



General Assembly

February Session, 2024

**Raised Bill No. 146**

LCO No. 1032



Referred to Committee on HOUSING

Introduced by:  
(HSG)

***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2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  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)] (e) The commissioner shall administer the program under this  
44 section to promote housing choice for certificate holders and encourage

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

56 (g) Any certificate issued pursuant to this section shall terminate one  
57 year after the issuance of such certificate, provided the commissioner  
58 may, upon a finding of good cause, extend the effective period of any  
59 such certificate by an additional one hundred eighty days.

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

72 (i) The commissioner may allow the owner of a housing unit to certify  
73 that such unit is eligible for participation in the program and a tenant  
74 may occupy such unit pending the results of any required inspection of  
75 such unit by the commissioner.

76 (j) The commissioner shall commence payments to the owner of an

77 eligible housing unit pursuant to the program not more than ten days  
78 after the commencement of a tenancy in such unit by a certificate holder  
79 under this section.

80 (k) Not later than June 1, 2026, the commissioner shall create an online  
81 tool accessible to the public on the Internet web site of the Department  
82 of Housing that allows for (1) the calculation of the maximum allowable  
83 rent, including any utility allowance, an owner of a housing unit may  
84 charge a certificate holder based on such unit's location and physical  
85 characteristics, and (2) an estimate of the monthly rental assistance that  
86 would be paid by the commissioner for such unit based upon a monthly  
87 rent price and a calculation of a certificate holder's projected  
88 contribution.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

138 (c) Not less than annually, the commissioner shall undertake an  
139 assessment, based on statistically representative rental housing survey  
140 data selected by the commissioner, to determine if maximum rent  
141 amounts provided for in the rental assistance program established  
142 pursuant to chapter 138a of the general statutes, or other housing  
143 voucher programs administered in whole or in part by the  
144 commissioner, are sufficient to provide certificate holders and housing  
145 voucher holders with housing opportunities in each municipality or zip  
146 code in the state. If the commissioner finds such maximum rent amounts  
147 are insufficient for such purpose, the commissioner shall adjust such  
148 maximum rent levels so that such rent levels are sufficient for such  
149 purpose. Such assessment shall be made publicly available on the  
150 Internet web site of the Department of Housing.

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

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

163 (f) The commissioner shall adopt regulations in accordance with the  
164 provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes to carry out the purposes  
165 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

**Statement of Purpose:**

To modify the rental assistance program to (1) increase the effective duration of rental assistance program certificates, (2) reduce eligible unit inspection periods, (3) require that program payments to landlords begin within ten days of the commencement of a qualifying tenancy, (4) provide for the electronic signature and electronic submission of all program documents, (5) create an online tool that allows interested parties to calculate housing authority payments under the program, (6) allow the Commissioner of Housing to adjust maximum rent levels for certain housing assistance programs, and (7) notify prospective tenants of the portability of rental assistance program certificates and other housing vouchers.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*