



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 146

February Session, 2024



AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND OTHER HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAMS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 8-345 of the 2024 supplement to the general statutes
2 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
3 *October 1, 2024*):

4 (a) As used in this chapter:

5 (1) "Certificate holder" means any individual or family who has been
6 issued a rental assistance certificate by the commissioner pursuant to the
7 rental assistance program;

8 (2) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Housing;

9 (3) "Housing" or "housing unit" means any house or building, or
10 portion thereof, which is occupied, designed to be occupied, or rented,
11 leased or hired out to be occupied, exclusively as a home or residence of
12 one or more persons; and

13 (4) "Low-income family" means an individual or family whose
14 income does not exceed fifty per cent of the median family income for
15 the area of the state in which such family lives, as determined by the

16 commissioner.

17 [(a)] (b) The [Commissioner of Housing] commissioner shall
18 implement and administer [a program of rental] the rental assistance
19 program to provide assistance for low-income families living in, or
20 seeking to live in, privately-owned rental housing. [For the purposes of
21 this section, a low-income family is one whose income does not exceed
22 fifty per cent of the median family income for the area of the state in
23 which such family lives, as determined by the commissioner.]

24 [(b) Housing] (c) To be eligible for participation in the program, a
25 housing unit shall [comply] be in compliance with any applicable state
26 and local health, housing, building and safety codes.

27 [(c)] (d) In addition to [an] a program element in which rental
28 assistance certificates are made available to qualified tenants, to be used
29 in any eligible housing [which] that such tenants are able to locate, the
30 program may include a housing support element in which rental
31 assistance for tenants is linked to participation by the property owner in
32 other municipal, state or federal housing repair, rehabilitation or
33 financing programs. The commissioner shall use rental assistance under
34 this section [so as] to encourage the preservation of existing housing and
35 the revitalization of neighborhoods or the creation of additional rental
36 housing.

37 [(d)] (e) The commissioner may designate a portion of the rental
38 assistance available under the program for tenant-based and project-
39 based supportive housing units. To the extent practicable, rental
40 assistance for supportive housing shall adhere to the requirements of
41 the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program, 42 USC 1437f(o), relative
42 to calculating the tenant's share of the rent to be paid.

43 [(e)] (f) The commissioner shall administer the program under this
44 section to promote housing choice for certificate holders and encourage
45 racial and economic integration.]

46 (f) The commissioner shall affirmatively seek to expend all funds

47 appropriated for the program on an annual basis without regard to any
48 population limitation established in prior years. The commissioner shall
49 establish maximum rent levels for each municipality or, at the discretion
50 of the commissioner, zip code area, in a manner that promotes the use
51 of the program in all municipalities. Any certificate issued pursuant to
52 this section may be used for housing in any municipality in the state.
53 The commissioner shall inform certificate holders that a certificate may
54 be used in any municipality and, to the extent practicable, the
55 commissioner shall assist certificate holders in finding housing in the
56 municipality of their choice.

57 (g) A certificate holder shall have a maximum period of one year from
58 the date of issuance of such certificate to locate suitable housing for
59 which to use such certificate, provided the commissioner may, upon a
60 finding of good cause, extend the maximum effective period of any such
61 certificate by an additional one hundred eighty days.

62 (h) If the commissioner requires an inspection of a housing unit in
63 order to determine whether such housing unit is eligible for
64 participation in the program, such inspection shall be conducted not
65 more than five business days after a certificate holder submits a request
66 for the approval of such unit to the commissioner. The commissioner
67 shall send written notice containing the date of any such inspection to
68 both the owner of the housing unit and the certificate holder. If the
69 commissioner denies such approval after an inspection because of
70 defects in such unit, and the owner of such unit certifies in writing to
71 the commissioner that such defects have been corrected, the
72 commissioner shall conduct a reinspection of such unit not later than
73 three business days after receipt of such certification from the owner.

74 (i) The commissioner shall commence payments to the owner of an
75 eligible housing unit pursuant to the program not more than ten days
76 after the commencement of a tenancy in such unit by a certificate holder
77 under this section.

78 (j) Not later than June 1, 2026, the commissioner shall create an online

79 tool accessible to the public on the Internet web site of the Department
80 of Housing that allows for (1) the calculation of the maximum allowable
81 rent, including any utility allowance, that an owner of a housing unit
82 may charge a certificate holder based on such unit's location and
83 physical characteristics, and (2) an estimate of the monthly rental
84 assistance that would be paid by the commissioner for such unit based
85 upon a monthly rent price and a calculation of a certificate holder's
86 projected contribution.

