

# INFORMATION PACKET

## MERRIMAC COMMONS

### AFFORDABLE RENTAL APPLICATION

125 -135 MIDDLESEX ROAD  
TYNGSBORO, MA 01879

THIS PACKET CONTAINS SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR **SIXTEEN (16) AFFORDABLE APARTMENTS** BEING OFFERED FOR RENT IN THE TOWN OF TYNGSBORO, MA, THROUGH A LOTTERY PROCESS.

AN INFORMATION SESSION WILL TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, JULY 14<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:30 P.M. AT 267 LITTLETON ROAD IN CHELMSFORD. THIS INFORMATION WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE VIA ZOOM VIDEO COMMUNICATIONS.

APPLICATIONS CAN BE MAILED, FAXES OR EMAILED TO:

CHELMSFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
10 WILSON ST.  
CHELMSFORD, MA 01824  
FAX: 978-256-1895  
TEL (978) 256-7425    TTY 800-439-0183 TDD 800 439-2370  
LOTTERY@CHELMSFORDHA.COM

THE DEADLINE TO SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATIONS IS  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18<sup>TH</sup> AT 4:00 P.M.



# General Overview

The Town of Tyngsboro is a small, residential community that borders the towns of Dunstable, Groton, Westford, Chelmsford, Dracut, the city of Lowell and the state of New Hampshire. It is located 28 miles northwest of Boston along the recently widened Route 3 corridor. It bills itself “The Gateway to The White Mountains” of New Hampshire, which is the source of the Merrimack River that runs through the town.

The 1,000-acre Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest is a popular attraction with 180 acres of ponds, swamps and wetlands. The forest has six miles of trails offering hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. Tyngsboro also boasts the lion’s share of Lake Mascuppic’s shores, where the Town Beach is located.

Tyngsboro’s single most identifying feature is its iconic, single-arched iron bridge across the Merrimack. Built in 1931, it had fallen into disrepair but has recently been restored to its original function and majesty.

Aside from its reputable public school system, Tyngsboro students have the opportunity to attend the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical High School and the Innovation Academy Charter School.

Merrimack Commons is a 64-unit development of duplexes currently under construction in Tyngsboro. Sixteen of these 2-bedroom units will be made available for rental through a lottery process for income-eligible households. These homes will be outfitted with central air, a stove, dishwasher, microwave and refrigerator. A washer and dryer hookup will also be provided. Tenants will pay for gas and electricity.

Merrimack Commons is a pet-friendly community. Two pets per apartment are allowed, with a weight restriction of 25 pounds per pet. Breed restrictions apply.

The initial occupancy of the units shall be done through a lottery. Any household that is not selected during the lottery will go onto a waiting list. Applications for the affordable units will be managed on a first-come, first-served basis once the original lottery list is exhausted.

The affordable rents are being set based upon the 2020 Lowell HUD Metro FMR Area area median income (AMI) limits to households earning no more than 80% of AMI.

Unit Type	Unit Size	# Units	Household Size	Project Rent (80%)	Utility Allowance
2BR	1250+/-SF	16	2-4	\$1,766	\$204



Merrimac Commons does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, sexual orientation or 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.

Persons with disabilities who may require a reasonable accommodation in obtaining or completing an application may call the CHA to make special arrangements. The CHA uses Mass Relay to communicate with applicants who may be speech or hearing impaired. The Mass Relay number is 1-800-439-2370 for TTY and 1-800-439-0183 for voice.

## GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### Maximum Allowable Income

To be eligible to apply for the chance to rent an affordable unit, the combined gross 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 the town of Shirley. The maximum incomes allowed for this program are:

#### **Lowell, MA HUD Metro FMR Area; effective 04/01/20**

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>80% Area Median Income</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>\$54,950</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>\$62,800</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>\$70,650</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>\$78,500</b>

### Minimum Allowable Income

In order to be able to afford the rent, the minimum annual income is \$52,988. This minimum may be waived for households that hold a rental voucher. Exceptions may also apply if you have assets that could be used to offset the rent.

### Asset Limits

There is no limit on the amount of assets households may have. Income from assets, however, is counted as the greater of: actual income or the HUD Passbook rate at the time of application (.06% as of 2/1/15) of the net value of the asset. Assets may include cash, cash in savings and checking accounts, a home, net cash value of stocks, net cash value of retirement accounts (such as 401Ks), real property, bonds, capital investments, life insurance policies and foreign bank accounts.



## Frequently Asked Questions – General Eligibility

**Q: Who is eligible to apply for the affordable units?**

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

- 1.) The entire household's income and assets must be below the maximum allowable income limit;
- 2.) The household must be of appropriate size;
- 4.) The household must meet the minimum income requirement as outlined above.

