

## ATTACHMENT

### Answers to Questions Raised at July 26, 2021 ZAP Meeting

A handful of questions were raised during ZAP's July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. Below are some of the questions (and answers) that staff was unable to answer at the time.

- 1.) What about disabled individuals who aren't necessarily physically disabled and don't require the features of a fully-accessible unit, but have an intellectual disability – those that live at home with their parents? Where does this group fall in terms of local preference?

**Answer:**

Staff consulted with a DHCD-certified local lottery agent on this question. The lottery agent explained that in order to qualify for a disabled-accessible unit, applicants must provide a note from a medical professional who treats the disability, stating that they need the special features in the unit. Additionally, the lottery agent provided that according to *Mass Access: The Accessible Housing Registry*, "units that are barrier-free are accessible to people with disabilities that are wheelchair users but could also be used by people of different types of disabilities. For example, a person of very short stature, a person with a brain injury or stroke, severe cardiac or respiratory problems, or a person with limited standing, walking, or reaching ability, may use the design features of a wheelchair accessible unit." Verification from a doctor or other medical professional, a peer support group, a non-medical service agency, or a reliable third party who is in a position to know about the individual's disability may be requested. But documentation submitted must specify that the household needs the features of an accessible or hearing-impaired unit.

Someone with an intellectual or developmental disability doesn't necessarily require the features of a disabled-accessible or hearing-impaired unit and, therefore, would not be given top priority for these units or any of the other affordable units in a project, even if they qualify as a local preference applicant.

- 2.) Of the 1,157 total applicants across the three projects analyzed in the Barrett study, how many of these applicants were deemed to be "eligible" for inclusion in the lotteries?

**Answer:**

1,157 was the total number of households entered into these three lotteries. The lottery agent determines initial eligibility for inclusion in the lottery based on households' own self-reported income/assets, which they include in their lottery application. A deeper vetting of income, assets, tax documentation, etc. is only conducted for those households that are invited to apply for a lease, based on their ranking on the lottery wait lists. This second level of eligibility certification is required to ensure that the household truly meets the income requirements of the program before signing a lease for an affordable unit.

3.) How is it decided which units across all income levels are designated as the Local Preference units?

**Answer:**

Staff works with the Lottery Agent to assign which units are local preference units, based on the overall unit and affordability mix of the project and the identified housing needs of the community. Staff also works to ensure that the appropriate number of accessible affordable units are designated as local preference units.

4.) For those minority applicants that qualify as local preference, is there a way to enhance the probability that they are chosen for a unit?

**Answer:**

No. There are four local preference “allowable categories,” per DHCD, and each category carries the same weight; therefore, a local preference applicant that identifies as a minority and is a current resident of Newton is given the same priority as a White local preference applicant that is an employee of a local Newton business but is not a current Newton resident. Per the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development’s [Chapter 40B Guidelines](#), the Local Preference “allowable categories” include:

- 5.) Current residents: A household in which one or more members is living in the city or town at the time of application. Documentation of residency should be provided, such as rent receipts, utility bills, street listing or voter registration listing.
- 6.) Municipal Employees: Employees of the municipality, such as teachers, janitors, firefighters, police officers, librarians, or town hall employees.
- 7.) Employees of Local Businesses: Employees of businesses located in the municipality.
- 8.) Households with children attending the locality’s schools, such as METCO students.