87 (k) The commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance with the
88 provisions of chapter 54, to implement the use of electronic signatures
89 or electronic submissions of any applications, approvals, reports or
90 other agreements required for the administration of the program. Until
91 any such regulations are adopted, the commissioner shall accept any
92 electronic signature or electronic submission of any applications,
93 approvals, reports or other agreements required for the administration
94 of the program.

95 [(f)] (l) Nothing in this section shall give any person a right to
96 continued receipt of rental assistance at any time that the program is not
97 funded.

98 [(g)] (m) The commissioner shall adopt regulations in accordance
99 with the provisions of chapter 54 to carry out the purposes of this
100 section. The regulations shall establish maximum income eligibility
101 guidelines for such rental assistance and criteria for determining the
102 amount of rental assistance [which] that shall be provided to eligible
103 families.

104 [(h)] (n) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the commissioner or
105 the commissioner's agent pursuant to the program under this section
106 shall have the right to a hearing in accordance with the provisions of
107 section 8-37gg.

108 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2024*) (a) As used in this section:

109 (1) "Certificate holder" means any individual or family who has been

110 issued a rental assistance certificate by the commissioner pursuant to the
111 rental assistance program established pursuant to chapter 138a of the
112 general statutes;

113 (2) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Housing;

114 (3) "Housing" means any house or building, or portion thereof, which
115 is occupied, designed to be occupied, or rented, leased or hired out to
116 be occupied, exclusively as a home or residence of one or more persons;

117 (4) "Housing voucher" means any assistance issued to an individual
118 or a family pursuant to a housing voucher program;

119 (5) "Housing voucher holder" means any person or family entitled to
120 participate in any housing voucher program other than the rental
121 assistance program;

122 (6) "Housing voucher program" means any housing voucher
123 program, including any portion of the federal Housing Choice Voucher
124 Program, that is administered in whole or in part by the commissioner;

125 (7) "Low-income family" means an individual or family whose
126 income does not exceed fifty per cent of the median family income for
127 the area of the state in which such family lives, as determined by the
128 commissioner; and

129 (8) "Rental assistance program" or "program" means the rental
130 assistance program established by the commissioner pursuant to
131 chapter 138 of the general statutes.

132 (b) The commissioner shall administer the rental assistance program
133 established pursuant to chapter 138a of the general statutes, and any
134 other housing voucher program, to promote housing choice for
135 certificate holders and housing voucher holders and to encourage racial
136 and economic integration.

137 (c) Not less than annually, the commissioner shall undertake an

138 assessment, based on statistically representative rental housing survey
139 data selected by the commissioner, to determine if maximum rent
140 amounts provided for in the rental assistance program established
141 pursuant to chapter 138a of the general statutes, or other housing
142 voucher programs administered in whole or in part by the
143 commissioner, are sufficient to provide certificate holders and housing
144 voucher holders with housing opportunities in each municipality or zip
145 code in the state. If the commissioner finds such maximum rent amounts
146 are insufficient for such purpose, the commissioner shall adjust such
147 maximum rent levels so that such rent levels are sufficient for such
148 purpose. Such assessment shall be made publicly available on the
149 Internet web site of the Department of Housing.

150 (d) Any certificate issued pursuant to chapter 138a of the general
151 statutes, and to the extent permissible by federal law, as applicable, any
152 housing voucher, may be used for housing in any municipality in the
153 state. The commissioner shall inform certificate holders and housing
154 voucher holders that a certificate or housing voucher may be used in
155 any municipality and, to the extent practicable, the commissioner shall
156 assist certificate holders and housing voucher holders in finding
157 housing in the municipality of their choice.

158 (e) The commissioner shall administer the program in a manner that
159 ensures that no certificate holder or housing voucher holder be
160 displaced as a result of the application of the provisions of subsection (f)
161 of section 8-345 of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

162 (f) The commissioner shall adopt regulations in accordance with the
163 provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes to carry out the purposes
164 of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2024	8-345
Sec. 2	October 1, 2024	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(a)(3), "or "housing unit"" was added for clarity, Section 3(c) was rewritten for clarity and in Section 3(e), "such a way" was changed to "in a manner" for clarity.

HSG *Joint Favorable Subst.*