

# CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY

## THE PREFERENCE SYSTEM

With thousands of individuals and families applying for quality subsidized housing through the Cambridge Housing Authority, waiting lists are maintained in order to house applicants fairly and efficiently. The CHA waiting list uses a two-tiered preference system that gives applicants that qualify for a preference an opportunity to receive housing assistance ahead of other applicants. If an applicant for public housing or the housing choice voucher program meets the criteria for a preference, they will be placed ahead of non-preference applicants on the waiting list.

### **Preference Eligibility Criteria**

A preference is given to applicants who meet one of the following criteria:

1. **Resident of Cambridge\***: An applicant that is permanently living in Cambridge on the application date qualifies for a preference. Also, if an applicant is temporarily living with relatives or friends in Cambridge or living in a shelter, and whose last permanent residence was in Cambridge, qualifies for a preference.
2. **Residency and Transitional Households\***: An applicant that is currently living in a Cambridge shelter or transitional facility, or was living in a Cambridge shelter or transitional facility but was relocated by the Department of Transitional Assistance or a service provider to a location outside of Cambridge, will qualify for a preference.
3. **Employed or Soon to be Employed\***: Any non-resident applicant that is employed or about to be employed in the city of Cambridge on the date he/she applied qualify for a preference. This includes self-employed applicants who can demonstrate specific arrangements to carry out their employment activity in Cambridge. Part-time employment qualifies applicants for a preference.
4. **Veterans**: Those honorably discharged that performed wartime service, as well as their spouses, surviving spouses, parents and other dependents, qualify for a preference. Veterans with the same date of application will receive a preference in the following order:
  - Veterans with a service-connected disability
  - Families (surviving spouse, parent or other dependent) of deceased veterans whose death was service connected

*\*Preference eligibility must be maintained at the time of screening and lease up.*

### **Key Facts**

- **Each criterion for a preference carries equal weight and applicants will not be placed ahead of others due to a “higher” preference**
- **Employees at the reception desk cannot pre-screen an applicant and eligibility for a specific preference**

**Non-preference Applicants**: Applicants who do not qualify for a preference are placed on the waiting lists after all applicants with preferences, in order of their date and time of application.

**Emergency Status**: Applicants are able to move immediately to the top of the waiting list if they meet certain criteria and qualify for emergency status. For more information on Emergency Status please see the Emergency Status handout.

Visit [www.cambridge-housing.org](http://www.cambridge-housing.org) to learn more and contact CHA staff with inquiries