



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ♦ Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor ♦ Tina Brooks, Undersecretary

March 18, 2010

**TO: Family Shelter Providers**

**FROM: Robert Pulster, Associate Director, Division of Housing Stabilization**

**RE: Clarification of the Use of Short Term Rental Supports**

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As you are all aware, DHCD is in the process of recalibrating the Commonwealth delivery of temporary shelter services. This new framework embraces a housing first model that moves families quickly from shelter into housing. Stabilization services have been built into this model to help ensure households have the necessary supports to maintain their tenancies.

Central to this re-housing effort are the transitional rental supports (short and medium term rental supports) that have been made available through DHCD Flex Fund Program, ICHH and HPRP resources. In light of the fact that long term subsidies are no longer readily available, transitional rental supports represent the bridge resource that our shelter families must avail themselves of in order to be re-housed. To this end, as part of the development of all Re-Housing Plans, there must be a re-housing strategy that includes accessing transitional resources. With the suspension of flex funds as of March 2, 2010, it is critical the providers work aggressively to connect families with available HPRP and other local resources.

Accessing a transitional rental support **is not** something a family can opt in or out of without good cause. Families should therefore be made aware that failure to accept an offer of housing, based on not wanting to access a transitional rental resource, will be considered a refusal to accept feasible alternative housing, which is ground for shelter termination. In such an instance, the shelter provider is obligated to submit the necessary paperwork to Renee Montague at DHCD so that a shelter termination notice can be issued to the family.

I realize that families have reservations about being re-housed with a transitional rental resource. Therefore, this is where shelter staff involved in re-housing families plays a critical role in providing a reality check to families on the limited availability of long term subsidies, the existence of long waiting lists for these resources, and the likelihood that a family will qualify for these resources based on prior housing history, current credit and criminal records. The use of transitional rental supports is the best chance families have to get re-housed and begin to build a positive housing resume.

It is also important to re-enforce to families that they will not lose their homeless status on state aided or federal housing waiting lists if they are re-housed with a transitional rental resource. In addition, DHCD is committed to continuing to provide flex funds, if necessary, to families who were re-housed with this resource and can demonstrate that they have actively engaged in stabilization services. Families, who are re-housed with a

transitional rental support, need to make a concerted effort to increase their income, pay their portion of the rent on timely basis and adhere to all other terms and conditions of their lease. In addition, families must actively follow up on affordable housing opportunities including tracking their status on subsidized waiting lists. Any household that receives an offer of subsidized housing while on transitional rental support should be advised to accept this offer. Failure to accept such an offer will impact both their ability to access additional flex funds and EA funded shelter.

It is critical that we all have a fundamental understanding of the reality that we are faced with in terms of the availability of long term subsidies and balance this with the need to avoid having families to languish in shelters waiting for such resource. Our responsibility is to re-house homeless families utilizing any and all resources that we have available. Short term rental supports are the primary vehicle we have right now to move families quickly from shelter into housing. I expect that all DHS providers will make every effort to re-house families with these resources.