

Westborough Housing Authority

2 Rogers Road

Westborough, MA 01581

Elderly/Handicap Resident Handbook



WESTBOROUGH HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESIDENT HANDBOOK

Welcome

Westborough Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners and the staff welcome you and your family to your new home. We are extremely proud of our housing complexes and the services provided to our residents. Our Authority has an excellent and well-trained staff to help you, the residents, in caring for your housing needs.

We intend this handbook to be a handy reference concerning the guidelines of this Authority along with various features of benefit to you. It should help answer some of your questions, however please feel free to contact the Housing Authority with any questions that you might have.

We are confident that you will enjoy living in one of our housing units and we will help you make this experience a positive one.

Who are we?

Westborough Housing Authority is a politic, corporate, and duly organized agency. The power of authority enabling Massachusetts State Public Housing Agencies to exist derives from Massachusetts general laws Chapter 121B and all of its enacted subsequent amendments.

As a public housing agency, we provide housing assistance to eligible and qualified applicants. Applicants must meet the income and eligibility criteria set forth by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), our state-funding agency.

The process begins by completing and signing an application. This process mandates that all members of a household eighteen years of age or older are subject to a criminal offenders record of information

(CORI). Once applicants are determined eligible and qualified, they are placed on a waiting list.

Massachusetts State Public Housing Authorities receive funding directly from the Department of Housing Community and Development (DHCD). This agency empowers the Authority to operate, manage, construct, modernize, and administer rules and regulations that they promulgate.

Westborough Housing Authority has a Board of Commissioners who oversees the financial administration and regulatory requirements of this Authority. Commissioners advocate for housing, set policy, and chart a direction of current and future housing programs.

Housing Authorities in Massachusetts either elect or appoint Commissioners based on their city or town charters. In this community, four members are elected and the Governor appoints the fifth member. All members serve for a term of five years.

As public officials, the Commissioners hold monthly meetings in the community room at 2 Rogers Road. These meetings must abide by the M.G.L. chapter 39, section 2 (b) of the open meeting law. Westborough Housing Authority posts all special, annual, and regular meetings with the Town Clerk and Westborough TV.

The Executive Director administers the ongoing day-to-day operation of the Authority. He or she is responsible for the administration, policies, regulations, rules, modernization, construction, direction and goals set by the Commissioners of the Authority. Each month the Executive Director reports the monthly activity to the Board of Commissioners at their board meeting.

The Executive Director and Board of Commissioners apply for different funding or grants, when available, for modernization, rental assistance, new construction, and any other funding available for the Housing Authority. Together they form a powerful

force by serving those who are in need of decent and safe housing.

**The Westborough Housing Authority's
Board of Commissioners and Staff:**

Board Member positions

Chair
Vice Chairman
Treasurer
Assistant Treasurer
Clerk

Management Staff

Executive Director
Housing Coordinator

Maintenance Staff

One full-time Maintenance Director
One full-time Maintenance/Groundskeeper/Custodian

General Information:

Westborough Housing Authority's Management Office is located at 2 Rogers Road, Westborough, and is opened from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The office is closed Friday.

Please call us at **(508) 366-1225** for any questions, help, routine, non-routine, and emergency maintenance calls. After business hours, the Authority has an answering service to receive calls. The only calls processed after hours are emergencies determined by the Executive Director. The office will handle all other calls when the office reopens. The Executive Director may charge residents for calls that the Maintenance Department responds to, determined not to be emergencies.

Residents Move in Checklist

1. Schedule appointment for lease signing and unit inspection
2. Review rent calculation forms
3. Review policies and handbook
4. Pay rent and receive keys
5. Schedule a mover for a new unit
6. Notify utility companies, if applicable, of shut off dates and the date and address where to begin service
7. Notify the post office of your change of address

General Information Numbers:

Westborough Police Department	(508) 366-3064
Police Emergency Calls	911
Westborough Fire Department	366-3040
Fire Emergency calls	911
Westborough Town Hall	366-3030
Senior Council on Aging	366-3000

Maintenance Repairs:

Repairs: What is a maintenance repair? A maintenance repair is a repair to the unit or structure that belongs to the Housing Authority. E.g., Leaking or dripping faucets, shower assemblies, toilet or sink problems, inoperable stoves, refrigerators, etc. As a new resident, maintenance repairs might be unfamiliar to you. Do not hesitate to contact the office for assistance. It is important that you understand what your responsibilities are concerning your unit.

