

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS BENJAMIN J. WEBER, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE,
HENRY SANTANA, BREADON, COLETTA, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD,
FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO REVIEW THE CITY OF BOSTON VOUCHER PROGRAM

WHEREAS, The City of Boston Voucher Program (CBVP) was announced during a 2020 State of the City address by Mayor Martin J. Walsh and was established with a \$2.5M appropriation from the city's general fund in Fiscal Year 2021; *and*

WHEREAS, Last year the Boston City Council approved an investment of \$200,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding towards housing search and stabilization services for Boston Housing Authority vouchers, including the CBVP; *and*

WHEREAS, Similar to the federal Section 8 program, the CBVP provides vouchers to make existing income-restricted housing affordable to low-income and extremely low-income renters, and ensures that tenants pay no more than 30 percent of their income on rent, but unlike Section 8 it is available to families of mixed immigration status; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) is the City's biggest housing provider with roughly 60,000 people utilizing its services, including 10,000 public housing units, and it issued around 13,000 tenant based vouchers in 2022, with a notable increase in mobility for voucher recipients; *and*

WHEREAS, In Fiscal Year 2023, the City expanded the CBVP with \$2.5 million in additional funding, bringing total funding for the program to \$7.5 million; *and*

WHEREAS, The need for the CBVP is likely to increase as voucher funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is expected to decline; *and*

WHEREAS, A 2023 WCVB investigation found that more than 42,000 families were on the BHA's waitlist across all of its housing programs. The investigation found that it would cost nearly \$1 billion to house families on the waitlist.; *and*

WHEREAS, Four years since the CBVP began, rents have become more unaffordable, with 51% of all rental households in Boston spending more than 30% of their income on rent in 2022, according to recent Census Bureau data. We as a city and state have not built enough affordable housing to meet demand; *and NOW,*
THEREFORE BE IT

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to review the CBVP and explore whether there is a potential to expand the program to better meet demand.

Filed on: April 10, 2024