

# *Information Packet*

## Alta at Indian Woods Apartments

An Affordable Housing Opportunity  
Stoughton MA

This packet contains specific information on the affordable housing program and application process for the affordable rental units being offered at the Alta at Indian Woods in Stoughton, MA.

Wood Partners LLC and the Town of Stoughton invite you to read this information and submit an application if you think that you meet all eligibility requirements.

Please hold on to this packet until you have leased a unit as it will be a useful guide throughout the entire process.

*Alta at Indian Woods Apartments*

*Developed by Wood Partners LLC*

*For Affordable Unit Information call (617) 782-6900*

*Information Packet created by SEB*



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## GENERAL OVERVIEW AND RENTS

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**Alta at Indian Woods Apartments** is a 154 unit apartment community located on Stagecoach Road off Washington Street. 39 of these apartments will be rented to households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income.

For a **description of the units and the development** please read page 13. The unit mix of the affordable units is as follows:

# of Units	# of Bedrooms	# of Bathrooms	Disabled-Accessible Features?	Approximate Size	Rent* (does not include any utilities)	Estimated Monthly Utilities*
22	1	1	No	761 sq. ft.	\$1,114*	\$90*
5	1	1	Yes	761 sq. ft.	\$1,114*	\$90*
9	2	2	No	1,004 sq. ft.	\$1,332*	\$113*
3	2	2	Yes	1,004 sq. ft.	\$1,332*	\$113*

\* **RENTS DO NOT CHANGE BASED ON INCOME.** The rents are set annually using a calculation that determines the “affordable” rent, which is based on the Area Median Incomes for the Boston MSA. They are therefore subject to increase or decrease based on yearly changes in Area Median Income and utility allowances. As briefly explained as possible, “affordable” rents are essentially rents that are “affordable” to a household that makes 70% of the Area Median Income and pays 30% of this income towards rent and utilities.

The rents are set annually using a calculation that determines the “affordable” rent, which is based on the Area Median Incomes for the Boston MSA.

Alta at Indian Woods Apartments do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and handicap (disability). Disabled persons are entitled to request a reasonable accommodation of rules, policies, practices, or services, or to request a reasonable modification of the housing, when such accommodations or modifications are necessary to afford the disabled person equal opportunity to use and enjoy the housing.

**Q: How long will the designated apartments remain affordable?**

A: As a **current resident only**, you are considered income eligible for an affordable unit as long as your household earns an income that does not exceed 140% of the current applicable income limit for a household of your size (see *Yearly Eligibility and Rent Review*). Additionally, the rents change yearly based on changes in Area Median Income and Local Utility Allowances. If the Area Median Income decreases or the total utility allowance increases, rents will drop. If the AMI increases or the utility allowances decrease, the rent will increase a few percentage points.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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**Q: Who is eligible to apply for the affordable units in Alta at Indian Woods Apartments?**

A: In order to qualify for an affordable unit, households must meet each of the three following criteria:

- 1.) Households must have income and assets that qualify within the parameters as highlighted in this section.
- 2.) Households must also be between 1 and 4 persons, but priority is given based on household composition. For questions on household size and composition, please read **"Household Size and Composition"**.
- 3.) Households cannot own a home upon move-in. All homes must be sold before leasing a unit.

Additionally, some of the units will be disabled-accessible. All households may apply for the disabled-accessible units but households in need of an accessible unit will get top priority. For questions on priority by need of a disabled accessible unit, please read **"Disabled-Accessible Unit Information"**.

**Q: Can I apply if I currently own a home or am losing a home through foreclosure or divorce?**

A: You may put down a deposit but the Lottery Agent cannot deem you Program eligible until the home is no longer in your name. Therefore, the home must be sold or your name must be removed from the deed prior to your move-in date. If you are going through a divorce, your divorce decree or separation papers must state that you will no longer be on the deed or mortgage of the home. If your house is going through foreclosure, you must prove that it will be foreclosed on prior to your move-in date. All this must be documented for the Lottery Agent prior to them issuing your letter of eligibility.

**Q: What are the income eligibility requirements?**

A: To be eligible to lease an affordable unit, annual household income must be within a particular range, set by maximum and minimum income levels as follows:

## Maximum Income

Household Size	Maximum Income Limit
1	\$ 44,950
2	\$ 51,400
3	\$ 57,800
4	\$ 64,200

To be eligible to apply to lease an affordable unit, the combined annual income for all income sources of all income-earning members in the household must be at or below eighty percent of median income for Boston PMSA. **All sources of income are counted.** This includes, but is not limited to, Social Security, alimony, child support, overtime pay, bonuses, unemployment, severance pay, part-time employment, matured bonds, and monies received in court settlements. **It will be assumed that all applicants will continue to receive any monies they have received over the past 12 months unless supporting documentation proves otherwise.** Additionally, 2% of the value of total household assets will be added to a household's income (*see Allowable Assets below*).

