

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 is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
3 *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" means any house or building, or portion thereof, which
10 is occupied, designed to be occupied, or rented, leased or hired out to
11 be occupied, exclusively as a home or residence of one or more persons;
12 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,
25 housing shall comply with applicable state and local health, housing,
26 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.] The commissioner shall affirmatively
46 seek to expend all funds appropriated for the program on an annual
47 basis without regard to population limitation established in prior years.
48 The commissioner shall establish maximum rent levels for each
49 municipality or, at the discretion of the commissioner, zip code area, in
50 a manner that promotes the use of the program in all municipalities.

51 Any certificate issued pursuant to this section may be used for housing
52 in any municipality in the state. The commissioner shall inform
53 certificate holders that a certificate may be used in any municipality and,
54 to the extent practicable, the commissioner shall assist certificate holders
55 in finding housing in the municipality of their choice.

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

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

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

77 (j) Not later than June 1, 2026, the commissioner shall create an online
78 tool accessible to the public on the Internet web site of the Department
79 of Housing that allows for (1) the calculation of the maximum allowable
80 rent, including any utility allowance, an owner of a housing unit may
81 charge a certificate holder based on such unit's location and physical
82 characteristics, and (2) an estimate of the monthly rental assistance that

83 would be paid by the commissioner for such unit based upon a monthly
84 rent price and a calculation of a certificate holder's projected
85 contribution.

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

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

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

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

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

108 (1) "Certificate holder" means any individual or family who has been
109 issued a rental assistance certificate by the commissioner pursuant to the
110 rental assistance program established pursuant to chapter 138a of the
111 general statutes;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

136 (c) Not less than annually, the commissioner shall undertake an
137 assessment, based on statistically representative rental housing survey
138 data selected by the commissioner, to determine if maximum rent
139 amounts provided for in the rental assistance program established
140 pursuant to chapter 138a of the general statutes, or other housing
141 voucher programs administered in whole or in part by the
142 commissioner, are sufficient to provide certificate holders and housing

143 voucher holders with housing opportunities in each municipality or zip
144 code in the state. If the commissioner finds such maximum rent amounts
145 are insufficient for such purpose, the commissioner shall adjust such
146 maximum rent levels so that such rent levels are sufficient for such
147 purpose. Such assessment shall be made publicly available on the
148 Internet web site of the Department of Housing.

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

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

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

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