

SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

FAIR HOUSING MARKETING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Somerville Housing Authority (“SHA”), its Board, and staff are responsible for implementing federal and state civil rights laws that affect the admission, occupancy, and procurement of services for the SHA. When developing, marketing, or leasing units, the following Fair Housing Marketing Plan applies.

I. FEDERAL FAIR HOUSING LAWS¹

A. [The Fair Housing Act \(Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968\)](#)

- i. As amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings based on race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, or disability.

B. [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)

- i. Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.²

C. [Age Discrimination Act of 1975](#)

- i. Prohibits discrimination based on age in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
- ii. Exceptions may apply when age is used as part of criterion for a program that has a statutory age limit or is otherwise statutorily authorized.

D. [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

- i. As amended, prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

E. [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

- i. Prohibits discrimination against person with disabilities in all services, programs, and activities of state and local public entities.

F. [The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968](#)

- i. Requires buildings and facilities that are constructed by or on behalf of the United States, or leased by the United States, or buildings financed in whole

¹ This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. A brief summary is provided for each law. To access the full text of a particular law, click the embedded URL.

² “Program or activity” under Title VI, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Age Discrimination Act noted above means “all the operations” of the covered recipient of federal financial assistance.

or in part by a grant or loan made by the United States, to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

II. MASSACHUSETTS FAIR HOUSING LAW

A. M.G.L. c. 151B

- i. Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, age, ancestry, genetic information, veteran/military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, presence of children, disability or receipt of public assistance, including housing subsidies in the sale, rental, or lease of covered dwelling units, including publicly assisted dwelling units.

B. Massachusetts Equal Rights Law (M.G.L. c. 93, § 102)

- i. Provides that all persons within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, regardless of sex, race, color, creed, or national origin, shall have equal rights to make and enforce contracts, and to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property.

C. Article CXIV of the Massachusetts Constitution

- i. Provides that “no otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely on the reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity within the Commonwealth.”

D. M.G.L. c 121B, § 32

- i. Prohibits discrimination and segregation in SHA-operated housing on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, blindness or physical handicap.

III. FAIR HOUSING MARKETING PLAN

This Fair Housing Marketing Plan (“FHMP”) is adopted in accordance with the federal and state laws listed above, as well as state-aided public housing regulations at [760 CMR 4.07](#). Pursuant to 760 CMR 4.07, the SHA shall biennially determine whether the percentage for each minority group in the SHA’s housing by program (i.e., elderly/handicapped program and family program) is significantly below³ the percentage for the minority⁴ group in the city or town or in the general population of the applicable metropolitan statistical area (“MSA”), whichever is greater, and, if so, shall update and implement this FHMP to ensure affirmative outreach to the minority group.

³ For this purpose, “significantly below” means that the percentage for each minority group in the SHA’s housing for a given program is at least one percentage point below the percentage for the minority group in the city or town or in the general population of the applicable MSA, whichever is greater. For example, Asian households comprise 5% of residents in the SHA’s Chapter 667 housing, but 6% or more of the population in the city or town or the applicable MSA, whichever is greater, the percentage in the SHA’s housing would be deemed “significantly below”.

⁴ “Minority” has the meaning assigned to it in 760 CMR 5.03: *Definitions*.

The SHA has an ongoing responsibility to ensure that people in the local city or town, the primary MSA, and the communities from which applicants have historically applied for housing are aware of the availability of units and given an opportunity to apply. The SHA shall initiate a marketing effort whenever any of the following situations occur:

- a. the SHA has any minority group among its tenant population that is significantly below the percentage for the minority group in the City of Somerville or in the general population of the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy MSA, whichever is greater.
- b. the waiting list, including available MRVP vouchers, is less than the number of applicants anticipated to be placed in the next 12 months;⁵
- c. applications for new programs or units will be accepted; or
- d. the overall minority household population (where at least one household member is a minority) is less than the SHA’s Affirmative Action Goal adopted pursuant to 760 CMR 5.10(3).

IV. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CITY OF SOMERVILLE AND MSA

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development/American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau), 2014-2019

Percentage of Somerville that is:

Black or African American:	5.6 %
Asian:	10.1 %
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander:	0.0 %
American Indian or Alaskan Native:	0.1 %
Hispanic/Latino:	12.3 %

Percentage of Boston-Cambridge-Quincy MSA that is:

Black or African American:	8.2 %
Asian:	8.4 %
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander:	0.0 %
American Indian or Alaskan Native:	0.1 %
Hispanic/Latino:	11.9 %

⁵ Marketing of MRVP PBV waiting lists administered by SHAs will include postings with Housing Navigator at <https://www.housingnavigatorma.org/>.