Repair Process: How are repairs processed? **Residents must call repairs into the office for processing.** Residents may not give a specific time for repairs. Work orders will be processed and given to the Maintenance Department. All repairs will be done according to the priority and nature of the work required. Maintenance Department

will not work in any unit without a work order.

It is very important that when you place a request for maintenance, you give permission to enter the unit. Without permission, the Maintenance Department will not enter the unit and the work order will not be completed. One exception is section 4 (d) of the lease that states . . . the Authority will enter without permission, only, if there is an emergency and we cannot reach the Resident . . .

Recapping the work order system, Westborough Housing Authority will process all work orders according to priorities. We will give the work orders to the Maintenance Department for completion.

The office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and the answering service will take all calls after business hours. Emergency calls will be forwarded to the Maintenance Director for processing.

Emergency Call Procedure:

If you have a medical, police, or fire emergency, you need to contact 911 immediately.

The definition of a maintenance emergency is as follows: A condition that is immediately threatening to the life and safety of residents, staff, or structures.

The following is a list of emergencies that should be called out to maintenance for immediate repair: If you are unsure what to do, play it safe and call!! Daytime and after hours call the office number at 508-366-1225.

- Fires of any kind (Call 911)
- Gas leaks or Gas odor (Call 911)
- Electric power failures
- Electrical hazards, sparking outlets
- Broken water pipes or flooding
- No water or unsafe water
- Sewer or toilet blockage
- Roof leaks
- Lock outs
- Door or Window lock failure
- No heat
- No Hot water
- Dangerous structural conditions
- Inoperable Smoke or CO detectors, beeping or chirping detectors

Residents are not allowed to hire an outside vendor to work in a unit or work on Westborough Housing Authority property without express and written permission from the Authority. If a resident employs an outside vendor, the Authority will take immediate action for violation of the lease.

Utilities:

Utilities are according to the terms of the lease, section C (3).

Charges to Residents:

Broken windows and screens	actual cost
New locks and cylinders	actual cost
Lockout after hours and weekends	\$35.00
Lockout on holidays	\$50.00
Non-emergency maintenance calls	
After business, weekends, holidays	\$50.00
Additional keys	actual cost
Return check charge**	actual bank cost plus a \$25.00 processing fee
Broken doors (interior/exterior)	actual cost
Defacing/damaging property	actual cost
Lawns damaged by cars, bikes etc.	actual cost
Fire/Water damage by Resident	actual cost
Damage to unit by Resident	actual cost
Late rent fee	\$25.00

** Returned check policy: When the Authority receives two personal checks from the bank for insufficient funds or closed account; the Authority will no longer accept personal checks. Residents may pay by certified check or money order.

Insurance:

We strongly suggest that residents obtain a tenant/homeowners insurance policy. This will give broad coverage for personal property of the resident. Westborough Housing Authority is not responsible for any damage to the property of the resident.

Guest Policy:

We lease the unit to you and only those persons listed on the lease. Per the terms of your lease, section B: Guests, it reads as follows:

Tenant and other household members may have guests provided that Tenant shall be responsible for the conduct of any guest while in the leased premises or on LHA property and shall take reasonable steps to supervise the conduct of any guest, including a guest of a household member. No guest may stay overnight (as defined in Section I) for more than a total of twenty-one (21) nights in any twelve (12) month period without LHA's written approval of a temporary extension of the guest's stay. Tenants shall not accept any compensation from the overnight guest for his or her stay in the leased premises. If notwithstanding adequate supervision, a guest behaves in a manner, which violates any of Tenants' Obligations set out in Section 1X, among its remedies LHA may require that Tenant take steps to insure that the individual involved shall not be a guest of Tenant or any household member again in the future. In addition, if a guest damages or destroys LHA property, among its remedies LHA may require that the Tenant shall pay the cost of repair or replacement.

