



# Subsidized Housing in Massachusetts: The Basics

## (Brief Version)

### Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs)

We suggest you **start your search with your local HCEC**, also called Regional Housing Networks or Regional Non-Profits. They can help you understand subsidized housing options and how to apply. Find your local HCEC at: [masshousinginfo.org/regional-agencies](https://masshousinginfo.org/regional-agencies) or call 800-224-5124.

### Other Helpful Resources

- **Community Action Agencies** ([www.masscap.org](http://www.masscap.org)) may be able to provide an advocate
- **Independent Living Centers (for people with disabilities)** may be able to provide an advocate see: [masilc.org/findacenter](https://masilc.org/findacenter) or call 508-620-7452 (Voice/TTY)
- **Housing Navigator Massachusetts** ([search.housingnavigatorma.org/](https://search.housingnavigatorma.org/)) a searchable database of income-restricted rentals
- **Find a Local Housing Authority at:** [hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/](https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/)

### Financial Eligibility

You may qualify if you fall in the “Extremely Low Income” level for Area Median Income Search for the 2023 limits based on where you live at:

[huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2022/2022summary.odn](https://huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2022/2022summary.odn)

Some programs can help people at the higher incomes listed.

### Priorities and Preferences

**There are long waitlists for all types of subsidized and affordable housing** in the area. If you qualify, a **priority and/or a preference** (sometimes called “emergency housing”) **may move you up a waitlist more quickly**, or get you on to a waitlist that is otherwise closed. **They do NOT get you immediate housing. Ask about preferences at each place you apply.**

### Tips

- **Unfortunately, there is no single place to apply for all subsidized housing options, but don’t be discouraged.** Know that applying will take effort and patience. Try to remember that the more waitlists you get your name on, the greater your chances of finding affordable housing in a timely manner.
- **Keep track of where you apply and let them know if you move or your situation changes.** You should give your new address to every place you applied to avoid missing an offer or being removed from their waitlist. If you may now be eligible for a preference it isn’t too late to apply- ask them how.
- **Prepare for an offer.** Contact an advocate if you have a criminal record, have credit problems, or have had problems with a previous landlord.
- **Non-Citizens:** see [masslegalhelp.org/housing/eligibility](https://masslegalhelp.org/housing/eligibility) or ask your social worker for our additional handout- **Supplement: Options for Non-Citizens.**