Willow Park Construction and Relocation

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Revised September 2026

1. Why is Willow Park being rehabilitated?

The existing buildings were constructed in the early 1950s and face substantial plumbing, electrical, and mechanical challenges, and none of the units are ADA-accessible. The redevelopment will ensure that all units meet modern safety and energy-efficiency standards, while also meeting accessibility standards for the buildings and site.

2. What is the relocation and construction timeline?

If funding is approved, the relocation process is expected to begin by the Fall of 2026. Once all residents are relocated, demolition and construction will begin in early 2027 and are expected to be completed by early 2029.

3. Where will I be relocated to, and for how long?

You will need to temporarily relocate for approximately 24 – 36 months, though this timeline may shift depending on construction progress. The relocation team will work to identify a comparable replacement unit; we anticipate most residents will prefer to be within or close to Watertown, but there may be some who prefer to be elsewhere.

4. Who will assist me with my relocation?

Housing Opportunities Unlimited (HOU) has been hired to assist you and your family with all your relocation needs. A Relocation Coordinator from Housing Opportunities Unlimited will work closely with you and your family with all the planning and coordination of your relocation.

HOU staff have an office on site **at 55 Melendy Avenue. Watertown, MA** with **regular office hours from Monday – Friday from 9am-5pm. (Holidays may affect these hours and we will keep you informed)**

5. Who is HOU?

Housing Opportunities Unlimited (HOU) is a privately held company that offers relocation services and resident services to clients focused on affordable and mixed-income housing communities. HOU has provided relocation services for over 43 years at numerous housing developments throughout the country. HOU's mission is to ensure that residents affected by the redevelopment of their community are treated fairly, in accordance with relocation of regulatory requirements, and experience minimal physical and emotional stress during this process.

6. Will I receive any notices regarding my relocation?

Yes, on May 8th 2026, a **General Information Notice (GIN) and a Resident Information Notice (RIN)** were sent via certified mail to all Willow Park residents. These notices inform you that WHA and POAH have applied for federal and state funding to redevelop Willow Park. It also advises you **NOT TO MOVE** on your own, as doing so may risk your relocation assistance and benefits.

You should have also received a **Notice of Eligibility and a 120 Day Notice** which was sent on September 2nd, 2026. The notice of Eligibility informs you that funding has been approved and explains your potential relocation assistance and benefits. The 120 Day Notice informs you that in approximately four months you must vacate your move. Please do not panic. HOU is assisting with this process and will keep you informed of your relocation process.

In October 2026, you will receive a **90 Day Notice to Vacate –** This notice will inform you of a vacant and available comparable replacement unit that has been identified for you based on your household needs.

Once you accept your replacement unit, you will receive a **30 Day Notice-** This notice provides the specific address of your new apartment, the date of your move, and allows you 30 days to pack and get ready to move. Often, the relocation team would help your household move sooner than 30 days, but this letter outlines your right to have 30 days before you are required to move.

7. Do I have to pay for any costs associated with my relocation?

No, you will be entitled to have all reasonable moving and related costs paid by the project. You will be provided with packing materials (boxes, tape, wrapping paper), and a licensed and bonded moving company will move all of your belongings to your temporary unit.

If you must transfer any utilities (phone, cable, Internet), you will be reimbursed for the transfer fees.

A professional moving company will assist residents during their move. Packing/unpacking assistance will be offered to all residents.

8. Will I receive packing supplies or assistance before and during my move?

Yes. All packing supplies (boxes, tape, wrapping paper) will be provided at no cost. Packing and unpacking assistance will also be available to all residents.

9. What if I wish to dispose of some of my belongings prior or during my relocation?

HOU can arrange for movers to assist you in disposing of unwanted furniture or other belongings.

10. What's going to happen with my in-home services (such as Meals on Wheels, Visiting Nurse, PCA, etc.) while I am relocated?

HOU will help you transfer these services to your temporary apartment and transfer them back when you return.

11. Who will assist me with transferring my utilities to the new apartment?

HOU staff can assist you with this process. **Please note that if you have an outstanding balance in your account, you may not be able to transfer the services until the balance is paid in full.**

If you have a Lifeline, HOU will assist you with transferring the service to your new address.

You will be reimbursed for any transfer fees (if any). To receive a reimbursement check, you must provide a copy of the bill to HOU reflecting those charges. Please allow two weeks for the reimbursement to be completed.

12. What utilities will I pay during the relocation period?

You will continue to pay the same utilities that you currently pay now.

13. Do I have any choice in where I move during relocation?

HOU will identify relocation options that align as best as possible with parameters provided from residents and POAH/WHA. Residents are encouraged to suggest apartments they would like to move to.

14. Do I need to change my address with the Post office?

Yes, once you have moved, you will need to go to your local post office to make this change. Any associated costs with this transfer will be reimbursed by the project. Please save your receipt and submit it to the HOU coordinator so the reimbursement can be processed.

15. Will my rent change when I relocate to the new apartment?

Your rent will continue to be calculated at 30% of your income, the same as it is now.

16. Can I return to the new development once completed?

All current residents in good standing will have the right to return to the redeveloped Willow Park.

17. What if I want to stay in my temporary relocation unit permanently, and not return to Willow Park once construction is complete?

You may choose to stay if your lease allows you to; however, after the relocation period ends, you will be responsible for the full rent of the unit, without WHA/POAH subsidies.

18. If my current unit is too big or small, can I move into a different-sized new unit?

Residents will have the right to return to a unit with the same number of bedrooms as their current WHA unit. However, residents may also be eligible for a different-sized unit if it better reflects their current household composition and family size, in accordance with WHA occupancy standards.

19. Can my child(ren) remain in Watertown Public Schools during relocation?

WHA and POAH are working to secure a waiver so that all households with school-aged children can remain in Watertown Public Schools even if they move to another town.

20. If I move to a different location, will I get help with transportation for my children to stay in Watertown Public Schools?

Yes. During the relocation period, if you move, whether within Watertown or to another town, that makes your child's trip to school longer, WHA and POAH will help with the extra transportation cost. WHA and POAH will reimburse you for the additional mileage needed to take your child(ren) to and from school, based on the standard mileage rate set by the IRS.

21. What are the next steps?

- Expect the 90 day notice with a unit offer in the next couple of weeks.
- Once you receive the 90 day notice with a unit offer, HOU will contact you to schedule a unit viewing. After the viewing, you will have 24 hours to accept or decline the unit offer.
- If you decline the offer, you must provide a valid reason. You will then be added to a waiting list for available units and HOU will provide you with an automatic unit assignment.

22. Who can I contact if I have questions about my relocation?

If you have any questions about your relocation process, please contact Yasaira Garcia, HOU Project Manager, at ygarcia@housingopportunities.com or by phone at (508) 612-0824 or Askar Suvanbekov at asuvanbekov@housingopportunities.com or by phone at (857) 243-4978.