

City of Somerville Artist Certification

A joint effort by the City's Arts Council and
Housing Division

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Why an artist certification

Somerville's current zoning includes provisions that certain developments require "artist use."

If a new development creates "Artist Live/Work" or "Artist Studio Space" a certification process will accompany those units.

This policy will ensure that development built for artists will retain artists.



The City of Somerville has established through zoning the creation of artist spaces permanently dedicated to artists through deed restrictions or other legally binding covenants. An individual who seeks to rent or purchase one of these artist units will be required to submit a current Artist Certificate as proof of eligibility.

WHAT IS AN ARTIST CERTIFICATE?

An Artist Certificate is a confirmation from the City of Somerville that an artist has been reviewed by a committee of peers and is “certified” as a working artist. An Artist Certificate qualifies an artist, for a period of three years, as eligible for artist spaces. Upon expiration, an artist will need to seek new certification.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A SOMERVILLE ARTIST CERTIFICATE?

Any artist who can demonstrate to a committee of peers that they have a recent body of work as an artist.

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

WHO REVIEWS THE APPLICATION AND MAKES DECISIONS REGARDING CERTIFICATION?

Each application and related attachments is presented to a peer review committee. The committee is comprised of Somerville artists and arts professionals who have been nominated to serve in this capacity. To make a nomination contact Gregory Jenkins at gjenkins@somervillema.gov .

No one who is applying for a unit may serve on this committee.

The peer review committee primary task is to confirm whether each applicant has demonstrated that s/he is a working artist. Applicants will not be judged based on the aesthetics of their work but rather their commitment and activity of work.

WHEN DO I APPLY FOR AN ARTIST CERTIFICATE?

Applicants must first apply for an artist certificate prior to applying to the units. If the units are affordable artist housing, applicants must undergo a two-step process.

First, applicants should seek artist certification. The deadline is Feb. 17th. The next step is submit an application to the Housing Division by March 2nd at 4 p.m.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- *(Required)* Completed application form.
- *(Required)* Evidence of a recent body of work, **created in the past three years**, as documented in support materials such as CDs, slides, JPGs or other digital images, DVDs, video and/or audiotapes; production photographs; scripts, works of fiction, non-fiction or poetry;
- *(Required)* A resume that demonstrates the following two categories: 1) Evidence that the artist has training or is self-taught. 2) Evidence that the artist has **presented his/her work during the past three years** in exhibition, performance, readings or comparable public programming.

AUTOMATIC CERTIFICATION

- Automatic certification is granted to Somerville artists who have ***received in the past three calendar years (2013-2015) a fellowship or finalist*** from the Massachusetts Cultural Council or a fellowship from the Somerville Arts Council.
- If you are such an artist, you must still submit the application form and a copy of your award letter from the Massachusetts Cultural Council or the Somerville Arts Council.

Questions and Answers

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

No. Because these artist units are also affordable units you will then complete an application for inclusionary housing which has a lottery process. You will then follow all processes and rules governing inclusionary housing.

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

You must demonstrate either employment through an employee pay stub or employee verification letter or have a studio lease.

Questions and Answers

What if I don't currently live or work full time in Somerville can I still apply?

Yes, but the priority will follow in this order:

- Somerville Housing Authority wait list
- Currently living or working in Somerville
- Not currently living or working in Somerville

Questions and Answers

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

Yes but all processes and rules apply.

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

Artists certification is good three years if you are currently in an artist live/work unit you must be re-certified at the end of the third year.

Questions and Answers

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.

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

You should determine and apply for the area medium income level in which you think you will be eligible based your **current gross** household income. If you are on the cusp you can apply for both.

Questions and Answers

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

The management company, with the City's review, will conduct an annual income certification. If you are in a 50% unit, your income can increase up to 140% of 80% AMI. But your rent will be increased. If you are in a 80% unit, your income can increase up to 140% of the 80% AMI. If your income increase beyond 140% of 80% you are then at market rate.

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

You must first apply for the artist certification. Then apply for the housing application. A lottery will occur. If you are chosen in the lottery process, then you must go through a full income certification process and credit check by management. If a chosen lottery applicant is deemed not income eligible, then we will move on to the next household from the lottery for that unit type. This process will continue until all units are full. Households that did not initially get placed will remain on wait list for Millbrook base on lottery order.

Questions and Answers

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

No. You are not eligible for a affordable 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 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.

Questions and Answers

If I am a full-time student and the head of household, can I apply?

No, if you are a part-time student and head of household, that is fine. Or if you a full time but someone else is head of household, then that is fine.