

HOUSE No. 1305

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Adrian C. Madaro

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act codifying the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>
<i>Joseph A. Boncore</i>	<i>First Suffolk and Middlesex</i>
<i>Harriette L. Chandler</i>	<i>First Worcester</i>
<i>Tommy Vitolo</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>
<i>John J. Lawn, Jr.</i>	<i>10th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kevin G. Honan</i>	<i>17th Suffolk</i>
<i>Carlos Gonzalez</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>Michael J. Barrett</i>	<i>Third Middlesex</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Jay D. Livingstone</i>	<i>8th Suffolk</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Daniel R. Cullinane</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>

<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>
<i>Russell E. Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>
<i>Daniel J. Hunt</i>	<i>13th Suffolk</i>
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>
<i>Diana DiZoglio</i>	<i>First Essex</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>
<i>Paul J. Donato</i>	<i>35th Middlesex</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Peter Capano</i>	<i>11th Essex</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>
<i>Chynah Tyler</i>	<i>7th Suffolk</i>
<i>Brian W. Murray</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>
<i>Paul W. Mark</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>

HOUSE No. 1305

By Mr. Madaro of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1305) of Adrian C. Madaro and others relative to the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program. Housing.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act codifying the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 121B of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

2 Section 61. (a) The department shall, subject to appropriation, establish and administer
3 through administering agencies ,the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program also known as
4 MRVP, a program of rental assistance for eligible low-income, very low-income, and extremely
5 low-income households through mobile and project-based vouchers for the purpose of obtaining
6 decent, stable, and affordable housing and promoting economically mixed housing.

7 (b) To be eligible to receive assistance under this section, a household shall have a net
8 income that does not exceed 80 percent of the area median income, as determined by the U.S.
9 Department of Housing and Urban Development. The department may award mobile vouchers to
10 eligible households occupying MRVP project-based units that shall expire due to the nonrenewal
11 of project-based rental assistance contracts. Households shall meet eligibility requirements as
12 required in this section and applicable regulations and guidance issued by the department. Not

13 less than 75 percent of the vouchers shall be targeted to households whose income at initial
14 occupancy does not exceed 30 percent of the area median income.

15 (c) A payment standard is the amount used by an administering agency to calculate the
16 maximum amount of the MRVP subsidy. Except as provided under paragraph (d), the payment
17 standard for each size of a dwelling unit in a market area shall not exceed 110 percent of the fair
18 market rent, or Small Area Fair Market Rent as established annually by the U.S. Department of
19 Housing and Urban Development, for the same size of dwelling unit in the same market area and
20 shall be not less than 100 percent of that fair market rent, except that no administering agency
21 shall be required as a result of a reduction in the fair market rent to reduce the payment standard
22 applied to a household continuing to reside in a unit for which the household was receiving
23 assistance under this section at the time the fair market rent was reduced. The department shall
24 allow administering agencies to request exception payment standards within fair market rental
25 areas subject to criteria and procedures established by the department.

26 (d) The department may require an administering agency to submit the payment standard
27 of the administering agency to the department for approval, if the payment standard is less than
28 100 percent of the fair market rent or exceeds 110 percent of the fair market rent, except that an
29 administering agency may establish a payment standard of not more than 120 percent of the fair
30 market rent where necessary as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability,
31 without approval of the department. An administering agency may use a payment standard that is
32 greater than 120 percent of the fair market rent as a reasonable accommodation for a person with
33 a disability, but only with the approval of the department. In connection with the use of any
34 increased payment standard established or approved pursuant to either of the preceding two
35 sentences as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability, the department may not

36 establish additional requirements regarding the amount of adjusted income paid by such person
37 for rent.

38 (e) A household that receives tenant-based assistance under this section, with respect to
39 any dwelling unit, shall not pay for rent more than forty per cent of the monthly adjusted net
40 income of the household. The department may adjust household rent for those paying separately
41 for utilities.

42 (f) The rent for dwelling units for which a housing assistance payment contract is
43 established under this subsection shall be reasonable in comparison with rents charged for
44 comparable dwelling units in the private, unassisted local market.

45 (g) For each dwelling unit for which a housing assistance payment contract is established
46 under this section, the administering agency shall inspect the unit before any assistance payment
47 is made to determine whether the dwelling unit meets the minimum standards of fitness for
48 human habitation as required by the State Sanitary Code. These requirements cannot be waived.
49 Each administering agency providing assistance under this section shall, for each assisted
50 dwelling unit, make inspection not less often than biennially during the term of the housing
51 assistance payments contract for the unit to determine whether the unit is maintained in
52 accordance with the requirements of this paragraph.

53 (h) Effective as of January 1, 2021, the monthly administrative fee for all vouchers
54 administered under this section shall be not less than \$80.00 per voucher, per month.

55 (i) The department shall maintain and administer a single voucher management system
56 and shall collect data on the utilization of rental vouchers in each fiscal year under this program.
57 This data shall include, but not be limited to, the location and value of each voucher-assisted

58 unit, the number and average value of mobile and project-based vouchers currently distributed in
59 the Commonwealth, in each county, and in each municipality, the household size, age of the
60 head of household and each member of the household, the race and ethnicity of each household,
61 the income and source of income of each household. The department shall report to the House
62 and Senate Committees on Ways and Means and Joint Committee on Housing annually on the
63 utilization of rental vouchers in each fiscal year under this program. The department shall collect
64 and report on the data collection as required under Chapter 334 of the Acts of 2006.

65 (j) The department shall promulgate regulations and guidance to implement this section.