



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ♦ Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor ♦ Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary

HomeBASE Program

Notice 2012-01

TO: HomeBASE Administering Agencies
CC: EA Shelter Providers
FROM: Lizbeth Heyer, Associate Director, Division of Public Housing & Rental Assistance
Robert Pulster, Associate Director, Division of Housing Stabilization
RE: **Universal Waiver of HomeBASE Regulations, Appropriate Size Guidelines**
DATE: March 8, 2012

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "H. B. G.", located to the right of the "FROM:" line.

This notice provides guidance on implementation of the Universal Waiver on Bedroom/Unit size requirements (UW-6) in HomeBASE.

Waiver Language (UW-6 attached)

Pursuant to 760 CMR § 65.08, for ease of implementation of the HomeBASE program and to further the fundamental principles of the HomeBASE program, anything to the contrary in 760 CMR Ch. 65 notwithstanding, the provision of 760 CMR § 65.02, *appropriate unit size* providing guidelines for the number of occupants in each bedroom shall be waived in all circumstances, subject to following proviso: Instead of meeting the bedroom occupancy guidelines as stated in 760 CMR § 65.02, an appropriate size unit may meet the following alternative bedroom occupancy guidelines:

- (1) The head of household shall share a bedroom with (i) his/her spouse, (ii) the person with whom the head of household is involved as a couple in an inter-dependent relationship that is intended to be long-term, or (iii) the person who is the other biological or adoptive parent of a child in the family, if any.
- (2) All remaining family members will be allocated one bedroom per two family members, regardless of sex, age, or relationship of these family members, except that no person over the age of 10 shall share a bedroom with another person of the opposite gender.
- (3) Exceptions may be made for medical reasons upon presentation of reasonable documentation of the medical need for a different arrangement on the letterhead of a health care professional and signed by such professional.

Implementation

Please distribute this notice and waiver to all staff and subcontractors as soon as possible. This will reduce the need for submitting individual waivers to DHCD.

Please Note: This universal waiver is for unit size requirements only. This does not waive any requirements related to FMR. Individual waivers will still need to be submitted for any units with gross rents (contract rent + utility allowance) over 100% FMR.

DHCD also wants to emphasize that the original unit size requirements in 760 CMR 65 are still acceptable to use. This waiver eases some of the restrictions of those requirements, but HomeBASE agencies can now place families in accordance with either set of guidelines. It is also important to note that this waiver will result in larger unit sizes for HomeBASE units. It is expected that rents will also be more expensive for larger units. DHCD expects HBAs and subcontractors to be having conversations about housing affordability with HomeBASE families. The families should be searching for and moving into apartments that they reasonably believe will be affordable to the family after the HomeBASE assistance ends.

Examples of New Unit Size Requirements under UW-6

Example 1

A HB approved household is composed of the following:

Head of Household, 24 F; Spouse of HoH, 32 M; child, 3 M; child, 6 F

This family would have been eligible for a one-bedroom under the HomeBASE regulations. This waiver allows for a two bedroom unit for this family. The children will share one bedroom and the HoH and spouse will share another.

Example 2

A HB approved household is composed of the following:

Head of Household, 38 M; child, 4 F; child 11 M

This family would have been eligible for a two-bedroom under the HomeBASE regulations. This waiver allows for a three-bedroom unit for this family. The Head of Household receives his own bedroom. The children each receive their own room because the boy is over 10 years old, therefore, does not need to share a room with another child of the opposite gender.

Example 3

A HB approved household is composed of the following:

Head of Household, 23 F, 6 months pregnant; no other children

This family would have been eligible for a one-bedroom under the HomeBASE regulations. This waiver allows for a two-bedroom for the family. Once the baby is born, it will have its own room. This is to prevent any unnecessary moves midway through the program. DHCD expects that this situation will be fairly uncommon.

Example 4

A HB approved household is composed of the following:

Head of Household, 23 F, 6 months pregnant; child, 5 F

This family would have been eligible for a one-bedroom under the HomeBASE regulations. This waiver allows for a two-bedroom for the family. Once the baby is born, it will share a room with the other child.



**Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
Division of Public Housing and Rental Assistance**

To: Rental Assistance Staff & HomeBASE Administering Agencies
From: Lizbeth Heyer, Associate Director
Date: March 8, 2012
RE: UW-6, Universal Waiver of HomeBASE Regulations, Appropriate Unit Size Guidelines

Pursuant to 760 CMR § 65.08, for ease of implementation of the HomeBASE program and to further the fundamental principles of the HomeBASE program, anything to the contrary in 760 CMR Ch. 65 notwithstanding, the provision of 760 CMR § 65.02, *appropriate unit size* providing guidelines for the number of occupants in each bedroom shall be waived in all circumstances, subject to following proviso: Instead of meeting the bedroom occupancy guidelines as stated in 760 CMR § 65.02, an appropriate size unit may meet the following alternative bedroom occupancy guidelines:

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- (3) Exceptions may be made for medical reasons upon presentation of reasonable documentation of the medical need for a different arrangement on the letterhead of a health care professional and signed by such professional.

This universal waiver shall be in effect until further notice by the Department.