



## **Sober Homes Fire Sprinkler System Program (FSSP)**

### **Guidelines**

**November 2022/Revised March 2024**

#### **A. Introduction**

We are pleased to announce that the legislature has provided funding within the Commonwealth's FY2022 budget in response to the need of sober homes across Massachusetts to comply with M.G.L. c. 148 s. 26H, which, upon municipal adoption, requires boarding houses and sober homes with six or more occupants to install fire sprinkler systems that comply with the statute.

MassHousing is contracting with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to administer the Sober Homes Fire Sprinkler System Program (FSSP). These Guidelines have been developed by MassHousing in cooperation with DHCD and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH).

MassHousing is pleased to offer \$3.8M (\$3,800,000) in FSSP grant funding to Massachusetts Association of Sober Homes (MASH) Certified Sober Homes for the installation of fire sprinkler systems. Eligible sober home may apply for up to \$80,000 in FSSP funds per property to construct and install sprinkler systems in compliance with local and state requirements.

#### **A. Program Administration**

MassHousing shall implement the policies and procedures for the FSSP and promote the program to eligible owners of sober homes throughout the Commonwealth. MassHousing shall accept applications, select awardees, administer funds and ensure compliance for the program consistent with the Authorizing Legislation.

#### **B. Program Eligibility**

1. Applicants must be owners and/or operators of Certified Sober Homes, in good standing, as evidenced by a signed Good Standing form from MASH; or have voluntarily decertified due to the sprinkler requirement, as confirmed in writing by MASH;
2. Applicants must have operated the MASH certified sober home for at least one year and have participated in the recertification process with MASH at least once; OR if a property is not yet certified, or has been certified for less than one year, owner must be in good standing and have operated at least one other MASH certified sober home for a minimum of one year; and
3. Applicants must own the real property for which funds are being requested or are co-applying with property owner.

4. Applicants must agree to remain a MASH certified Sober Home for a minimum of 5 years; and
5. Applicants must have a written estimate from a licensed and insured sprinkler installation contractor for the projected cost of the installation of the sprinkler system.

### **C. Available Funding**

A total of \$3.8 Million is available to ensure that eligible sober homes can comply with fire safety requirements in municipalities that have or may adopt M.G.L. c. 148, s. 26H. The per property award cap is \$80,000. Funding awards will be determined based on project costs including construction, contingency, permits and design/engineering. Awardees are required to expend the award within 12-18 months.

### **D. Eligible Projects and Eligible Costs:**

Eligible projects include the design and installation of sprinkler systems and related improvements to achieve compliance with M.G.L. c. 148, s. 26H as adopted by local municipalities. Eligible costs may include design and installation of fire sprinkler systems and related improvements necessary for compliance. Other costs may include permits and construction contingency.

### **E. Maintenance of Sober Homes**

MassHousing shall require participating owners/operators to maintain their properties as Sober Homes for a period of no less than five (5) years. MassHousing reserves the right to inspect properties or confirm with MASH to verify the continued operation of participating Sober Homes.

### **F. Funding Priorities**

Funding priorities are as follows:

First Priority: shall be given to Certified Sober Homes certified for no less than 6 individuals, and which have been cited or are at-risk of being cited pursuant to municipal adoption of M.G.L. c. 148, s. 26H.

Second Priority: shall be given to sober homes that were previously Certified Sober Homes that voluntarily de-certified due to the sprinkler requirement and who were in good standing, as documented by MASH, prior to de-certifying.

Third Priority: shall be given to Certified Sober Homes certified for fewer than 6 individuals; for Certified Sober Homes certified for 6 or more beds where the municipality has not yet adopted MGL c. 148, s. 26H; or for Certified Sober Homes needing upgrades to existing fire sprinkler systems.

### **G. Program Application**

The FSSP Application will be available starting November 10, 2022 and MassHousing will accept applications for the FSSP on a continuously rolling basis as long as funding is available. Information about the application process is available on the MassHousing website, at [www.MassHousing.com/FSSP](http://www.MassHousing.com/FSSP). All applications for FSSP funds shall include the following items:

- (i) Application form, to be completed and submitted electronically.
- (ii) Documentation of property ownership by the applicant(s) (note that if operator does not own the property, the property owner MUST be a co-applicant).

- (iii) Either:
  - a. documentation from MASH affirming the sober home is certified and in good standing; or
  - b. if voluntarily de-certified due to the sprinkler requirement, documentation of such, as well as proof of good standing, as documented by MASH, prior to de-certifying; and
- (iv) Additional documentation:
  - a. documentation of violation related to the local adoption of M.G.L. c. 148 s.26H.
  - b. evidence that municipality has adopted M.G.L. c. 148 s.26H.
  - c. evidence that municipality is considering adoption of M.G.L. c. 148 s.26H.
  - d. other documentation supporting the need for funding.

#### **H. Program Selection & Awards**

MASSHOUSING is responsible for awarding funds and selecting FSSP participants from the pool of eligible applicants who have submitted applications conforming to program requirements. MASSHOUSING will notify successful applicants of the amount of funds awarded to their project.

Selection and award of grant funds will take into consideration completeness of the proposals and priority category of the applicant as described in Section F.

#### **I. Monitoring and Compliance**

1. Awardees will be responsible for construction monitoring and shall submit progress reports to MassHousing when requesting payment and upon project completion.
2. MassHousing reserves the right to inspect construction progress in advance of release of grant funds.
3. Projects must be completed and all invoices submitted within one year of the date of the Grant Agreement, unless an extension is requested in writing.
4. Awardees shall be responsible for the continued use of the property as a sober home for a period of at least 5 years. Confirmation of compliance with this requirement will be based on data from MASH and/or the awardees.

#### **J. Program Reporting**

MASSHOUSING shall submit periodic reports to DHCD stating the number of awards made, the amount of each award, and the status of each project funded. MassHousing reserves the right to request information from awardees to include in the reports.

#### **K. Disbursement of Funds**

MASSHOUSING shall make disbursements to awardees as work progresses, based on a signed installation contract and invoices from vendors and contractors:

- 30% upon signing a purchase/installation contract for an automatic sprinkler system.
- An additional 60% may be requested as progress payments during construction.
- Final 10% after submission of local fire department inspection confirming completion of project and a final bill from the system installer.
- Funds will be transferred to your identified bank account.