**Q: Do I need to be a resident of Tyngsboro to apply?**

A: No, but there is a local preference assigned to this lottery, which means you would have an additional chance at "winning" unit. A local preference would also apply to who are municipal employees, are working at a business located in Tyngsboro, or people who have children who are attending Tyngsboro schools.

**Q: Can I apply if own a home?**

A: You may own a home when you apply. It does not have to be sold before you move in. Your home will count as an asset and be calculated as such when determining eligibility. Once it is sold, additional documentation will be needed to update your file and income information.

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

ALL SOURCES OF INCOME ARE COUNTED. Any monies you receive will be counted as income. This includes, but is not limited to, Social Security, alimony, overtime pay, bonuses, unemployment, severance pay, part-time employment, recurring monetary gifts to the household, matured bonds, monies to be received in court settlements and imputed interest and dividends on bank accounts and actual or imputed income from assets.

The Chelmsford Housing Authority will calculate the value of your assets pursuant to the formula set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This formula takes the greater of the actual income from an asset or the current market value of any asset multiplied by .06%. The amount derived from this calculation is then added to your income.



For example: Mrs. Smith receives \$19,200 a year in annual Social Security earnings. She also has a checking account valued at \$7,000 earning 1% interest and a CD worth \$20,000 earning 2.3%. Her income would be calculated as follows:

Social Security: **\$19,200**      Checking ( $\$7,000 \times 1\%$ ) = **\$70**

CD ( $\$20,000 \times 2.3\%$ ) = **\$460**

Total income = **\$19,730**

**Q: I have a 401K and am not taking any withdrawals. 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 or don't have access to them. The "post-penalty" amount is what you need to provide along with supporting documentation.

**Q: Are there eligibility exceptions for households that are barely over the income limit?**

**A:** No, there are no exceptions to the income limits.



# PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The Chelmsford Housing Authority will be advertising and publicizing the availability of this affordable housing opportunity in Tyngsboro and distributing applications and this Information Packet throughout the community and region.

After reading this Information Packet in its entirety, applicants will need to fill out a Program Application and provide accompanying documentation. The applying household must list all income and asset information for every person that will be residing in the unit. The Program Application must be signed and dated by all heads of household.

## **Formal Review of Eligibility**

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Before a household can move forward, all documentation of income and assets from all members over the age of 18 must be reviewed for eligibility. Below is a list of some of the items that may be requested:

Income:

- **Wages:** Verify gross earnings by submitting six (6) pay stubs or a letter from the employer stating the number of hours per week that the employee works and the rate of pay per hour. Any such letter should include the name and address of the employer as well as the name and telephone number of the contact person.
- **Social Security or Supplemental Income:** A statement no more than one month old from the Social Security Administration. This statement can be obtained online at [www.socialsecurity.com](http://www.socialsecurity.com) or by calling 1-800-772-1213.
- **VA Pension or other retirement benefits:** A statement no more than one month old showing earnings from the Veterans Administration or other retirement funds
- **VA Compensation or Benefits:** A statement no more than one month old showing earnings from the Veterans Administration.
- **EAEDC:** A statement less than one month old from the Department of Transitional Assistance showing benefits. This statement may be obtained by calling 1-800-632-8095.
- **Food Stamps and Fuel Assistance:** A statement less than one month old from the Department of Transitional Assistance.
- **Alimony and/or Spousal Support:** Copies of six (6) payment checks.
- **Unemployment Benefits:** Current statement or copies of six (6) check stubs from the Department of Unemployment Assistance.
- **No Income:** If an adult family member does not have any income at all, a “Zero Income Self Affidavit” must be completed and notarized. The Chelmsford Housing Authority can provide you with a copy of this form.

Assets:

- **Checking and Savings Accounts:** Copies of six (6) months of complete statements showing transaction details for any and all banking accounts, including foreign accounts.
- **Current Value of Assets:** A statement no more than one month old showing the current value of any stocks, bonds, CDs, IRAs, etc. Including current rate of interest and dividends.
- **No Bank Accounts:** If any member of your household over the age of 18 does not have a bank account, each person must complete and have notarized a “No Bank Account” certificate. The Chelmsford Housing Authority can provide you with a copy of this form.

In addition, all members of the household must complete the Tenant Packet and sign the authorization for release of information. If the adult is a full-time student, proof of current student status must also be provided.

*If it is determined that incomplete or inaccurate information was provided in the application, or if the applicant fails to respond to questions regarding the required documentation within a timely fashion, the CHA reserves the right to deem the applicant ineligible for a unit at Merrimack Crossing.*

*The landlord will make the final determination regarding suitability for the unit based upon references, credit checks and other screening processes used for all applicants.*