

CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY

EMERGENCY STATUS

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. However, in emergency circumstances CHA can move an applicant who qualifies for housing assistance to the top of the waiting list by granting them Emergency Status. Should an applicant be granted Emergency Status, he/she is offered the next available apartment in public housing, or in some cases, a housing choice voucher.

Emergency Status Criteria

For the first 5 emergencies listed here, the applicant **must first qualify for a preference category** (see the **Preference System Fact Sheet** for more information). For the fifth category, having a preference is not necessary to qualify for Emergency Status. The list below describes the different qualifications for receiving Emergency Status.

1. The applicant has been left without housing because of natural disaster such as a fire or flood.
2. The applicant has been given notice by the City to vacate an apartment and did not know of the issues that led to the order to vacate.
3. The applicant is faced with displacement by court order in a "no fault" eviction case and has an absolute deadline to vacate their current home within 90 days or a time set by court order; or has been displaced by court order in a "no fault" eviction case within 6 months of the CHA receiving emergency application.
4. The applicant or a member of the applicant's household is an individual with disabilities whose condition has changed within the past 90 days and makes continued residency in his/her current housing impractical.
5. For emergency voucher assistance, the applicant must be a current resident of Cambridge whose shelter burden (rent plus Section 8 Utility Allowance) has been increased, through appropriate notice or legal procedures, to more than 50% of his/her monthly adjusted income; and the owner agrees to enter into a Housing Choice Voucher contract for at least one year that will allow the applicant to stay in place.
6. Victim of Domestic Violence
 - a) An applicant qualifies for Emergency Status if he/she or a household member is a victim of domestic violence, the incident occurred in Cambridge, and:
 - Has been displaced from the Cambridge dwelling unit due to violence, and
 - Violence occurred within 6 months of the application, or
 - Has been displaced from the Cambridge dwelling due to loss of income from abuser and must leave the home, and
 - Applicant's rent is more than 50% of his/her monthly income
 - b) The applicant must show that:
 - He/she was a permanent resident of the Cambridge dwelling unit
 - Abuser was a permanent resident of the Cambridge dwelling unit
 - He/she is a victim of domestic violence by submission of a certification, and potentially provide third party documentation

Key Facts

- In order to determine eligibility for emergency status, an applicant must meet with a CHA staff person
- Employees at the reception desk cannot prescreen or give any advice regarding an applicant's eligibility for emergency status
- Every applicant has the right to seek an interview for emergency status
- Applicants seeking emergency status must be prepared to participate in a process that offers no guarantee of success

Visit www.cambridge-housing.org to learn more and contact CHA staff with inquiries