



HOUSING OPTIONS TOOL

**Housing Pathway
Conversation Guide**

Instructions to staff

- ✓ Review the possible housing pathways ahead of time to know what options you can review with the client. Have an open conversation with the client about options
- ✓ Explore the housing options in the order they are listed. They build on each other and move from the lightest amount of housing assistance to more intensive amounts.
- ✓ Once you complete the assessment, make sure to complete the subsequent referral steps to get the client on that pathway

SHARE WITH THE CLIENT:

- ✓ Thanks for sharing all of this information. It's helpful to get to know you and better know what possible pathways you have out of shelter.
- ✓ Based on what you shared, I think you might consider: start with least intensive service and then work down
- ✓ This is a first attempt at getting you to the housing program that will work for you. It's not however a guarantee of an open spot. The program will also have to eventually verify your eligibility for that program.



Housing Pathway Referral Quick Reference

Youth (18-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete Pathways 2021 Assessment for access to youth rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing.• Refer to Bridge Over Troubled Water for general services.
Senior (62+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Elderly Housing Navigation Checklist
Veteran	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Veteran Housing Navigation Checklist
HIV+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use HIV+ Housing Navigation Checklist
Housing in Hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer to HomeStart's Rapid Re-Housing Program for housing search and upfront moving costs
Friends/Family/Relocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete Barrier Buster application
Alternative Housing/Service Pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer internally to behavioral health or case management expertise.
Housing Now: Market Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer to HomeStart's Rapid Re-Housing Program
Housing Navigation-Subsidized/Supportive Housing Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer internally to site's housing navigation staff to begin a subsidized and/or supportive housing option.

Special Population: Young Adult (18-24)

Services: Designated staff to help young adults connect to youth housing

Eligibility: Currently between 18 to 24 years of age

What to share with client: Because you are 18 to 24 years old you qualify for a range of housing opportunities designated specifically for you, run by agencies that who have a lot of experience serving young people.

Does this Housing Option work for the client? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Yes→ Complete Pathways 2021 Assessment for Youth housing resources; refer to Bridge Over Troubled Water for general youth services

No→ Move to next option

Special Population: Veteran, HIV, 62+

Services: Designated staff to help these priority populations connect to special resources that they qualify for

Eligibility: Client must be either: 62 years or older, HIV+ or a Veteran

What to tell client:

- ✓ Because you [insert criteria above that the client meets], there are a number of housing programs that you may qualify for.
- ✓ I am going to help you get connected to an opportunity that might work for you.

Does this Housing Option work for the client? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Yes→ Use special population one-pagers to refer

[Click here for Senior \(62+\)](#)

[Click here for Veteran](#)

[Click here for HIV+](#)

No→ Move to next option

Housing in Hand

Services: Assistance with housing search, income maximization, move-in costs, and support connecting to community resources once housed.

Eligibility: Currently staying in a Boston emergency shelter and has either

- An active housing voucher
- An identified unit they can move into

What to tell client:

- Because you have [insert above criteria that the client meets], we have a staff who can work with you to help you find a unit if you have a voucher or move into a unit if you've already identified one.
- We can help cover some move-in costs and provide some support connecting you to community resources.

Does this Housing Option work for the client? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Yes→ Refer to HomeStart's Rapid Re-Housing Program (contact info TBD)

No→ Move to next option

Barrier Buster

Services: Client can reunite with family/friends or can quickly move to a safe alternative to shelter. Help and financial assistance to help people move in, relocate, pay “hosts” like family or friends to take them back as a guest. Can provide up to three months of assistance.

Eligibility: Currently staying in a Boston emergency shelter, transitional housing program or unsheltered. **The housing situation does NOT need a lease**, but you will need to document that the host expects to allow them to stay for at least 90 days. Sober home placements are only eligible if the participant has a plan for how sober home fees will be paid after 3 months.

What to share with client:

- We always explore with everyone if there is a quick way out of homelessness, to a positive place you could stay. We can help with funds and logistics to get you there.
 - *Is there anyone that may want to know you are experiencing homelessness or need help?*
 - *Tell me about past places you’ve stayed that have been positive.*
 - *Tell me about any strengths you have to navigate difficult situations.*
 - *Do you have family, friends or anywhere to stay, even for the night?*
 - *What support would you need to make a housing option work?*
 - *What support would you need to access treatment?*
 - *Do you have family or friends that you would like to connect with following treatment, if treatment was an option?*
- The barrier buster fund is small, one-time, and flexible. Examples may be helping a host (friend or family with rent/food/utilities) or helping to pay for travel to relocate.
- Let’s talk through safety considerations about these options.