## Minimum Income

The Leasing Office will determine if an applicant has enough monthly income to cover the rent using the same methodology for applicants applying to their market rate units. Applicants who have receive a housing subsidy (like Section 8) are not subject to the minimum income requirements but, like all other applicants, will also have to pass reviews on credit scores, tenant history etc.

Leasing Offices will use the same criteria for the affordable units as they use on the market rate units which is usually that applicants' monthly income must be 3 times the monthly rent.

## Allowable Assets

There is no asset limit for applying households for this development. However, 2% of assets will be imputed as income. Household Assets are calculated at the time of application. Assets may include cash, cash in savings and checking accounts, net cash value of stocks, **net cash value of retirement accounts** (such as 401k), real property, bonds, and capital investments.

If any household member currently owns property (to be sold for eligibility for this lottery), the total amount of retained equity after the sale of their current home shall be added to their total value of assets.

*Example: A household has \$10,000 in savings, \$20,000 in a retirement account (\$13,000 net cash value) and a home assessed at \$300,000 on which they currently have \$280,000 remaining on the mortgage (\$20,000 in equity).*

*Their assets total is:       \$10,000 + \$13,000 + \$20,000 = \$43,000*  
*Imputed Income is:        2% of \$43,000 = \$860*

**Q: How is a household's income determined?**

A: The Lottery Agent will **project a household's income over the next 12 months** based on their current income and assets. In an effort to provide as accurate an income estimation as possible, the Lottery Agent will also review historical income data to provide a basis for future income estimates.

ALL SOURCES OF INCOME ARE COUNTED. Any monies you anticipate receiving in the next 12 months will be counted as income and monies received over the previous 6 months will be analyzed to help estimate future income. This includes, but is not limited to, Social Security, alimony, child support, overtime pay, bonuses, unemployment, severance pay, part-time employment, matured bonds, monies to be received in court settlements and imputed interest and dividends on bank accounts and other assets.

As an example, if a household applies for this opportunity on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the total anticipated amount of money received by all members of the household from March 15<sup>th</sup> 2012 thru March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 will be counted as income. There are some exceptions that will not be counted, most notably income from employment of children under the age of 18 years.

If a household claims that certain income will stop in the near future, all claims must be supported with documentation. It is also not up to the household to determine what monies received over the past year should and should not be counted as their calculated income. Therefore, all monies should be listed on the application and the inclusion of these monies in determining a household's eligibility will be based on affordable housing guidelines.

**Q: I cannot withdraw money from my 401k or retirement fund, do I have to include it when I list my assets?**

A: Yes. You need to include the *net cash value* of all your current retirement funds. We realize that most retirement funds assess large penalties for early withdrawal but this does not technically mean that you "cannot" withdraw your funds. The post-penalty amount is what you need to provide along with supporting documentation.

**Q: If I cannot qualify for a Lease based on my own income or credit history, can I have a co-signer on my Lease?**

A: No. Only people who will live in the unit can sign the lease. Applying households must be able to meet the income qualifications on their own. If someone outside the household is going to help pay the rent, the amount to be paid must be listed as "Periodic Payments" on the Income Table in the Program Application. These payments will be counted towards the applying household's income. Guarantors will be allowed.

**Q: Do I have to be a resident of the Town of Stoughton to apply?**

A: No. All households that meet the income guidelines specified above may apply for an affordable unit.

## Household Size

**Q: How is appropriate household size determined?**

A: According to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development guidelines:

Within an applicant pool first (priority) shall be given to households requiring the total number of bedrooms in the unit based on the following **criteria**:

- a. There is at least one occupant and no more than two occupants per bedroom.
- b. A husband and wife, or those in a similar living arrangement, shall be required to share a bedroom. Other household members may share but shall not be required to share a bedroom.
- c. A person described in the first sentence of (b) shall not be required to share a bedroom if a consequence of sharing would be a severe adverse impact on his or her mental or physical health and the lottery agent receives reliable medical documentation as to such impact of sharing.

Household size shall not exceed state sanitary code requirements for occupancy of a unit.

