

Post-Lottery Information Packet

Charles River Landing

An Affordable Housing Lottery
Needham MA

This packet contains specific information on the affordable housing program and application process for the affordable rental units being offered at the Charles River Landing in Needham, MA.

Applicants must first complete a Waiting List Application.

When units are available, the Leasing Office will notify the next Applicant on the waiting that they can apply for a lease.

Once found eligible for a Lease and a unit has been reserved, Applicants will then complete the Affordable Housing Application that this Information Packet addresses.

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

Charles River Landing

Developed by Lofts at Charles River Landing LLC

For Affordable Unit Information call (617) 782-6900

Information Packet created by SEB



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GENERAL OVERVIEW AND RENTS

Charles River Landing is a 350 unit apartment community located at 300 Second Ave. in Needham, MA. 88 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 22.

The unit mix of the affordable units is as follows:

# of Units	# of Bedrooms	# of Bathrooms	Approximate Size	Rent* <i>(does not include any utilities)</i>	Estimated Monthly Utilities
63	1	1	787 to 1,112 sq. ft.	\$1,040*	\$118
25	2	1	1,139 to 1,175 sq. ft.	\$1,147*	\$155

*** 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 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. **This is not subsidized housing. Tenants are responsible for paying the full amount of rent each month.**

Q: How long will the designated apartments remain affordable?

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

Please see **YEARLY ELIGIBILITY REVIEW** on pg. 11 for information on Income Limits for tenants who are renewing leases.

Charles River Landing does 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.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Q: Who is eligible to apply for the affordable units in Charles River Landing?

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 6 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 (DA). All households may apply for the DA units but households in need of an accessible unit will get top priority. For questions on priority by need of a DA unit, please read "**Disabled-Accessible Unit Information**" on page 9.

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: Are there disabled-accessible units?

A: Yes, 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 on the bottom of pg. 9.**

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

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*).

Household Size	Maximum Income Limit
1	\$ 46,300
2	\$ 52,950
3	\$ 59,550
4	\$ 66,150

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.

The Leasing Office 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 2.5 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 the affordable program on February 15th, 2010, the total anticipated amount of money received by all members of the household from February 15th 2010 thru February 15th, 2011 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.

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.

DISABLED-ACCESSIBLE AND HEARING-IMPAIRED (DA/HI) UNIT INFORMATION

Applicants who qualify for a Disabled-Accessible (DA) Units and Units for the Hearing Impaired (HI) will get priority for leasing these types of units. Qualifying households will get priority over non-qualifying households for these units

Q: Who qualifies for a disabled-accessible (DA) or Hearing Impaired (HI) 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. There are other kinds of accessible units for people who do not necessarily need a barrier-free unit. Other kinds of accessible units are units that are equipped with communication devices for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. People with disabilities are eligible for these types of units if they need the particular design features of the unit.” Verification of need of a DA/HI apartment must be provided in the form of a doctor’s note or equivalent if applicant is selected to rent one of these units.

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

A: Yes. Households that qualify for a DA/HI unit will also be placed on the Waiting Lists for the non-DA/HI. If they reach the top position on the Waiting List for a non-DA/HI unit before they reach the top position for a DA/HI unit, they will have to decide if they want to lease a non-DA/HI unit or wait until they have a top position on the Waiting List for a DA/HI unit.

Q: What happens if there are now qualifying households on the Waiting Lists for the disabled-accessible and HI?

A: If there are not enough qualified applicants on the Waiting Lists for the DA or HI units, the units will be made available to the highest non-qualifying applicants on the Waiting List still waiting for units of the size available.

APPLICATION PROCESS

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

Step 1: Fill out a Waiting List Application at the Leasing Office

If there is a waiting list for units, you will need to be added to the Waiting List first. Once units are available, the Leasing Office will contact the top households on the waiting list who qualify for the unit type and size available.

Step 2: Fill out a Lease Application at the Leasing Office.

The top households on the waiting list will need to go to the Leasing Office and complete a ***Lease Application***. During the Lease Application, 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 holding deposit is one months rent. They may then fill out the Affordable Housing Program Application.

Step 3: 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 4: 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 email and postal 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 within 90 days.

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.

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

Q: What is the schedule for applications and the selection of renters for the affordable apartments at The Charles River Landing?

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:

Step 1: Now The applicant completes a Waiting List Application. They will remain on the Waiting List until appropriate units are available.

Step 2: **Contacted by Leasing Office to complete Lease Application** at The Charles River Landing. 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. The holding deposit is one months rent (or possibly more depending on credit scores and other factors). They can then fill out an Affordable Housing Program Application.

Step 3: +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: Charles River Landing
165 Chestnut Hill Ave, Unit 2
Brighton, MA 02135**

+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).*

+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 4: 0-90 days: Applicants must move into their affordable unit by the date determined when they put their deposit down on a unit in Step 2 above.

YEARLY ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

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 2009 Income Limits as an example:

Household Size	2009 Income Limit (80% of 2009 Area Media Income)	2010 Income Limit for Current Tenants (140% of 2009 Income Limit)
1	\$ 46,300	\$ 64,820
2	\$ 52,950	\$ 74,130
3	\$59,550	\$ 83,370
4	\$ 66,150	\$ 92,610

According to the table above for the years shown, if a household's income exceeds the 2009 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 2009 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**. For historical reference, the Boston Area Median Income did not change between 2005 and 2009 and utility costs generally increased therefore the rents that affordable tenants paid have decreased slightly from the previous years.