Does this Housing Option work for the client? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Yes→ You can begin to complete→ [Barrier Buster Application](#) from the [Boston CoC Website](#)

No→ Move to next option.

Alternative Housing

Services: Assistance with finding, securing, and moving into a domestic violence shelter, detox, treatment or sober home, group home and long-term assisted care.

Eligibility: Client is interested in one or more of the following:

- ✓ Survivor of domestic violence OR
- ✓ Seeking treatment or sober home OR
- ✓ Seeking group home or long term care OR
- ✓ Seeking Dept. of Mental Health Rest Home

What to share with clients:

- Instead of finding housing right away, some guests choose to find a setting other than our shelters that has services to fit their needs more. Examples are:
 - Treatment program or detox for substance use
 - A domestic violence shelter if you're actively fleeing a dangerous partner
 - Housing with the Dept. of Mental Health (DMH)
 - Long term care like assisted living, rest homes or nursing homes
- If one of these settings would work best for you, I will refer you to our Behavioral Health team who will help you pursue these options.

Does this Housing Option work for the client? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Yes→ Refer to internal behavioral health expertise

No→ Move to next option

Housing Now: Market Rate

SHARE WITH THE CLIENT:

- ✓ Thanks for sharing all of this information. It's helpful to get to know you and better know what possible pathways you have out of shelter.
- ✓ For people who want to move now, we can help you move into a unit or room. There is some support we can offer to make that possible.
- ✓ If you're feeling uncertain about taking private market housing, let me tell you about some of the services and why you might consider this option.

WHAT HELP COULD I GET TO MOVE TO PRIVATE MARKET HOUSING?

Housing search services to find a home in the private market. This means there will be a lease between you and the landlord, and you will be responsible for the full rent on the lease. This is not a subsidy, or voucher program where your rent is calculated at about 30% of your income, so you may be paying a high amount of your income towards rent each month.

Case management & Help to Increase Your Income: These services are designed to build ties in your community, increase your income as much as possible, and assist with budgeting so you can stay in your home and not have to experience homelessness again. Even if you cannot fully pay your rent to begin with a case manager will work with you to identify ways you could increase your income.

Financial assistance to help you move into your new home. These are usually upfront moving costs like security deposit, assistance with rent, and a moving truck.

Why do people take it?

- It often takes **years to get to the top of waitlists**. *As an example- the city was able to house 1/3 of the people on its chronic list last year*
- Getting to the top of a waitlist **does not guarantee** an **offer** of housing due to background checks
- **Most** affordable housing programs in Massachusetts actually **do not require homelessness** to move up on the list; you can keep applying and waiting without remaining homeless.
- BHA does allow participants enrolled in rapid rehousing to maintain homeless status as long as they are enrolled in the program

How do people make it work?

- Income maximization services & balancing the budget
- Negotiating Rent Down
- Roommates
- Single Rooms
- Leaving Boston
- Continue applying for subsidized housing
- Move in with family or friends

Eligibility: Client must meet one of the following:

- ✓ Client has monthly income of \$800 a month or more (earned or unearned) or has income prospects **OR**
- ✓ Currently or recently employed **OR**
- ✓ Client has already found housing and needs rental assistance **OR**
- ✓ Client is interested in shared housing

What to tell client: Because you [insert above criteria that the client meets], one of our market-rate housing options could be great for you. You'll get assistance finding a market-rate unit and then some financial assistance to help you cover your rental costs.

Does this Housing Option work for the client? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Yes → Refer to HomeStart's Rapid Re-Housing Program (contact info TBD)

No → Move to next option

Housing Navigation (More intensive support)

Services: Affordable, subsidized housing search services for people not interested in the above programs and who have high barriers to obtaining housing.

What to tell client: It seems like you're really interested in moving out of shelter but ultimately probably want a subsidized housing option. We have staff who will help you navigate subsidized housing and find an option that will work for you- we will let the team know of your interest and connect you when there are openings.

Referral: Refer to internal housing navigator to begin subsidized and/or supported housing search.

Checklist of Housing Pathway Options: Elderly (62+)

In general, for most subsidized housing, elderly means one is 62+ years old. State resources use 60+ y/o.

- ✓ **Connect to [Hearth, Inc.](#)** for housing search/navigation. If client enrolls/engages with Hearth, case may be closed.

