

## A Better Life (ABL) Program – Noncompliance Process

This document outlines the steps that should be followed by LHAs when a tenant household is deemed non-compliant with (and non-exempt from) the A Better Life (ABL) program requirements, as outlined in the 2022 version of the ABL Lease Addendum.

The noncompliance process cannot be initiated for households who have not yet signed the 2022 version of the ABL Lease Addendum because they have not legally agreed to the terms of the Addendum.

For tenants who have signed the 2022 Lease Addendum and fall in the category of needing to meet with a coach at least once a month to achieve compliance, the noncompliance process should be initiated if/when two consecutive months have passed without any meetings between the household and an ABL coach.

In cases where the LHA knows the tenant household’s primary language is not English, the LHA should make every effort to translate warning notices into the household’s primary language, in accordance with the LHA’s Language Access Plan, before sending them out.

<b>Step 1. First Warning Notice (Request to Contact ABL Coach)</b>	<b>When?</b> Mail the first warning notice as soon as the household is deemed non-compliant and non-exempt.
This letter will remind the tenant about the current policies that they agreed to comply with when they signed the revised ABL Lease Addendum. It will ask them to contact an ABL coach upon receipt of the letter.	
<b>Step 2. Second Warning Notice (Scheduling Appointment with ABL Coach)</b>	<b>When?</b> If the tenant does not contact an ABL coach during the 3 weeks after the first notice was sent, mail the second warning notice.
This letter will reference the first warning notice and include a specific appointment time for the tenant to meet with an ABL coach.	
<b>Step 3. Third Warning Notice (Scheduling Informal Conference)</b>	<b>When?</b> If the tenant does not attend the scheduled appointment with the ABL coach (or if the tenant contacts the ABL coach to reschedule the appointment but then does not attend the rescheduled appointment), mail the third warning notice.

This letter will reference the first and second warning notices and include a specific appointment time for an Informal Conference with LHA staff (this could include the ABL coach, the Director of Resident Services, a representative from the property management team, or whichever staff the LHA thinks is appropriate).

**Step 4. 14-Day Notification of Rent Increase**

**When?** If the tenant does not attend the scheduled Informal Conference (or if the tenant reschedules the conference but then does not attend the rescheduled conference), mail the 14-day notification of rent increase.

This notice will notify the tenant that if they continue to be non-compliant during the 14 days following the date of the notice, then on the 15<sup>th</sup> day, their monthly rent will become 150% of the rent which would otherwise have been charged to the tenant (and that this will be the rent until the first day of the month following the tenant household achieving ABL compliance or the first day of the month following the expiration of the Lease Addendum). The notice will include what the new rent amount would be and what the effective date would be. The notice will also inform the tenant of their right to a grievance hearing pursuant to 760 CMR 6.08.

**Step 5. Rent Increase and Notice**

**When?** If the tenant remains non-compliant 15 days after the 14-Day notification was sent, increase their tenant rent share to 150%.

The tenant rent share will be increased to 150% of the rent which would otherwise have been charged to the tenant. One final notice will be sent to the tenant with the new rent amount and the effective date.

Once the rent increase has gone into effect, it will remain in effect until the household is compliant, meaning at least one adult (ages 18 to 55) in the household:

- A. Is working, attending school, and/or volunteering for a monthly average of at least 30 combined hours per week
- OR
- B. Is working, attending school, and/or volunteering for a monthly average of 1-29 combined hours per week AND has met with a coach (in person or over the phone) at least **once per month for two consecutive months**
- OR
- C. Has met with a coach (in person or over the phone) at least **once per month for two consecutive months**.