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 743. Living in the community of our choice is a fundamental civil right that non-disabled people 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 finds an apartment with a voucher, they stay there long-term. Waiting lists were so long because vouchers rarely turn over. The program’s success in keeping people housed that contributes to long waiting lists.

The Problem:

- As of March 2019, **1,779 adults with disabilities are currently on the waiting list for an AHVP voucher** in 17 of the 25 issuing Public Housing Authorities. This does not include numbers from housing authorities that use a master wait-list for multiple programs.

- Those waiting can expect to spend, on average, **over 5 years** waiting for housing assistance. Some individuals have been waiting for as long as 13 years.

- 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.

- **Numerous people currently stuck in institutional settings** like nursing homes could use AHVP to regain their independence.

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. In addition to there being too few vouchers, the voucher values are too low in many places. Long-time voucher holders are facing eviction as rent skyrockets and new voucher holders struggle, and often fail, to find any apartment within the rental ceiling of their vouchers. **88% of surveyed housing authorities cited the low ceiling rents as AHVP’s biggest barrier to success.**

The Solution:

**Increase funding for line-item #7004-9030 to $12 million.** This will:

- Put us on track for clearing the waiting list in 5-10 years.
- 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 homes.

Please contact Shaya French (sfrench@bostoncil.org) or Lenny Somervell (lsomervell@dpcma.org) with any questions.
communities so they can contribute and live full, meaningful lives.

**Organizational Sponsors:**

- Ad Lib, Inc.
- 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
- Commonwealth Care Alliance
- Disability Policy Consortium
- Easter Seals of Massachusetts
- Disability Resource Center
- Independence Associates
- Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
- MassADAPT
- Metrowest Center for Independent Living
- North East Independent Living Program, Inc.
- Stavros