Tenants shall notify LHA of the length of the stay of an overnight guest within a reasonable time following an overnight stay; such notice shall be confidential

and provided that the guest has not been barred from the premises and has not committed lease violations during his or her stay, the notice shall only be used by LHA for enforcement of the foregoing provision as to the permissible stay of a guest in the leased premises.

Each household member shall take reasonable steps to supervise the conduct of his or her guests. Failure of a household member to take such steps shall constitute good cause for LHA to request deletion of the household member from the lease in the manner provided in Section XI if his or her guest violates the provision of the lease and the violation constitutes cause for termination of the lease but LHA in its discretion does not seek such termination.

If an individual, whom the resident or a household member knows or should have known to have a history of serious crimes or of antisocial conduct is a guest of Tenant or the household member, this circumstance shall be deemed a lack of adequate supervision if the guest violates the provisions of the lease.

Monthly Rent:

According to the terms of your lease, it reads: . . . The resident agrees to pay monthly rent in advance, on or before the first calendar day of each month . . . Resident may pay monthly installments with permission of the Authority. The Authority accepts personal checks, money orders, and certified checks. If by the seventh of the month, we have not received rent, it will be considered delinquent. The Authority will begin the eviction process.

If resident fails to pay all or any part of their rent within thirty (30) days of its due date, the LHA by the DHCD policy will charge resident a \$25.00 late fee for each month that resident has a balance due.

If resident fails to pay all or any part of the rent within seven days of its due date, the LHA may declare the unpaid rent delinquent and issue a Notice to Quit.

Annual Rent Recertification:

DHCD requires that all public housing agencies determine eligibility, continued occupancy, and rent annually. We require residents to complete and furnish all information to the Authority within thirty days.

Each adult member of the household eighteen years of age or older or emancipated minor must sign the authorization forms to begin the verification process. Rent is based on the formulas determined by DHCD for elderly, disabled, and family residents.

Once the information is completed, the Authority will issue a notice of rent change showing the effective date and the new monthly rent.

Income Changes:

Residents must report at once any changes in income and the Authority will begin the verification with a new recertification process. Once it is completed, the Authority will notify resident that rent will either increase or decrease with a new effective date and amount.

Resident's Telephone Number:

In order for the Authority to contact a resident, they need the telephone number of residents. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of the resident, the Authority cannot give out this number to anyone. This number will be for business purposes only.

Inspections:

Move in: Westborough Housing Authority requires that new residents, together with a member of the Authority's staff, inspect the unit before signing the lease. If repairs are found during the inspection, the Authority will contact Maintenance. When the inspection is completed, both the Authority and the

resident sign the inspection forms.

Annual: We inspect all units annually. Residents receive a notice specifying the date and time of the inspections. If resident is unavailable at the time of inspection, they may appoint someone to represent them. It is important that someone represent the resident during the inspection, as once we have notified the resident the inspections will continue. After the inspection is completed, work orders will be prepared.

Move Out: Residents must give the Authority a written thirty-day notice, a requirement of the lease, when vacating a unit. We will schedule a move out inspection with the resident or a resident representative. They will review the unit with the Authority for any damages beyond reasonable wear and tear. The Authority will assess appropriate charges, if any.

Decorating Unit:

Westborough Housing Authority does not allow residents to paint or hang wallpaper; also we will not permit wallpaper borders or stenciling. The lease states ... No changes or alterations can be done to the unit ...

Residents cannot add additional phone lines or cable lines within the unit or on the property of the Authority. This includes the prohibition of satellite dishes and Verizon FIOS.

No exterior decorations may be placed on/or around the unit, e.g. flags, ornamental decorations and lights, etc.

Planting Policy:

At the Cedar Estates Complex, plants are to stay within the existing gardens. No plants or flowers should be taller than 24 inches. No bushes or shrubs will be planted by the tenants. Tenants must get

permission from the Housing Authority before planting.

At the Mayberry Court Complex, designated areas will be sectioned off 3 feet from the buildings on the courtyard side for plants and flowers. No plants or flowers should be taller than 24 inches. The ends of the buildings facing the parking lot will continue to be maintained by the tenants and they remain for flowers and existing plants and shrubs. The Westborough Housing Authority does not allow any decorative fencing or rocks around the flower beds. The Westborough Housing Authority will be responsible for the upkeep of the grounds around the courtyard sitting area, including trees, shrubs, and lawn care.