✓ **Boston Housing Authority Application**

- **Public housing:** There are “designated” developments where 62+ receive 100 points to move right to the top of the list. [Check their website as they change periodically.](#)
 - Ashmont Street; Ausonia Homes; Bellflower Street; Codman Apts; Commonwealth Elderly; Doris Bunte; Eva White; Foley Apartments; Frederick Douglas; General Warren; Groveland; Hampton House; Hassan Apts; Hertiage-PHA Owned; Holgate Apts; JJ Carroll; Lower Mills-PHA Owned; Malone Apts; Mildred C Hailey-Bromley; MLK Towers; Pasciucco; Patricia White; Peabody Square; Rockland Towers; Springs Street; St. Botolph Street; Torre Unidad; Washington Street

- **Project Based Voucher List- Elderly Points:** The following developments in the project-based voucher portfolio also have the designated 100+ elderly points:

Apartment	Neighborhood
Heritage Apartments	East Boston
Lower Mills	Dorchester
Central Boston Elder Service	Boston
Building 104	Charlestown
Morville House	Boston

- **Fast Track Option- Moderate Rehabilitation Section 8 Properties (“Mod Rehabs”):** These are known as the Mod Rehabs for short (reminder, these are federally funded S8 units). They are also BHA’s “fast tracks”. Each of these developments has to report their vacancy to BHA. If the BHA cannot fill the vacancy within a short timeframe, the developments have permission to outreach to find applicants. BHA hardly ever fills these vacancies, usually the property managers are seeking applicants and “fast tracking” when they have a vacancy. It is very important to work with your teammates to build good relationships with fast track property managers so that they will call you when they have vacancies (referring eligible clients who fit the exact criteria to make things go fast!).
- **Mod Rehab- Special Population Housing:** Read the full descriptions in the BHA application, but know that some of the developments are targeted towards special populations. Some examples are:
 - 1.) Bishop: Run through Hearth, focus on 50+ (under 50 can still apply).
 - 2.) Coventry Street, HIV+
 - 4.) Valentine Street, focus on women in recovery from substance abuse.
 - 5.) Walnut House, focus on dual diagnosis (mental health and substance use)

- ✓ **Specialized Housing** ([nursing homes](#), [assisted living](#), [group homes](#), etc.)

- ✓ **Housing Authorities outside of Boston:** Any [housing authority](#) where the participant would live (most if not all have elderly preferences)
- ✓ **Project Based Voucher Units** through [Metro Housing Boston \(send app to MHB\)](#)
 - Pelham House, the Moorings, Coolidge School Apts and Marshall Place- elderly only
- ✓ [Centralized S8](#) and [DHCD Housing Choice Vouchers](#). *MRVP vouchers are currently closed.*
- ✓ [MassHousing List](#)- many elderly/disabled developments. Make sure to call each time you apply to ensure the waitlist is open and the property is taking applications. On the website you can search for just elderly properties.
- ✓ Sign up and be on the lookout for time-limited lotteries of new affordable housing- many are elderly (62+).
[Scroll down on Metrolist's website to sign up for emails](#)

Checklist of Housing Pathway Options: HIV+

- ✓ **Connect to AIDS Action Committee for Housing Navigation:** They provide housing navigation. During COVID, housing navigation services are remote. For more information about our Housing programs, call our main number at 617.450.1550 or email information@fenwayhealth.org.
- ✓ **Boston Housing Authority Application**
 - – **Project Based Voucher Units- Special Population Housing:** Read the full descriptions in the BHA application, but know that some of the developments are targeted towards special populations. Some examples for HIV+ are:
 - Corey Seton Manor
 - **Fast Track Option- Moderate Rehabilitation Section 8 Properties (“Mod Rehabs”):** These are known as the Mod Rehabs for short (reminder, these are federally funded S8 units). They are also BHA’s “fast tracks”. Each of these developments has to report their vacancy to BHA. If the BHA cannot fill the vacancy within a short timeframe, the developments have permission to outreach to find applicants. BHA hardly ever fills these vacancies, usually the property managers are seeking applicants and “fast tracking” when they have a vacancy. It is very important to work with your teammates to build good relationships with fast track property managers so that they will call you when they have vacancies (referring eligible clients who fit the exact criteria to make things go fast!). Read the full descriptions in the BHA application, but know that some of the developments are targeted towards special populations. Some examples for HIV+ are:
 - Coventry Street
- ✓ **New England HIV Housing Directory**
 - [Inventory of HIV Housing in New England](#). Contact each housing listing for current availability, openings and application process.

Assisted Living Program

Serves approximately 400 individuals and families with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts.



STAFF CONTACT

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BACKGROUND

The Assisted Living Program (ALP) provides approximately 400 mobile rental subsidies from a variety of sources that can be used throughout Massachusetts. Some of the subsidies require the users of those particular subsidies to be homeless to qualify. All participating households must have at least one member who has HIV/AIDS and meets income limitations.

