



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

BETH RUBENSTEIN
Acting Assistant City
Manager for Community
Development

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: ^{YBR} Beth Rubenstein, Acting Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

DATE: February 17, 1999

RE: Council Order # 029 dated 11/2/98 RE: Develop a
one-stop housing office for Cambridge residents

We are writing to report to you on the steps taken to date to explore the feasibility of developing a comprehensive one-stop housing office for Cambridge residents. This report, which is a follow-up to our original response dated July 22, 1998, offers recommendations for streamlining the process of resident access to affordable housing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

List of Housing Services

The City's Community Development Department (CDD) has developed a list of consumer resources that explains how to access affordable housing in Cambridge (see attached list). This list offers a convenient way for residents to find services and organizations to help them with their housing needs, whether they are looking for rental opportunities, homeownership options or have legal questions.

The Housing Services list will be distributed to all the affordable housing providers and organizations in the City, as well as in community locations such as City Hall, public libraries, MAPS, Concilio Hispano, East End House, Margaret Fuller House, Cambridge Community Center, neighborhood health centers and neighborhood youth centers.

Meeting of Housing Providers

A second initiative that the Community Development Department has undertaken is to convene a regular bi-monthly meeting of affordable housing providers in the City, beginning in March. Although the referral network between City and non-profit housing organizations is strong, this will formalize the process and offer a way to share information on a regular basis.

These meetings will provide the opportunity to: 1) coordinate efforts on providing housing referrals and to ensure that housing advocates are aware of available housing units throughout the City; 2) evaluate programs to avoid duplication of services and simplify the application processes; and 3) troubleshoot problems and address unmet needs in the community.

The list of meeting attendees will include, but not be limited to, the following organizations: Cambridge Housing Authority, MultiService Center, CASCAP, Homeowner's Rehab, Inc., Just A Start Corporation, Cambridge Economic Opportunity Council, Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services, Cambridge Community Development Department, and the Department of Human Services Program.

Case Management Services

The third initiative is to provide case management services for residents looking for affordable rental housing opportunities. The New Lease program, formerly operated by DHSP, offers a model for the effectiveness of this approach. Two organizations in the City currently offer these services to the most vulnerable and hard to house populations.

DHSP, through the Cambridge MultiService Center, (MSC), offers case management for residents in search of affordable housing. There are two case managers on staff at the MSC who provide housing search services. The MSC's primary clientele are homeless people, while their secondary clientele are the working poor, generally those with annual incomes at or below 50% of median. The MSC also offers a walk-in center that provides weekly apartment listings from the Boston Globe, and staff to teach people how to conduct their own housing search.

CASCAP, through its Housing Resource Team, also provides case management and housing search services for homeless individuals who are moving to permanent and independent living situations. In addition, they provide housing search support groups and referral to affordable housing programs.

Homeownership Programs

The Community Development Department essentially operates a One-Stop Housing Office for homeownership. The comprehensive services for low-income first-time homebuyers include classes on how to buy a home, a mailing list that informs interested buyers when units become available, special mortgage financing programs, subsidies to reduce the cost of the unit, and individual one-on-one counseling. Through this program, buyers are assisted during all phases of the buying process.

We believe that these four initiatives will ensure that residents are better informed about City housing programs and will provide a more streamlined application process, thereby making it easier for residents to access affordable housing.

In the meantime, please let us know if you have any questions or comments about this matter.

Attachment

HOUSING SERVICES IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

IF YOU NEED AN AFFORDABLE RENTAL APARTMENT...

Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI)

Non-profit owner of rental properties. Call for a list of available units and to apply. 868-4858

Just A Start (JAS)

Non-profit owner of rental properties. Call for a list of available units and to apply. 494-0444

CASCAP

Housing for individuals and disabled. Housing search office. Call to apply. 492-5559

Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA)

Call to apply for public and subsidized housing. 497-4040

Community Development Department (CDD)

Call to apply for units in private mixed-income properties. Resource list of affordable rental properties. 349-4622

Winn Management

Manages rental properties, including affordable units. Call to apply. 491-5466

L.E. Smith Management

Manages rental properties, including affordable units. Call to apply. 357-7188

Multi-Service Center (MSC)

Housing search for elderly, disabled and homeless. Call for information. 349-6340

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BUY A HOME IN CAMBRIDGE...

Community Development Department (CDD)

Homebuyer classes, subsidies and property listings. Call for information. 349-4622

IF YOU ARE HOMELESS AND NEED SERVICES...

Multi-Service Center (MSC)

Housing search, referrals to shelters, emergency funds. Call for information. 349-6340

CASCAP

Housing search, post-placement support, emergency funds. Call for information. 492-5559

Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA)

Public and subsidized housing. Call to apply. 497-4040

Department of Human Services Program (DHSP)

Directory of Resources for People Homeless in Cambridge. Call for information. 349-6200

IF YOU HAVE LEGAL QUESTIONS ABOUT HOUSING...

Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services (CASLS)

Free legal services for low income residents. 494-1800

Just A Start (JAS)

Legal services for tenants and landlords. 494-0444

Cambridge Economic Opportunity Council (CEOC)

Tenant advocacy and eviction counseling. 868-2900

Human Rights Commission

Investigates allegations of discrimination. 349-4396

Community Legal Services and Counseling Center

Free legal services for low income residents. 661-1010

Cambridge Consumer Commission

Tenant advocacy. 349-6150

IF YOU HAVE A HOUSING EMERGENCY...

Multi-Service Center (MSC)

Emergency case management and limited emergency funds for housing - related costs. 349-6340

Cambridge Economic Opportunity Council (CEOC)

Tenant/Landlord mediation. 868-2900

CASCAP

Emergency funds for housing - related costs. 492-5559

Inspectional Services Department (ISD)

Call to report code violations or substandard housing conditions. 349-6100

IF YOU NEED TO HAVE WORK DONE ON YOUR PROPERTY IN CAMBRIDGE...

Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI)

Offers 0% - low interest loans for 1-4 unit buildings. Call to apply. 868-4858

Just A Start (JAS)

Offers 0% - low interest loans for 1-4 unit buildings. Call to apply. 494-0444

CNAHS

Loans for rental properties of 4 units or more. Call to apply. 491-1545

INCOME LIMITS

1 person household	\$21,950	\$26,350	\$33,450
2 person household	\$25,100	\$31,100	\$38,250
3 person household	\$28,200	\$33,850	\$43,000
4 person household	\$31,350	\$37,600	\$47,800

These limits are subject to change.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
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3.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

March 1, 1999

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 3, regarding a report on developing a one-stop housing office for Cambridge residents, received from Acting Assistant City Manager for Community Development Beth Rubenstein.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment

Consent Agenda #3

S-1448

Relative to AW #3, regarding a
report on developing a one-stop
housing office for Cambridge
residents.

In City Council March 1, 1999

Placed in file