



PHA Profile: Boston Housing Authority Flexible Application Appointment Times Housing Choice Voucher Program

Basic PHA Stats

Location: Boston, Massachusetts
Housing Choice Vouchers: 14,015
Public Housing Apartments: 10,409

Program Description

The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) has been working closely with a number of homeless advocacy agencies for many years. One partnership included establishing flexible appointment times for households who are homeless. BHA has set-aside blocks of time for housing advocates to come in with their clients during normal business hours to facilitate the application and screening process. In addition, BHA staff is as flexible as possible in scheduling individual appointments to accommodate the needs of clients and their advocates.

Motivation

BHA's Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting lists are open only to those persons who are considered Priority One, the majority of whom are homeless living in shelters. The BHA recognized the need for many of these applicants to have assistance during the application and screening process.

Resources Required

BHA says this type of cooperation between Housing Authorities and advocacy agencies only requires a willingness to work collaboratively. In fact, it ultimately saves staff time because it allows staff to more efficiently process applications and complete the screening process.

Challenges

The only real challenge is to get the word out and to find the right people in the agencies that can make it happen.

Rewards

The most rewarding experience is when BHA is able to successfully house an individual or family. BHA has found that those individuals and families that receive assistance before and after being housed are the most successful in remaining permanently housed.

Partners

BHA's partners include homeless shelters, housing advocacy agencies, and managements companies.

No Documentation Changes Were Made.

Words of Wisdom from Boston

"We have found the more open the communication is with the housing community the better results we see when trying to screen persons for eligibility. PHAs should educate the housing advocacy agencies in your area as to what documents you require and what a client should expect at a screening appointment. The more information you can share regarding the process the better your outcomes will be."

Contact Person for PHAs Interested in Implementing a Similar Program

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