SETTING

ALP assists program participants to apply for rental subsidies that can be used for apartments in scattered sites throughout Massachusetts.

LEASING INFORMATION

The tenant signs a lease with the landlord.

SERVICES

- ☒ Housing search assistance
- ☒ Move in assistance
- ☒ Lease up assistance
- ☒ Case management
- ☐ Furnished apartments/rooms
- ☐ On site staff Y hours a day
- ☐ On site staff X days a week

LIFE ASSISTANCE

- ☒ Transportation to medical appointments
- ☒ Assistance w/ transportation
- ☐ Medication management

GROUP MEETINGS

- ☐ Community activities/trips

OTHER MEETINGS/SERVICES

- ☐ Parenting support classes
- ☐ HIV education
- ☐ Spiritual guidance
- ☐ Planned leisure activities
- ☐ Pastoral care
- ☒ Computer instruction
- ☐ On site education center
- ☐ Monthly educational workshops
- ☐ Access to YMCA facilities
- ☐ Drop in center
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ Respite care
- ☒ Internet access for residents

PROGRAM TYPE

Checklist of Housing Pathway Options: Veterans

- ✓ **Connect to Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF).** They can provide rapid re-housing, connection to HUD-VASH and in some cases some alternative sheltering options (transitional housing, limited hotels on a case by case basis). *They can also help determine Veteran discharge status.*
 - **SSVF Rapid re-housing:** For Veterans interested in finding housing in the private market. The lease would be between the Veteran and the landlord. SSVF can provide housing search, supportive services to settle in, connect to resources and temporary financial to help the Veteran move into the private market.
 - **SSVF-eligible Veterans:** A person who served in the active military, naval or air service, regardless of length of service, and who was discharged or released there from. This excludes Veterans who received a dishonorable discharge from the Armed Forces or was discharged or dismissed from the Armed Forces by reason of sentence of a general court martial.
 - **Email** the Veteran name and any contact info to the following:
 - New England Center: Santino.simms@nechv.org or 617-910-6063
 - Volunteers of America: JD Morales at jmorales@voamass.org or 617-360-1798
 - Volunteers of America: Mark Catalano at mcatalano@voamass.org or 617-631-7780
 - If the Veteran engages with SSVF, BPHC may close the case.
 - If the Veteran needs help engaging, especially if services are remote, BPHC may continue to keep the case open to assist.

- ✓ **City's Veteran List**

The City keeps a Veteran by name list and meets with a Veteran working group every other Tues to connect Veterans with housing and services. Key members of the group are area shelters, the VA, SSVF providers, etc.

- Someone from BPHC can ask to be a member to ensure your Veterans are added to the list; this will help accelerate connecting them to housing pathways with VA, SSVF, HomeStart, etc.
- New England Center has a special housing navigation program for long term Boston homeless Veterans with any discharge status; the way to be referred is through this list/working group.
- Let Ian Gendreau at the city know who may be a rep for BPHC.

- ✓ **Chapter 115 Veterans Benefits**

Veterans may be eligible for safety net income called [Chapter 115](#). Veterans with dishonorable discharges are not eligible. It can include basic income, help with medical costs, transportation, etc.

HUD-VASH: Mobile vouchers for homeless and chronically homeless Veterans. It is rare, but they sometimes have project-based units that become available.

Eligibility: Enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980 or entered active duty after October 16, 1982, and served 24 continuous months or the full period for which you were called to active duty and do not have a dishonorable discharge. [There are exceptions that apply, see here.](#)

Access: There are multiple ways to access HUD-VASH

- The City's Veteran working group- HUD VASH attends
- [HUD VASH Hotline/Info sessions](#)

✓ **Boston Housing Authority Application**

- Veterans who meet the VA Healthcare definition of Veteran (see above, HUD-VASH) are preferenced for BHA's housing programs. Make sure they have checked off Veteran on BHA's preference form.
- **Mod Rehab- Special Population Housing:** Read the full descriptions in the BHA application, but know that some of the developments are targeted towards special populations. Some examples are:
 - Congressman John Joseph Moakley Quarters- upstairs of New England Center
Substance free permanent housing for Veterans
- ✓ **Housing Authorities outside of Boston:** Any [housing authority](#) where the participant would live (most if not all have Veteran preferences)
- ✓ [Centralized S8](#) and [DHCD Housing Choice Vouchers](#). *MRVP vouchers are currently closed.*
- ✓ [MassHousing List](#)- many elderly/disabled developments. Make sure to call each time you apply to ensure the waitlist is open and the property is taking applications. On the website you can search for just elderly properties.
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