

Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)

Line Item # 7004-9030

The Alternative Housing Voucher Program provides mobile housing vouchers to individuals with disabilities under 60 years old who qualify for Chapter 667. In 1995, when the program was first launched, there were 800 vouchers. Now there are only 475. Living in the community of our choice is a fundamental civil right that non-disabled people often take for granted. AHVP ensures people with disabilities can live independently in their own homes, rather than facing the impossible choice between homelessness and institutionalization.

AHVP works to keep people housed. All contacted housing authorities reported that, once someone gets a voucher and is able to find an apartment with it, they stay there long-term. Housing Authorities reported that waiting lists were so long because vouchers only become available when people die or no longer need the voucher. In fact, it is the program's success in keeping people housed that contributes to its long waiting lists.

The Problem:

- As of March 2017, **1,440 adults with disabilities are currently on the waiting list for an AHVP voucher** in 14 of the 23 issuing Public Housing Authorities.
- Those waiting can expect to spend **over 5 years** waiting for housing assistance.
- People with disabilities are **more than twice as likely** as the nondisabled population to experience homelessness, and are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing housing insecurity.
- Having **stabilized housing is the most important factor in someone staying healthy**, something especially true for people with disabilities.
- There are **numerous people currently stuck in institutional settings** like nursing homes who could utilize AHVP to regain their independence.

DHCD has committed to raising the rental ceiling, stabilizing voucher holders whose situations had become dire in our current rental market. They expect all vouchers will be leased shortly. Increased funding for AHVP will allow people with disabilities to escape from homelessness, abusive and unsafe situations, and institutions that they are trapped in for lack of access to stable, affordable, accessible housing.

The Solution:

Increase funding for line-item #7004-9030 to \$7.7 million. This will:

- Assist people with disabilities secure long-term, stable housing.
- Give people with disabilities the tools they need to escape homelessness, substandard housing, and abusive situations, take care of their own health, and contribute to their communities.
- Allow people in nursing homes to regain their freedom by moving them back into their communities so they can contribute and live full, meaningful lives.

Please contact Shaya French (sfrench@bostoncil.org) or Lenny Somervell (lsomervell@dpcma.org) with any questions.

Organizational Sponsors:

Ad Lib, Inc.

AIDS Action Committee

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center

Boston Center for Independent Living

Cape Organization for the Rights of the Disabled

Center for Living and Working, Inc.

Citizens Housing and Planning Association

City of Boston Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Disability Policy Consortium

Easter Seals of Massachusetts

Homes for Families

Independent Living Center of the North Shore and Cape Ann, Inc.

Independence Associates

Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless

MassADAPT

Multi-Cultural Independent Living Center of Boston

North East Independent Living Program, Inc.

Somerville Homelessness Coalition

Stavros



After 3 years in nursing home care, Sue O'Brien was able to transition into her own subsidized apartment in time to celebrate Christmas 2014 with her family.

Increasing AHVP funding will stabilize individuals and communities throughout Massachusetts.