**Q: Can a one person household or a married couple (or those in a similar living arrangement) lease a two-bedroom unit?**

A: Yes but only when there are no larger households on the waiting list. By Department of Housing and Development definitions, a one person household or married couple (or those in a similar living arrangement) leasing a two bedroom unit, is not a "household of appropriate size". Therefore, "inappropriately" sized households must understand that if and when an "appropriately" sized household applies for a 2BR unit and all 2BR units are currently leased, then the applicant will have to move into an affordable one-bedroom if one is available at the end of the initial lease term.

**Q: If I am currently going through a divorce/separation or planning on being divorced / separated soon, can I still apply?**

A: For non-homeowners, you will need to provide proof that the separation or divorce process has begun or has already been finalized. The **Program Application** will guide you through the documentation you will need to provide. If you have only begun considering a divorce or separation, and no legal action has been taken, you cannot apply as a single head-of-household and your application will be reviewed as if your current spouse will be moving into the affordable unit with you. **For homeowners going through a divorce**, the home must be sold or the divorce must be finalized (as you must be off the deed) before you move-in.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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**Q: What are the steps in leasing an affordable unit?**

*Step 1: Fill out a Lease Application at the Leasing Office.*

The Leasing Office reviews a household's *Lease Application* using different criteria than the Lottery Agent uses in reviewing a household's *Program Application*. At the Leasing Office, criteria such as credit scores, references, and current employment income will be reviewed. If a household is found to be eligible for a lease, they must choose a unit and put down a holding deposit. The required holding deposit is equal to one months rent (although non-Section 8 households with poor credit scores may be required to put down an additional deposit). All households, including Section 8 voucher holders, need to provide this deposit. This holding deposit will also act as the security deposit when the applicant moves into their unit

They may then fill out the Affordable Housing Program Application.

*Step 2: Fill out the Affordable Housing Program Application in entirety and submit the Program Application with ALL required documentation to the Lottery Agent.*

The Program Application will then be reviewed by the Lottery Agent for program eligibility. Only when all documentation is received will their application be reviewed and processed.

*Step 3: Notification of Affordable Housing Program Approval*

If the applicant is found eligible for an affordable apartment according to program guidelines, they will be notified by phone and/or by mail. The applicant will then need to go to the Leasing Office, fill out a **Lease Agreement and an Affordable Lease Addendum**, and move into their affordable unit by the date determined when the holding deposit was given.

**Q: How is the Affordable Housing Program Application different from a Lease Application?**

A: The Affordable Housing Program Application is used to determine if applicants make more than the maximum income allowed to be eligible for an affordable apartment according to state and program guidelines.

The Lease Application is used to determine if applicants have ENOUGH INCOME to *afford* the affordable rent and have enough income remaining for other costs of living. The Lease Application uses criteria including employment history, credit score or reports, former lease history etc.

**Q: What happens if I don't submit all necessary documentation or fail to correctly complete my Affordable Housing Program Application?**

A: Households that submit incomplete documentation will be will be mailed a notice detailing the additional documentation that is needed to make their application complete. If the household submits all additional documentation their application will be processed in the order the application was completed. If a household fails to submit all required documentation, their application will remain in an "Incomplete Application Pool" and will only begin being processed once all requested materials have been received. If a household fails to complete their Affordable Housing Program Application so they cannot move into their reserved affordable unit at the designated time, they will lose their holding deposit.

**Q: What information is required when an application is submitted?**

A: For an application to be considered complete it must be filled out in entirety, signed and dated. **In addition, all required income documentation and if applicable, disability documentation, must be submitted.** If any documentation is missing the application will not be processed but a notice will be sent stating what documentation is missing. If you following the application closely, it should guide you through everything you need to include.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE

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**Q:** What is the schedule for applications and the selection of renters for the affordable apartments at Alta at Indian Woods?

**A:** This process can be as short as 2 weeks or longer than 2 months. To ensure the fastest approval possible, carefully complete all sections of the Program Application and send in copies of everything required. Below is an approximation of the time needed for each step:

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**Step 1:** The applicant completes a Lease Application at the Alta at Indian Woods Leasing Office. All applicants that are found to be lease eligible (based on the review of credit scores, references, adequate income) must put down a holding deposit. They can then fill out an Affordable Housing Program Application.

**Step 2: (2 weeks)** The applicant fills out the Affordable Housing Program Application and gathers all required documentation listed on the checklist and sends it to the Lottery Agent. Applications and *copies* of all income and asset documentation should be mailed to the address below.

