Questions and Answers for artist certification & affordable housing lottery

If I receive an artist certification does that mean I am guaranteed a unit?

No. There are two types of units: Market Rate and Inclusionary. The developer will establish an application process and lottery for the Market Rate units. Together, the developer and the City’s Housing Division will establish an application process and lottery for the Inclusionary units.

I don’t live in Somerville, how do I demonstrate that I work in Somerville?

Non-Somerville residents must provide either an employment pay stub with existing business/organization in Somerville, or employee verification letter stating that the applicant is a full time employee.

What if I don’t live in Somerville nor do I have any affiliation with Somerville, can I still apply?

Yes, but the lottery will follow this priority.

Priority will follow in this order:

1. Currently living or working full time in Somerville (both equally weighted)
2. Not living or working in Somerville

Can I apply for both the artist unit and the “non-artist” units?

Yes but all processes and rules apply.

What happens if I decide to stop being an artist? Or that I am no longer active?

If you are currently in an artist live/work unit you must be active during the prior three year period. If you are not active for three years you will be asked to demonstrate activity in year four or prepare to vacate the unit in year five.

Do applicants apply for specific units, i.e. unit 103, or only for specific categories of units, i.e. one-bedroom or two-bedroom unit?

Applicants will need to choose if they are applying for a one-bedroom or a two-bedroom unit. If you are a two-person household you can apply for both a one-bedroom unit AND a two-bedroom unit.
simultaneously. For more details about inclusionary unit regulation go to: www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/inclusionary-housing-program

**Do I determine which income category I am applying for or do you?**

You should determine and apply for the income category in which you think you will be eligible. If you are on the cusp you can apply for both and depending on the final certification review you will be placed in one or the other income category.

**What happens if my income goes up after I am in a unit?**

The housing division and the management company will conduct an annual income certification. If your income remains over after ONE year you will be asked to move. Meaning, in year one you are eligible and you move in, in year two your income increases, you remain, and at the end of year two your income is still over income you will be asked to leave at the beginning of year three.

**What are the timelines for the artist certification and inclusionary housing lottery?**

You must first conduct the artist certification. Then apply for the housing application. Typically, a lottery will occur. If you are chosen in the lottery process, then you must go through a full income certification process. If a chosen lottery applicant is deemed not income eligible, then those next in the lottery will go through an income certification. This process will continue until all units are full with the higher lottery picks and income eligible applicants.

**If I currently own a home can I apply for an income eligible unit?**

No. You are not eligible for a rental unit.

**Concerning eligibility around income guidelines and “household numbers,” if I have a roommate and we are not married are we considered a “two-person household”?**

If you have lived together prior for the past year, as a household, and your intent is to live together in the future, you would be considered a two-person household.

**Is there a different priority for market rate and inclusionary units?**

There is priority for residents of Somerville or full time Somerville employees for both types of units. Applicants for market rate units will undergo a typical fair housing application process, including credit check, etc.

**How will my application be reviewed? Who is on the review panel?**

The Art Council and board members who have a range of discipline area expertise will review applications for certification approval. Reviewers are NOT reviewing applications for quality of work or aesthetics but only to review if applicants are actively engaged in creating work. Your support material,
resume, images, video links, are essential for this review process. Again, the panel is not judging you based on the quality of work.

Why do I need to submit documentation for proof of residency in a market rate application and not in the inclusionary application for artist certification?

You will be asked to provide documentation during the inclusionary application process but not now during the certification process. If you are applying ONLY for the market rate units you must provide documentation now.

April 2020