Wild Animal Feeding Policy:

Under no circumstance shall a tenant feed or shelter wild animals. This includes all wild animals such as, but not limited to turkeys, coyotes, fox, deer, raccoons, cats, pigeons, seagulls, squirrels, skunks, chipmunks, mice and rats. Throwing any type of food on the ground, roof, walkway or any other exterior common area is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to garbage, seeds, nuts, fruit, wild animal food, domestic animal food, bread, sandwiches or bird food. Wild animals may carry disease, rabies, and are a personal and structural nuisance and threat.

Snow Policy:

During snow storms, the Westborough Housing Authority makes every effort to clear walkways and parking lots in a timely manner. The Housing Authority will call tenants to clean and move their vehicles when they are ready. If the storm ends later in the day, we will wait until the next morning to have the cars moved. Tenant cooperation is necessary, thus we ask that all residents comply with the following:

1. Tenants who do not move their cars within a reasonable time after snow removal begins may find their cars unintentionally "plowed in." Please note that snow is generally much easier to move

immediately after a storm. Additionally, it is time consuming and a waste of resources to send workers back time and again to clean parking spaces. If a "snowed in" vehicle is a safety hazard and the tenant refuses to move it, the authority will have it towed at the owner's expense.

2. In an effort to assist tenants when "digging out" is necessary, staff members will plow as close as is safely possible to the rear end of parked cars. Please note, however, staff members are not permitted to drive or move tenant vehicles and also cannot "dig out" individual cars. Any tenant who is unable to "dig out" and move their cars after a snow storm should arrange for another person to do so. Similarly, tenants who plan to be away from the Authority during winter months should make arrangements for another person to move their car after snow storms. Tenants may not hire authority employees to perform any tasks.
3. Authority parking lots must be clear so that emergency vehicles can get through. If a tenant fails to move their car after a snow storm, the vehicle will be towed at the owner's expense.
4. The Authority needs and requests tenant cooperation and assistance during snow removal. As plowing often requires maintenance staff to work many overtime hours, please treat the workers with patience and respect.

Home Business in a Unit

The Westborough Housing Authority does not permit any home/office business run from their units. This includes a home daycare.

Parking:

Westborough Housing Authority requires that residents have insured and registered vehicles on the property of the Authority. We do not allow unregistered

vehicles on the property of the Authority anytime. The Authority will tow all unregistered cars at Resident expense. Only one vehicle is allowed per tenant.

Residents may not park any commercial or business vehicles on the property of the Authority at anytime.

The Housing Authority does not allow any ATVs, dirt bikes or snowmobiles to be driven or parked on Housing Authority property.

PET POLICY

Westborough Housing Authority has adopted a pet policy for elderly/disabled residents. All necessary paperwork is located in the office and pet owners must sign a pet lease rider and veterinarian form.

A companion animal consisting of a dog, cat, bird in a cage, and fish in an aquarium of no more than 20 gallons shall be allowed, but must be approved by the Authority's Executive Director.

The mature size of newly acquired dogs is limited to a weight of 20 lbs. Dogs of vicious or aggressive disposition will not be permitted. Due to the age and behavioral activities of puppies and kittens, application for ownership of such young animals shall be more closely reviewed prior to approval.

All female dogs over the age of six months and all female cats over the age of five months must be spayed. All male dogs over the age of eight months and all male cats over the age of ten months must be neutered. If health problems prevent such spaying or neutering, a veterinarian's certificate will be necessary to allow the pet to become a resident of the development and the exception will be at the Executive Director's discretion.

Management reserves the right to require dog owners to relocate to a comparable unit on the ground floor of their building based upon written complaints concerning: 1. the behavior of the dog in the

hallways, or 2. the documented medical conditions of tenants affected by the presence of the dog.

Tenant Obligations:

1. The Pet owner will be responsible for proper pet-care good nutrition, grooming exercise, flea control, routine veterinary care, and yearly inoculations. Dogs and cats must wear identifications tags and collar when outside unit.

