



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

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Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2000-13
March 14, 2000

To: Transitional Assistance Staff
From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: JOBLink Section 8 Housing Voucher Program

Background

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded 2,000 welfare-to-work housing assistance vouchers to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). DHCD has contracted with eight nonprofit housing agencies to establish the JOBLink Section 8 Housing Voucher Program.

JOBLink is a Section 8 rental housing assistance program for families making the transition from welfare to work. Participants generally pay at least 30 percent of their income toward their housing costs, depending on the apartment they choose, and the housing voucher helps pay for the balance of the rent. This housing assistance program will help reduce the burden of meeting monthly housing costs for entry-level workers making the transition to work. To stay a participant in the JOBLink Program, the participant must get and keep employment, or regain it as quickly as possible following a job loss. If not currently employed, the participant must expect to find employment within four months.

In January and February the nonprofit housing agencies sent letters to all families currently on their waiting lists telling them about the JOBLink Program. This memo provides instructions for the direct referral process for TAFDC and EA recipients.

The JOBLink Section 8 voucher is different from the traditional Section 8 voucher. This housing assistance program rewards an individual with lower housing costs but also expects the participant to maintain his or her employment.

**Voucher
Disbursement**

The 2,000 vouchers have been divided among these DHCD administrative regions:

- Berkshire County - 40 vouchers
- North Middlesex/Essex County - 260 vouchers
- Cape and Islands - 40 vouchers
- Franklin/Hampden/Hampshire County and Springfield - 400 vouchers
- Metro Boston and Boston - 620 vouchers
- Worcester County - 260 vouchers
- South Middlesex - 40 vouchers
- South Shore - 340 vouchers

**Who is
eligible for a
JOBLink
Voucher?**

To be eligible for a JOBLINK Section 8 Housing Voucher, the individual must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- be a current or former (closed for 1 to 24 months) TAFDC or EA recipient, excluding EA recipients whose temporary emergency shelter eligibility is/was based solely on the EA Shelter Standard (130 percent); and
- be employed at least 75 hours per month; or
- be a participant in good standing in a qualifying job-readiness or post-employment program expected to lead to employment within four months and be subject to the TAFDC rules of time-limited benefits; and
- be able to demonstrate a critical housing need to DHCD, such as
 - insufficient funds to meet basic expenses, i.e., rent-burdened (housing costs are greater than 40 percent of their income);
 - need to relocate closer to work due to inadequate child care or transportation; and/or
 - being homeless and currently in shelter or transitional housing; and
- meet other Section 8 eligibility criteria.

**JOBLink
Qualifying
Programs**

Individuals who are not currently employed are eligible to apply for the JOBLink Section 8 Voucher Program if they are participating in a JOBLink qualifying program. JOBLink qualifying programs include, but are not limited to, the following ESP components:

- Skills Training;
- Post-Employment Services;
- Structured Job Search Program;
- Supported Work;
- Full-Employment Program; and
- Community College.

The ESP participant must also be subject to the rules of TAFDC time-limited benefits.

Remember, the applicant for this voucher program must be meeting the ESP participation requirements of the component and must expect to find employment of at least 75 hours per month within four months.

If there are any questions about whether a specific program is a JOBLink qualifying program, contact DHCD's JOBLink Project Administrator, Leslie Gleason, at (617)727-7130, ext. 353.

**Informing
Current
TAFDC and
EA Recipients**

During the next office visit with the recipient, the Transitional Assistance Workers should tell current TAFDC or EA recipients and any former TAFDC or EA recipients who meet the eligibility criteria about the JOBLink Section 8 Voucher Program. If you know of someone who would benefit from this program, call him or her right away.

If the current recipient is interested in applying for this Section 8 voucher, the *JOBLink Section 8 Housing Referral* (JOBLink-8) form (Attachment A) must be completed and faxed to:

Leslie Gleason
Department of Housing and Community Development
Workforce Development Coordinator
Bureau of Federal Rental Assistance
Fax: (617) 727-7127 or (617) 727-7891

Give a copy JOBLink-8 form to the recipient and file the original in the case record.

NOTE: Explain to the recipient that this is the referral and although there is no guarantee that the family will be eligible for the JOBLink voucher or will get one of the 2000 JOBLink vouchers, it would be advantageous for the referral to be completed for the family.

**Informing
Current
TAFDC and
EA Recipients
(continued)**

If you do not receive a confirmation of the received fax from DHCD within 24 hours, call Leslie Gleason at (617) 727-7130 ext. 353.

This referral form also verifies whether the individual is a current TAFDC or EA recipient who is employed or participating in a qualifying job-readiness program.

The final decision of the applicant's eligibility for the JOBLink voucher is with DHCD or one of the nonprofit housing agencies.

**Former
Recipients**

If the former recipient closed less than 12 months is interested in applying for this Section 8 voucher, the former Transitional Assistance Worker should complete the *JOBLink Section 8 Housing Referral* form (Attachment A) and fax it to Leslie Gleason at the Department of Housing and Community Development at: (617) 727-7891 or (617) 727-7127.

If a former recipient closed more than 12 months but less than 24 months contacts the TAO for a referral to the JOBLink Section 8 Voucher Program, he or she should be told to contact Centralized Eligibility Operations, Income Verification Unit at 1-800-632-8095 for the referral and verification that he or she had received TAFDC or EA within the past 24 months. Staff in the Income Verification Unit will complete the *JOBLink Section 8 Housing Referral* form and fax it to Leslie Gleason at (617) 727-7127 or (617) 727-7891.

A former recipient will be required to provide current verification of employment.

The final decision of the applicant's eligibility for the JOBLink voucher is with DHCD or one of the nonprofit housing agencies.

**JOBLink
Facts**

- A JOBLink waiting list will be maintained by the nonprofit housing agencies.
- An individual accepted for the JOBLink Section 8 Housing Voucher Program must continue to meet the employment eligibility criteria to keep the JOBLink Section 8 voucher.
- If the individual is found ineligible for a JOBLink voucher, his or her status on DHCD's other Section 8 waitlist will not be affected.

Questions

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



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Transitional Assistance

JOBLink Section 8 Housing Referral

To Leslie Gleason
Department of Housing and Community Development
Workforce Development Coordinator
Bureau of Federal Rental Assistance
Fax: (617) 727-7891 or (617) 727-07127

From _____ (TAO)
_____ (Address)

Re _____ (Name of Recipient)
_____ (Address)
_____ (Telephone Number)

The above-named recipient or former recipient is interested in applying for JOBLink Section 8 Housing benefits through the Welfare-to-Work program.

According to the Department's records this individual is (put an "X" on all lines that apply):

_____ a current recipient of TAFDC _____; TAFDC and EA _____; or EA only _____

_____ a former recipient of TAFDC _____; TAFDC and EA _____; or EA only _____
(case closed on ___/___/_____ (within the past 24 months));

_____ currently employed 75 or more hours per month;

_____ currently participating in Skills Training, Post-Employment Services, Structured Job Search, Supported Work, Full-Employment Program or Community College and is meeting the participation requirements for the program; and

_____ in critical need for housing by (put an "X" on the line that applies)

_____ being homeless and residing in a shelter or transitional housing;

_____ having insufficient funds to meet basic expenses, i.e., rent-burdened and housing costs are greater than 40% of income; or

_____ needing to relocate closer to work due to inadequate child care or transportation.

Transitional Assistance Worker Signature

Date

Transitional Assistance Worker (Print)

TAO Telephone Number