



TOWN of LINCOLN RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**A Collaborative Program of the Lincoln Housing Commission
and the Lincoln Council on Aging**

*c/o Town Offices
16 Lincoln Road
Lincoln, Massachusetts 01773
Phone (781) 259-8811*

Program Guidelines 2020

Purpose

The Lincoln Rental Assistance Program (LRAP or the Program) provides rental assistance to income-eligible households who are renting or wish to rent qualifying housing units in the Town of Lincoln and need financial assistance to pay for rent and certain utilities. The goal of the Program is to provide greater housing stability and housing opportunities to cost-burdened renters in Lincoln. For those who qualify under the Program and are selected to participate, the Town will provide rental assistance for a period of one year in an amount sufficient to ensure that each participating household does not pay more than 30% of the household's income for rent and certain utilities.

Background and Summary

The LRAP is funded by the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The CPA funds are appropriated each year, upon the recommendation of the Lincoln Community Preservation Committee (CPC), at the Lincoln Annual Town Meeting; as such the LRAP will make funding commitments on an annual basis. Households are eligible for assistance if they (a) qualify as low-income households and (b) spend more than 30% of their gross annual income on rent (and certain utilities), among other qualifications noted below. If more eligible households apply than can be accommodated, participating households will be selected through a lottery system, which is described in more detail below. Participants must be Lincoln residents or persons who will rent housing in the Town of Lincoln. Applicants must identify an intended Lincoln address at the time of application. Participants selected under the Program are eligible for a maximum of three years of rental assistance based on their individual Program entry date, at a maximum of \$5,000 per year, subject to the LRAP having sufficient funding.

A third-party organization will assist the Town with the administration of the LRAP. The LRAP is currently funded at a level sufficient to assist five to six participant households per year. Households eligible for assistance will receive monthly rental payments after all completed agreements and other required documents are received by the Lincoln Council on Aging. The payments will be made directly to the landlord.

The LRAP is managed by the Lincoln Housing Commission. It was approved by the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and by the 2019 Annual Town Meeting for the purpose of supporting community housing under the CPA.

Application Process

The initial application period has now passed and all applicants will be placed on a wait list. All interested households, including those on the waitlist from previous years, must submit new applications each year. Participants will be allowed to renew their assistance annually for a maximum of three years, subject to an annual eligibility review and the approval of future funding of the LRAP by the CPC and Annual Town Meeting.

LRAP applications and information packets will be available by contacting the Lincoln Council on Aging at (781) 259-8811. Applicants have the right to request a reasonable accommodation to complete the application, which may include a change to a policy, procedure, or practice to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to participate fully in the Program.

All prospective households must submit a complete LRAP application form and all required supporting documents to be considered for selection. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the administering entity.

Eligibility

A) Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for participation in the Program, households must have an annual income that is less than 80% of the median income for the area that includes the Town of Lincoln. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually publishes the Area Median Income (AMI), adjusted for household size, for U. S. communities. For the Lincoln area, the 2020 median income for a four-person household is \$119,000.

For an applicant household to be eligible for the LRAP, it must meet the following criteria:

1. The annual household gross income must be less than 80% of the Area Median Income for the household size as determined by HUD. The income limits for various household sizes are displayed in Table I below:

Table I
INCOME LIMITS FOR THE LRAP FOR 2020

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5
Income Must be LESS THAN	\$67,400	\$77,000	\$86,650	\$96,250	\$103,950

2. The household must spend more than 30% of its gross monthly income towards rental housing costs (which means the rent paid by the household to the landlord and the amount paid for heat, hot water, electricity, water and sewer). The rent paid to the landlord and, if not included in rent, the cost of heat, hot water, electricity, water and sewer are referred to collectively as the “Rental Housing Expenses”. A household applying for assistance under the Program must submit documentation evidencing these Rental Housing Expenses.
3. No household member can own a home or have any other ownership interest in real property.
4. The household must occupy the rental housing unit assisted through the LRAP as its primary residence.
5. The household must agree to work with the Town of Lincoln Council on Aging or Town Social Worker to develop a strategy that supports a sustainable long-term housing situation through at least four meetings each year.
6. The landlord must agree to accept LRAP payments, and the rental agreement between tenant and landlord must be in writing and signed by the parties that sets forth the amount of the rent to be paid by the household to landlord and whether the rent includes heat, hot water, electricity, water and/or sewer. Further, the lease must specify the amount of the rent paid each year. Rental increases will not be allowed unless the amount of the rent increase is specifically stated in the lease agreement.

B) Participant Renewal Limitations

1. So long as a household remains income eligible for the LRAP, lives in a qualifying unit, and, without the monthly subsidy, would spend more than 30% of the gross monthly income on Rental Housing Expenses, the household will be allowed to renew participation for a total of three years (in the same amount that was paid by the Program for the first month of assistance) for each household with a maximum benefit of \$5,000 per year, contingent on the LRAP having sufficient funds available for the assistance.
2. Participating households must submit documents to verify income, Rental Housing Expenses, and residence on an annual basis.

C) Unit Eligibility

1. Housing unit must be located in Lincoln, Massachusetts.
2. Landlord must attest that the housing unit meets minimum safety standards.
3. The landlord must sign an LRAP participation agreement accepting payments from the third party organization toward the participating tenant’s rent.

Selection Process

Applications will be placed on the wait list in the order received.

Households that are awarded rental assistance through the LRAP will receive a Commitment Letter from the administering entity detailing the terms of the rental assistance, including the amount of assistance provided, schedule of payments, Program requirements, and the obligations of the tenant,

landlord, and administering entity. Applicants will be required to sign and return the *Lincoln Rental Assistance Participation Form* acknowledging their intent to participate. If a household fails to return the *Lincoln Rental Assistance Participation Form* within 10 business days from the date of the Commitment Letter, the household will lose its opportunity to participate in the LRAP.

Right to Appeal

An applicant has the right to appeal decisions within 10 business days from the date of the written notification. An applicant may appear before an Appeals Committee in person or in writing, or via a designee. At the hearing, the applicant or his/her designee may present supporting information relevant to rejection. A final decision will be rendered by the Appeals Committee, in writing, within five business days from the date of the hearing.

Applicant Pool and Waitlist

Households that have qualified for the LRAP, but were not chosen by the lottery or who submitted an application after the lottery, will remain in the applicant pool until the next application period opens. All applicants must reapply at the opening of each application period. Applicants will be informed by letter of the deadline submission date of each application period. A two-tiered waitlist will be maintained until the next open application period as follows:

- A) Tier 1 - Applications received by the deadline
Eligible households that submit completed applications by the deadline will be placed on Tier 1 of the waiting list in order of lottery ranking.
- B) Tier 2 - Applications received after the deadline
All completed applications received after the application deadline will be reviewed. Eligible households that submit completed applications after the deadline will be placed on Tier 2 of the waiting list in order of receipt of their application.
- C) If assistance becomes available midway through the assistance period, for example due to a previously assisted household moving, then replacement households will be selected in rank order first from Tier 1 and then from Tier 2.

Households who do not respond to phone or mail inquiries or who do not respond to a request for additional information within the time frame provided shall be removed from the applicant pool.

Non-Discrimination

The LRAP will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, familial status, sex, age, marital status, children, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, ancestry, veteran/military status or membership.

Privacy

Personal information will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, but such information may be disclosed in communications with a Program participant, the landlord, and the Program representatives.