

An Act Relative to Local Housing Authority Reform

Accountability and Transparency

Performance-Based Monitoring Program

- Mandatory participation for all LHAs
- Benchmarks developed jointly by DHCD and stakeholders to address capital and operating program criteria and governance activities, including:
 - Executive director and senior staff training; board member training; senior staff certification in public procurement procedures; minimum experience and education requirements to be used when hiring new executive directors
 - Maintenance and repair of existing units; procedure for vacant unit turnover
 - Budget management; capital project planning
 - Resident services, including job training initiatives and family self-sufficiency programming; participation in the capital assistance team program
- Directs DHCD to define standards for “chronically poor performing” LHAs
 - Removal of executive director in chronically low performing LHAs when the Department finds clear and convincing evidence of a demonstrable threat to tenant safety attributable to the conduct of the executive director or financial misconduct or criminal activity by the executive director and appoint a chief financial and administrative officer for no longer than 3 years to a chronically poor performing housing authority.
- Directs each LHA to create a website with contact information for all board members and senior staff members; the information must also be posted in the community centers of developments

Annual Plan

- Describes goals of LHA and plan to meet the performance standards
- Must be made available for public review and comment through an annual public hearing
- Public hearing will address:
 - Proposed capital plan; proposed operating budget; details on specific projects/initiatives

Annual Audit

- Requires each LHA to have an annual audit performed by an independent auditor; also makes LHAs subject to state audits
- An auditor may only complete 5 consecutive audits before the LHA must hire a new auditor.
- The audit must be filed with DHCD and posted online

Board Members

- Tenant must be added to town boards through tenant organization election procedures to be determined by DHCD (in cities, one of the mayor’s 4 appointments is already required to be a tenant)
- DHCD will provide mandatory board member training developed in consultation with stakeholders
 - New board members receive initial training and all board members receive training every 2 years or upon reappointment/election; board members who do not complete the training are subject to removal
 - Board member training shall include at a minimum:

- Open meeting law; conflict of interest law; public records law; uniform procurement act; state budgetary process; fraud prevention; fiduciary responsibility; fair housing laws, tenant occupancy and participation policies; and anti-discrimination laws
 - For tenant board members and members of local tenant organizations, technical assistance training shall be made available
 - Explicitly states that board members are fiduciaries of the LHA

Executive Director Contracts

- DHCD will create guidelines for ED contracts, which will be subject to review by DHCD
- DHCD must review any contract worth more than \$100,000/year
- DHCD may strike any provisions that do not conform to guidelines

Resident Surveys

- DHCD to conduct annual anonymous resident surveys in native languages of the residents
- LHAs may respond to the results of the surveys in writing

Centralized Application and Waitlist

- DHCD will develop an online, centralized application and waitlist for state-aided public housing

Capital Assistance Teams (CAT)

- Creates 3 regional capital planning and project management staffs and systems
- Requires each LHA with fewer than 500 state-aided units to utilize services; LHAs, however, may apply for a waiver
- DHCD will select three host LHAs in designated regions through an RFP process
- LHAs will receive additional funding to increase the salary of the host executive director
- Each CAT will hire a director who will hire and manage staff
- An 11 member advisory board made up of members of participating housing authorities to oversee CAT program performance and coordination
- CATs will LHAs in developing and managing the capital program, including:
 - Developing a capital plan; preparing applications for special capital project funds; managing updates to the capital planning system; implementing capital improvement projects; facilitating coordination among LHAs to promote efficiencies
- CATs will complete a survey of all surplus land owned by participating LHAs and will work with DHCD and the LHAs to implement affordable housing development

Regional Innovation Program

- Creates 4 regional housing authorities through a regional innovation pilot program
- DHCD shall select the 4 pilots through an application process
- Eligibility restricted to: 4 regional housing authorities of no less than 7 local communities with a collective portfolio of at least 750 state units; and 1 regional housing authority of not less than 10 communities with a collective portfolio of at between 250 and 700 state units
- Creates incentives to participate in regional innovation pilot program, including:
 - Each pilot regional housing authority will receive a 20% increase in annual operating for elderly and family state units

- Enables flexibility in spending between operating funds and capital funds
 - Regional housing authorities may create a reasonable rent policy
- Advisory committee of DHCD and stakeholders will develop program guidelines
- Annual plan must be submitted listing all proposed innovations, goals, and an annual report detailing program outcomes
- Redefines “Extremely low income household” for the purpose of the program to mean persons earning less than 30 percent of AMI, adjusted for household size, as well as those earning less than 150 percent of Nantucket or Dukes county median household income