



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street . Boston MA 02111

Argeo Paul Cellucci
Governor


Jane Swift
Lieutenant Governor

William D. O'Leary
Secretary

Claire McIntire
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2000-30
October 16, 2000

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: Emergency Assistance and the Housing Assistance Program

Background

The Department is revising the EA regulations, procedures, shelter contracts and housing assistance contracts. The new EA policy and procedures are expected to be implemented in January 2001 after training of the staff.

The current Homelessness Intercept Program (HIP) and housing search services provided to families in shelter are being replaced with the new Housing Assistance Program (HAP). This new service program has been created to provide families with a variety of housing-related benefits and services that could prevent the family's future homelessness. The first phase of HAP services, prevention services, will be available to EA-eligible families as of October 16, 2000 and the second phase, shelter services, will be available in January 2001. The prevention services will be offered statewide through a number of HAP providers. A complete list of the HAP prevention services providers, subcontractors and the geographic areas they cover is attached to this memo.

Purpose of Memo This memo:

- describes the prevention services that the HAP provider will offer to the EA-eligible family;
 - outlines AU Manager responsibilities for identifying families who may benefit from HAP prevention services; and
 - details the process which will be used for determining HAP eligibility and referring families for HAP prevention services.
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**HAP Providers'
Responsibilities**

The HAP provider offers the following prevention services to an EA family trying to maintain its current housing:

- landlord/tenant mediation and counseling services;
- budgeting, housekeeping and other tenancy-related services;
- community linkages with programs that can provide services/benefits which will help stabilize the tenancy;
- informational services;
- ongoing case management services to ensure that the EA family is able to maintain housing;
- transportation when necessary to access housing/tenancy-related services; and
- advocacy for the EA family in housing court appearances, as appropriate.

If HAP determines that the EA family cannot maintain its current living arrangement, HAP offers the following additional services:

- conduct a local, regional and statewide search to locate permanent housing for the EA family;
- screen the EA family's eligibility for subsidized and public housing and help the EA family make the appropriate applications;
- educate the EA family on how to conduct their own housing search;
- assist the EA family in resolving CORI, credit and legal problems;
- advocate on behalf of the EA family with any agencies who can assist in securing housing; and
- provide transportation and accompany the EA family to view apartments and negotiate with landlords.

The HAP provider gives follow-up and post-placement/stabilization services to the EA family for up to one year depending on the family's individual circumstances.

**Awareness of
Family Situation**

Awareness of a family's current living situation may help in preventing the family from becoming homeless. The AU Manager may become aware of the situation at a case maintenance activity, an eligibility review or any contact with the family. The AU Manager should encourage the family to use HAP prevention services before the family is in jeopardy of losing the current housing. The following are examples of situations that indicate a referral to HAP prevention services would be appropriate:

- the family says it's hard to pay shelter expenses from the monthly income of the family;
 - the family is unable to show that the rent payments are up to date or explain what actions they plan on taking to bring the rent payments up to date;
 - the family indicates they are having problems with the landlord for any reason; or
 - the family has requested an EA rental arrearage benefit.
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Application and Referral Process for HAP Services

Families who request HAP services or who the AU Manager determines would benefit from HAP services must be eligible for EA. To make this determination, an EA application must be taken, signed by the EA applicant certifying the information is true, and, based on the information provided, the AU Manager determines the family's EA eligibility. No verification of the information provided on the EA application is required.

A family ineligible for EA based on the information provided in the EA application, such as excess income or assets, is ineligible for HAP services and will have the EA application denied using the NFL-9.

Prior receipt of an EA benefit does not make the family ineligible for HAP services. HAP services are always available to an otherwise eligible EA family. HAP services help the family maintain its current living arrangement or secure other living arrangements before the family becomes homeless.

If the family is EA-eligible based on the information provided, the AU Manager must:

- complete a referral to the appropriate HAP provider using the *Referral for Housing Assistance Program Services (RHAPS)* form (Attachment A). The HAP provider may forward the referral to one of its subcontractors. Not all HAP providers have a subcontractor;
- inform the family that:
 - it must cooperate with the HAP provider; and
 - if it fails to cooperate with the HAP provider and subsequently becomes homeless as a result of the noncooperation with HAP services, the family will be ineligible for temporary emergency shelter benefits;
- fax the RHAPS to the appropriate HAP provider (Attachment B for a list of HAP providers and their service areas);
- file the RHAPS and any written correspondence from the HAP provider in the EA AU record and annotate the EA AU record of verbal communications with HAP; and
- send the NFL-9 advising the family of the EA approval for HAP services.

The AU Manager **does not complete:**

- an EA-1;
- an NFL-16; or
- an SSPS invoice.

**HAP Service
Provider
Response**

Upon receipt of the RHAPS, the HAP provider will:

- within two business days, fax the annotated RHAPS to the AU Manager acknowledging receipt of the referral; and
- within five business days, contact the family and schedule an initial interview.