Percentage of SHA elderly/handicapped tenant population that is:

Black or African American:	26.5 %
Asian:	9.6 %
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander:	0.0 %
American Indian or Alaskan Native:	0.7 %
Hispanic/Latino:	17.6 %

Percentage of SHA family tenant population that is:

Black or African American:	28.0 %
Asian:	5.3 %
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander:	0.0 %
American Indian or Alaskan Native:	0.0 %
Hispanic/Latino:	41.6 %

V. MARKETING CONTENT – GENERALLY

- A.** Marketing for SHA units, as well as for the SHA as a whole, will provide information, maximum opportunity, and otherwise attract eligible persons protected under federal and state fair housing laws who are less likely to apply.
- B.** When undertaking marketing efforts, the SHA shall utilize the following advertising methods:
 - i.** Advertisements will be posted on the SHA’s website, www.sha-web.org, and social media accounts. Social media postings will be made in all threshold languages, as determined by the SHA’s Language Access Plan adopted pursuant to 760 CMR 4.02(1)(e).
 - ii.** Advertisements will be shared with the local fair housing commission, area religious institutions, local and regional housing agencies, civic groups, social services agencies, and other local community organizations, including:
 - Community Action Agency of Somerville
 - Somerville Homeless Coalition
 - The Welcome Project
 - City of Somerville Council on Aging
 - Somerville Cambridge Elderly Services
 - Community Action Agency of Somerville
 - Cambridge and Somerville Program (CASPAR)

- Respond
- Cross Street Family Shelter
- Salvation Army
- Somerville Community Corporation
- Cambridge and Somerville Health Alliance
- Visiting Nurse Association
- Senior and Disabled Door-to-Door Service (SCM)

iii. Advertisements may be placed in the digital or print versions of local and regional newspapers, including:


- Bay State Banner
- Sampan Newspaper
- Somerville Times
- Somerville News Weekly
- El Mundo

iv. Advertisements may be placed in the print versions of non-English publications (in the language of the publication) based on the prevalence of particular language groups in the regional area, including but not limited to non-English publications:

- El Mundo
- Sampan
- Brazilian Times
- El Planeta
- Vocero Hispano
- El Pueblo Latino
- O Jornal
- Thang Long

C. All materials being used for advertisements should direct potential applicants to the online application at CHAMP and indicate that paper applications may be downloaded and printed out from the DHCD website or picked up at the management office of any local housing authority. Applicants may also request that an SHA send them an application by mail.

D. Application information must also include a statement regarding the SHA's obligation not to discriminate in the selection of applications.

- E.** The size of the advertisements, including the content of the advertisement, as well as the dates of the advertising, will be comparable across regional, local, and minority newspapers.
- F.** The local residency preference will not be advertised so as not to discourage non-local potential applicants.
- G.** The Fair Housing logo () and slogan (“Equal Housing Opportunity”) will be included in all marketing materials. All marketing will be comparable in terms of the description of the opportunity available and the dates of marketing, regardless of the marketing type (e.g., local newspaper vs. minority newspaper).
- H.** All marketing will offer reasonable accommodations in the application process.

VI. SPECIAL EFFORTS TO ATTRACT MINORITY APPLICANTS

- A.** The SHA may utilize additional marketing efforts by targeting organizations from the following list to attract applicants from members of underrepresented minority groups to ensure affirmative outreach to under-represented minority groups identified in accordance with 760 CMR 4.07. Organizations that the SHA may utilize to recruit underrepresented minority groups include: the Asian American Civic Association, Asian American Development Corporation, Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, Casa Esperanza, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, Catholic Charities Haitian Multi-Service Center, La Alianza Hispana, Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs, METCO, Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness, Massachusetts Office on Refugees and Immigrants, NAACP, Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center, Somali Development Center, Vietnamese American Initiative for Development (VietAID), etc.

VII. OUTREACH EFFORTS TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- A.** The SHA will provide information on all SHA public housing accessible units with Housing Navigator, www.housingnavigatorma.org, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 151B. Additionally, the SHA is updating its website to include a list of accessible units by development.
- B.** All marketing will offer reasonable accommodations in the application process. The SHA will also provide application materials in alternative formats, engage in alternative means of communication through auxiliary aids and services, and/or provide assistance with the application process as necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities are reasonably accommodated and have equally effective access to the SHA’s programs.

VIII. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Marketing informational materials will provide notice of free language assistance to applicants, translated into the languages of Limited English Proficiency (“LEP”) populations anticipated to apply in accordance with the SHA’s Language Access Plan.

VIII. MARKETING TIMELINE

- A.** All advertisements will run annually a minimum of two times. The first set of advertisements will run as soon as possible after the SHA determines that marketing efforts are necessary. The second set of advertisements will begin running at least thirty (30) days after the end of the first set of advertisements.
- B.** All advertisements will be designed to attract attention.

IX. PLANS FOR CORRECTING NEGATIVE PROCEDURES OR POLICIES

- A.** The SHA annually examines its programs, proposed programs, and policies to identify any impediments to fair housing choice within those programs; addresses those impediments in a reasonable fashion in view of the resources available; works with the local jurisdiction to implement any of the jurisdiction’s initiatives to affirmatively further fair housing; and assures that its policies are consistent with 2 CFR 903.7(o) and 760 CMR 5.10(3).