### SEB

**Re: Alta at Indian Woods  
165 Chestnut Hill Ave, Unit 2  
Brighton, MA 02135**

**Step 3: (0-2 weeks)** Based on information in the application, the Lottery Agent requests that the applicant mail in additional documentation that was missing from their application. *(This step happens with approximately 90% of all applications. If you want to expedite the time it takes to process your application, send in ALL documentation up-front. Do not wait for the Lottery Agent or Monitoring Agent to request a piece of documentation you probably knew was missing).*

**Step 4: (1 week)** The Lottery Agent processes the completed application. If an applicant is deemed ineligible, this process is over. If they are deemed eligible, the Lottery Agent contacts the applicant and notifies them that they may now proceed to the Leasing Office to fill out a Lease Agreement.

**Step 5: (move-in date)** Applicants must move into their affordable unit by their scheduled move-in date. A Lease Agreement and Affordable Lease Addendum can be signed immediately.

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## Yearly Eligibility and Rent Review

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Approximately 90 days before lease renewal, you will need to submit updated income and asset documentation to the Leasing Office so they can ensure that you are still under the maximum income guidelines. You will not be able to renew your Lease until you have submitted all required documentation. You should maintain records of your taxes, pay-stubs, bank statements and asset statements while living in the affordable unit. Maintaining records makes this yearly review very simple.

**Q: How long can I lease my affordable unit?**

A: As a **current resident only**, you are considered income eligible for an affordable unit as long as your household earns an income that does not exceed **140% of 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)** for a household of your size. Total Income for all *new* applying households must still always be below 80% of AMI.

*Using the 2011 Income Limits as an example:*

Household Size	2011 Income Limit	2012 Income Limit for Current Tenants (140% of 2011 Income Limit)
1	\$ 44,950	\$62,930
2	\$ 51,400	\$71,960
3	\$57,800	\$80,920
4	\$ 64,200	\$89,880

According to the table above for the years shown, if a household's income exceeds the 2012 Income Limit for Current Tenants at the time of their renewal, their unit shall still remain affordable until the next available market rate unit with the same or greater number of bedrooms is rented at an affordable price. Once this market rate apartment becomes newly deemed as affordable, the apartment that was previously deemed affordable can subsequently be rented at market rates. The household with earnings exceeding the 2012 Income Limit for Current Tenants can choose to stay in their apartment, yet would then have to pay the market rate rent.

**Q: Will my rent increase each year, and if so, by how much?**

A: Rents may increase a few percentage points if Boston Area Median Income increases or the costs of utilities decreases. Likewise, if the Boston Area Median Income decreases and the costs of utilities increases, **rents will decrease**.

## DISABLED-ACCESSIBLE UNIT INFORMATION

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**Q: Who qualifies for a disabled-accessible (DA) unit?**

A: 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 of need of a DA unit must be provided in the form of a doctor’s note or equivalent if applicant is selected to rent one of the DA units.

**Q: How are disabled-accessible units awarded?**

A: A household in need of a disabled-accessible unit will get priority for a DA unit over any household who does not need the disabled-accessible features. So if a DA unit is available, and there is a waiting list for the DA unit, the household in need of the unit will jump to the top of that Waiting List.

**Q: Can households that qualify for a DA unit also apply for a non-DA unit?**

A: Yes. Households that qualify for a DA unit will get priority for a DA unit but they can also have positions on Waiting Lists for non-DA units. Their positions on the Waiting List for the non-DA units will be based solely on the time of their application and their household size and their need of an accessible unit will not give them any priority.

**Q: Who is entitled to request a reasonable accommodation?**

A: Disabled persons providing verification of disability are entitled to request a reasonable accommodation of rules, policies, practices, or services, or to request a reasonable modification of the housing, when such accommodations or modifications are necessary to afford the disabled person equal opportunity to use and enjoy the housing.

## ALTA AT INDIAN WOODS APARTMENTS DESCRIPTION

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Alta at Indian Woods is a 154-unit apartment community in Stoughton, Massachusetts. With easy access to Route 128 and the Southeast Expressway, Alta at Indian Woods is an ideal residence for commuters, and also offers easy access to the South Shore's best shopping amenities in Braintree and Stoughton.

The property features lush landscaping surrounding comfortable outdoor gathering areas with a fire-pit; two trellised grilling areas with two grills each and comfortable seating; and a recreation area with porch swings and putting green.

Interior amenities include a fitness center with machines and free weights and a cyber-café-style clubhouse, providing computing and printing services as well as lounge areas with media viewing on large-format televisions.

Units feature full-size washers and dryers; fully applianced kitchens with ENERGY STAR dishwashers and refrigerators and built-in microwaves and disposals; large windows for ample light; carpeting in living rooms and bedrooms; wood-look flooring in kitchens and baths; and kitchen islands in some units. The property will be ENERGY STAR-qualified and will feature very energy efficient construction.