2. The Pet owner is responsible for cleaning up after pet inside the apartment and anywhere on development property. Owners should carry a "pooper scooper" and disposable plastic bags when their pet is outside of the unit. All wastes will be bagged and disposed of in a receptacle determined by management. Toilets are not designed to handle pet litter. Under no circumstances should any pet debris be deposited in a toilet, as blockages will occur. Tenants will be responsible for the cost of repairs or replacements of any damaged toilet or pipes.

3. Pet blankets and bedding are not to be cleaned or washed in the laundry room for hygienic reasons.

4. The pet owner will keep the unit and hallways clean and free of pet odors, insect infestations, waste, and litter and maintain the unit in a sanitary condition at all times.

5. The Pet owner will restrain and prevent pet from gnawing, chewing, scratching, or otherwise defacing doors, walls, windows, and floor coverings of the unit, other units and common areas, as well as shrubs and landscaping of the facility.

6. Pets are not to be tied outside or left unattended in common areas.

7. Pet owners will agree to quarterly apartment inspections to be sure pets and units are being cared for properly. These inspections may be reduced or increase in time periods at the Executive Director's discretion.

8. The tenant is responsible for providing management with the following information and documents which are to be kept on file in the tenant's folder:

- a. color photo and identifying description of pet
- b. attending veterinarian's name, address and telephone number
- c. veterinary certificates of spaying or neutering, rabies distemper combination, parvovirus, feline VRC, feline leukemia testing and other inoculations when applicable
- d. dog licensing certificates in accordance with local and state law.
- e. two (2) alternate caretakers, their names, addresses, and telephone numbers, who are willing to assume immediate responsibility for the care of the pet should the owner become incapacitated; these caretakers must be verified in writing by signing the Lease Pet Rider, acknowledging their responsibilities as specified.
- f. The tenant is responsible for keeping management informed of any change of information.

Pet Participation Fee

1. A deposit of \$160.00 is required of each pet owner. This amount may be payable over a reasonable time period determined by the Executive Director. The Authority cannot require a tenant to pay all of the deposit before bringing in a pet. This payment will be implemented as a security deposit.

2. The deposit will be refunded at the time tenant vacates or no longer has ownership of the pet, provided that no pet related damage has been done to the property. Sums necessary to repair such damage will be deducted from the deposit.

3. A fee, in graduating amounts, not to exceed \$10.00, shall be collected from pet owners failing to

clean up after their animals.

Liability of Pet Owner for Damage or Injury

1. Repairing or replacing damaged areas of the exterior, interior, doors, walls, floor coverings, and fixtures in the unit, common areas or other areas damaged by tenant's pet.

2. Cleaning, deodorizing, and sanitizing carpeting and other floor coverings in the unit as necessitated by presence of pet.

3. Charges for damage will include materials and labor. Payment plans will be negotiated between management and the pet owner. Disputes concerning amount of damages are subject to the grievance procedures provided in E OCD regulations.

4. It is strongly recommended that the pet owner secure personal liability or other insurance and indemnify the LHA against pet related litigation or attorney's fees. LHA may require pet owners to secure liability insurance, if the Authority so elects, as a condition of pet ownership.

Lock Out Policy

To avoid delay in regaining entrance to your unit should you be locked out, we request that you leave an extra key with a relative, friend or neighbor. Should it be necessary for someone from the Authority to let you in after business hours and weekends there will be a charge of \$25.00, on holidays there will be a charge of \$50.00 that will be due and payable with your next month's rent.

Shed Policy

No tenant owned sheds are allowed on WHA property.

Candle Policy

No candles are allowed to be lit on Westborough Housing Authority property.

Solicitors

The Westborough Housing Authority does not allow canvassers, sales representatives, and solicitors to engage in any activity. These regulations are necessary for your safety. Never open the door to anyone you do not know.

Community Policy

Each development has a community room that can be used by Residents. Any Resident wishing to use the community room must inform the Executive Director. It is the responsibility of the Resident to maintain the community room in an orderly manner.

Washers/Dryers

There are washers and dryers in the community room for Residents only. Please be considerate of your neighbors by using one washer and one dryer at a time and remove your clothing promptly when done.

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