addition, DMR serves approximately 1,150 people in its six Developmental Centers. These centers provide 24-hour support.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for specialized services and supports through DMR the adult must:

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Reside and intend to remain in Massachusetts permanently or for an indefinite period;
- Have mental retardation as defined in DMR regulations.

How to Access Resources:

These programs are administered by a range of state and non-profit agencies. Agencies that work with people with disabilities including ILCs (listed in the Mobility and Sensory Impairment section) can provide assistance as well as Housing Consumer Education Centers at the agencies listed below.

Housing Consumer Education Centers

Berkshire Housing Development Corp.

(413) 499-1630

www.berkshirehousing.com

Community Teamwork, Inc.

(800) 698-0551

www.comteam.org

Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority

(413) 863-9781

www.fchra.org

HAP, Inc.

(800) 332-9667

www.haphousing.org

Housing Assistance Corp.

(508) 771-5400

www.haconcapecod.org

Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, Inc.

(800) 272-0990

www.mbhp.org

RCAP Solutions

(978) 630-6600

www.rcapsolutions.org

South Middlesex Opportunity Council

(800) 286-6776

www.smoc.org

South Shore Housing Development Corp.

(800) 242-0957

www.southshorehousing.org

SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES

Housing Resources:

- The **Housing Options Program** (HOP) supplements rental assistance funds with ongoing supportive services in order to facilitate successful tenancies for homeless disabled individuals.
- The **Designated Housing Program** (DSG) provides tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers for non-elderly disabled individuals. DSG provides alternative housing opportunities for persons who have applied to MassHousing developments but may not receive assistance at developments with preferences for the elderly families.
- The **Mainstream Housing Program** provides tenant-based housing assistance in the form of a Housing Choice Voucher to very low income disabled individuals and families where the head of household or spouse has a disability. Households are directly referred by providers of services to persons with disabilities, who in turn provide assistance to the household.
- The **Veterans' Housing Voucher Program** (VHVP) offers Section 8 vouchers to very low-income, homeless veterans with disabilities, or psychiatric or substance abuse disorders.
- The **Shelter Plus Care Program** combines housing assistance and social services to individuals and families who are homeless and disabled.

Eligibility:

Many of these supported housing options require that applicants:

- Fall below regional income limits;
- Have a head of household with a disability;
- Receive social services while accepting rental assistance;
- Meet a specific definition of being homeless.

How to Access Resources:

In each of the DMR regions, there is a Regional Eligibility Team that will assist in applying for and determining eligibility for DMR services.

Department of Mental Retardation Offices

Northeast Region

PO Box A
Hathorne, MA 01937
(978) 739-5000

Metro Region

200 Trapelo Road
Waltham, MA 02452
(781) 314-7513

Central/West Region

171 State Ave.
Palmer, MA 01069
(413) 284-5045

Southeast Region

68 North Main St.
Carver, MA 02330
(508) 866-5000

Additional help is available through The Arc of Massachusetts. There are 22 local Arc chapters across Massachusetts and contact information is listed on the Arc website.

The Arc of Massachusetts

(781) 891-6270
www.arcmass.org

HOUSING RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS DISABLED BY HIV/AIDS

AIDS and HIV:

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. A person who is HIV-positive (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) receives an AIDS diagnosis after developing one of the Center for Disease Control-defined AIDS indicator illnesses. Over time, the infection HIV can weaken the immune system to the point that the system has difficulty fighting off opportunistic infections that cause further medical problems or that can be life-threatening for people with AIDS.

Housing Resources:

There are private and group living options operated by non-profit agencies and funded primarily through the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. The following are two examples of agencies that provide housing resources and services:

- The **Rental Start Up Program**, run by AIDS Action Committee, provides funds for deposits on apartments and temporary rental assistance and provides case management services.
- The **Assisted Living Program** (ALP) is a scattered site housing program located in multiple regions run by the Justice Resource Institute (JRI). ALP connects participants with housing subsidies and services.
- The **Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program** (TBRA) provides Housing Choice Vouchers and links rental assistance with appropriate supportive services to assist individuals and families with AIDS or HIV in stabilizing their lives and enhancing their ability to cope with their illness.
- The **Project-Based Assistance AIDS Program** (PBA) provides Section 8 project-based units and links consumers with appropriate services.

Eligibility:

Many of the HIV/AIDS housing options in Massachusetts require that applicants:

- Demonstrate disability due to HIV/AIDS with a physician letter;
- Fall below regional income limits;
- Hold U.S. citizenship or eligible resident status;
- Be homeless or at risk of being homeless.

How to Access Resources:

A range of AIDS housing programs are centrally listed with the AIDS Housing Corporation. AHC offers an on-line directory of housing, a guidebook on obtaining housing, a universal application for AIDS housing in MA, and a list of housing advocates who can assist in housing search.

- Online Directory: www.ahc.org/consumer/consumer.html
- Housing Program Directory: www.ahc.org/directory
- Housing Advocates and Case Managers: www.ahc.org/consumer/find_ma.html
- Universal Application: www.ahc.org/resource_library/Universal_Application.pdf

For information on the above mentioned supported housing options contact JRI and AIDS Action directly.

AIDS Action Committee
(617) 450-1350
www.aac.org

Justice Resource Institute
(617) 450-0500 x324
www.jri.org