The HAP provider will:

- develop an individualized housing plan with the family;
- monitor the family's participation in the housing plan;
- report regularly to the AU Manager on the family's compliance with the housing plan;
- fax written notification to the AU Manager if the family fails or refuses to cooperate; and
- maintain at least monthly contact with the AU Manager to report on the family's compliance with the HAP services. This contact may be a written or verbal report, depending on the family circumstances.

The HAP provider may use the original RHAPS form more than once to update the DTA worker of the EA family's participation with its housing plan.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478.



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Referral for Housing Assistance Program Services

Please print all information entries.

Date _____

From _____ (DTA Worker)

TAO _____

Fax # _____ Telephone # _____

To _____ (HAP Contractor)

Address _____

Fax # _____ Telephone # _____

EA Family _____ SSN _____

Name of Other Adult _____ SSN _____

EA family size is _____.

Current Address _____

Prior Address _____

Current living arrangements primary tenant sharing tenant unauthorized

Information Update from HAP Contractor/Sub-Contractor

(fax to the DTA Worker listed above)

- Referral has been received on _____ (date)
Name of HAP Worker _____ (date)
- An appointment has been scheduled with the above-named EA family for _____ (date)
for the initial interview. A report of the findings and assistance provided will be faxed to DTA at that time.
Name of HAP Worker _____ (date)
- The initial interview was conducted with the EA family on _____ (date). A report of the
findings and assistance provided is being faxed at this time.
Name of HAP Worker _____ (date)
- The EA family has been in compliance with its housing plan. A written report will be provided at the
monthly meeting with DTA and HPA.
Name of HAP Worker _____ (date)
- The EA family has not been in compliance with its housing plan. A written report is being faxed to DTA
at this time.
Name of HAP Worker _____ (date)

Agency Name _____

Fax # _____

Telephone # _____

Fax to HAP Provider - Original to AU Record

RHAPS (10/2000)
13-214-1000-05

Listing of Housing Assistance Program (HAP) Providers

Region/TAO	Contractor	Contact Person	Subcontractors
1- Boston Family Housing Dorchester NewMarket Square Roslindale	ABCD Housing Services 105 Chauncy Street Boston, MA 02111	Jennifer Laing (617)357-6000 x449 fax (617)542-2228	None
2- Davis Square Malden Revere	Comm. Action Programs Inter-City, Inc. 100 Everett Ave Chelsea, MA 02150	Robert S. Repucci (617)884-6130 x114 fax (617)889-8110	Cambridge Multi-Service. Community Service Network Middlesex Human Services Ag. Somerville Comm. Corp. Tri-City Comm. Action Program Tri-City Housing Task Force for Homeless Families Hildebrand Family Self-Help Ctr
3- North Shore	North Shore Community Action Prog., Inc. 98 Main Street Peabody, MA 01960	Elizabeth Hogan (978)531-0767 x101 fax (978)531-1012	Serving People in Need
4- Haverhill Lawrence Lowell	Community Teamwork Inc. 167 Dutton Street Lowell, MA 01852	Eileen Healey (978)459-0551 fax (978)453-9150	Emmaus, Inc.
5- Brockton Plymouth Quincy	Quincy Comm. Action Progs. 1509 Hancock Street Quincy, MA 02169	Tricia Appert (617)479-8181 x121 fax (617)479-7228	Brockton Area Multi-Serv., Inc. South Shore Housing Dev.Corp.
6- Falmouth Hyannis Oak Bluffs Orleans	Housing Assistance Corp. 460 West Main Street Hyannis, MA 02601	Allison Rice (508)771-5400 x227 fax (508)775-7434	Community Action Comm of Cape Cod and Islands, Inc.
7- Framingham Milford	South Middlesex Opportunity Council 300 Howard Street Framingham, MA 01702	James Cuddy (508)620-2300 fax (508)620-2310	Rural Housing Improvement
8- Fall River New Bedford Taunton Wareham	Community Care Services 70 Main Street Taunton, MA 02780	Thomas Fisher (508)821-7777 x226 fax (508)880-6155	None

Listing of Housing Assistance Program (HAP) Providers

<u>Region/TAO</u>	<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Subcontractors</u>
9- Fitchburg Southbridge Worcester	Central Mass. Hsg. Alliance 7-11 Bellevue Street Worcester, MA 01609	Grace Carmark (508)791-7265 fax (508)791-0639	Rural Housing Improvement
10-Athol Greenfield Holyoke Northampton	Hampshire Community Action Commission 56 Vernon Street Northampton, MA 01060	Timothy J. Diehl (413)582-4200 x103 fax (413)582-4202	Franklin Com Action Committee New England Farmworkers Council, Inc.
11-Springfield Liberty Springfield State Westfield	New England Farmworkers 1628-1640 Main Street Springfield, MA 01103	Tom Salter (413)272-2352 fax (413)846-4805	Hampshire Community Action Commission
12-North Adams Pittsfield	Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority 150 North Street Pittsfield, MA 01201	Brad Gordon (413)443-7138 fax (413)443-8137	None