



Massachusetts Balance of State Continuum of Care

Updated 12/30/25

This policy determines the **default unit size** (i.e. number of bedrooms) for which a household is eligible, based on their household composition. This policy aims to ensure the CoC is maximizing resources and not “overhousing” households.

When determining the default unit size a household is eligible for, the Balance of State CoC will default to assigning one bedroom for each two persons within the household, except in the following circumstances:

- Adults will be allocated one bedroom per adult. If two adults consider themselves partners, they will be allocated one bedroom.
- Family members of different genders (other than spouses or partners) will be allocated separate bedrooms, except when both are children under 6 years of age, in which case they will share a bedroom.
- Approved live-in aides will be allocated a separate bedroom.
- A parenting minor will not be required to share a bedroom with a child.

When determining number of bedrooms, please also consider:

- For purposes of determining unit size, an adult is 18 years of age or older and a child is under 18 years of age.
- An adult will not be required to share a bedroom with a child.
- When a household member is pregnant, the unborn child will be included in the size of the household.
- Two children of the same gender will share one bedroom regardless of the age differential. This includes children of blended families, who may have different parents.
- Households comprised of one person will be allocated one bedroom.
- Reasonable accommodation requests for a larger unit, based on health-related reasons, must be submitted to the Regional Navigator of the region selected on the CE Assessment. Reasonable accommodations will require verification by a knowledgeable professional source, such as a doctor or other medical professional.

Referring households to a unit size different than the default unit size

If there are no eligible households with a default unit size matching an available unit, a household can be referred to a unit that doesn't match their default unit size as long as they are not "over-housed."

Per the definition of the Balance of State CoC, a household is over-housed if either:

- 1) two partners/spouses have separate bedrooms, **or**
- 2) the number of bedrooms in the unit is greater than the number of household members

The Navigator will consider households in this order when making a referral to an available unit:

1. Eligible households in region whose default unit size matches size of available unit
2. Eligible households in region whose default unit size does not match size of available unit, but where household would not be overhoused
3. Eligible households out of region whose default unit size matches size of available unit
4. Eligible households out of region whose default unit size does not match size of available unit, but where household would not be overhoused

Opting into a smaller unit

A household may opt into a unit smaller than their default unit size, as long as 1) the dwelling unit has at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons, and 2) it is in compliance with Habitability Requirements under Massachusetts regulation ([105 CMR 410.420](#)) and any applicable local codes.

Example

A household is comprised of 5 individuals - two adult spouses and three children (12-year-old male, 11-year-old male, 10-year-old female).

- Per this default unit size policy, this household's default unit size would be a three-bedroom unit (adult spouses share one bedroom, two male children share one bedroom, and female child has their own bedroom).
- If there is a four-bedroom unit available and there are no eligible and interested households whose default unit size is a four-bedroom unit, this household could be considered given that they would not be overhoused in a four-bedroom unit. The adult spouses would share one bedroom and the three children would each get their own bedroom. They would not be considered overhoused because 1) the adult spouses are sharing a bedroom, and 2) the number of bedrooms does not exceed the number of household members.