EMERGENCY POLICY NOTICE

EMERGENCY APPLICATION PROCESS (To Be Read by Staff Person to Applicant):

It is my responsibility to review your situation and advise you of the Cambridge Housing Authority’s criteria for emergency status. Further, I will make a preliminary determination regarding your likelihood of obtaining emergency status.

It is important to remember that regardless of my preliminary determination, no one shall be denied the ability to submit an emergency application provided they qualify for a preference and their situation fits into one of the six emergency criteria. If it is determined that you do not meet the threshold requirements for emergency status, you will be advised of all other housing options including other preferences which may be available and other waiting lists which may be open. Additionally, if I am able, I will direct you to external resources that may be able to assist in your current situation.

If it is determined that you meet the threshold requirements, you will be screened by me for eligibility to participate and will be required to document your current situation and prove eligibility for emergency status. During this process, I will prepare a file for you and will be responsible for presentation of your case to a reviewing committee. It will also be my responsibility to prepare a full write-up regarding the reviewing committee’s recommendation. This write-up, stating the committee’s recommendation is sent to the Executive Director for approval or disapproval. You will not be advised of a decision on your case until the Executive Director has signed and returned a recommendation write-up. At that time, I will provide you with a copy of the approved/disapproved recommendation form that will state the reasons for the decision and the procedure for appeal if necessary.

I certify that I read this information to this applicant and provided him/her a copy of this notice: ____________________________

The Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) has an Emergency Policy whereby applicants that meet CHA criteria may qualify for emergency admissions preference for public housing and a voucher.

PART A - PREFERENCE

To apply for emergency status, the applicant must qualify for one of the following preferences. Applicants who do not have a preference cannot be considered for emergency status and will be provided a letter of denial and given the right to appeal the staff decision to the Executive Director.

1. **Cambridge Resident** – The applicant is a permanent resident of Cambridge (this includes Congregate Housing and Single Room Occupancy [SRO] located in Cambridge), or the applicant is temporarily living with relatives and or friends in Cambridge and their last permanent residence was in Cambridge * Emergency Status for a Victim of domestic violence requires that the incident occurred in Cambridge and the situation meets certain other conditions as described in Part B of this notice.

2. **Cambridge Shelter or Transitional Facility** – The applicant is living in a Cambridge shelter or transitional facility or was living in a Cambridge shelter or transitional facility and was relocated by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) or other service provider to a facility outside of Cambridge.

3. **Employment in Cambridge** – The applicant is not a resident of Cambridge; however, the applicant or household member is employed or about to be employed in Cambridge.

4. **Veteran’s Status**: The applicant or household member is a veteran or the surviving spouse, parent or other dependent of a veteran with a service connected death.
PART B - CRITERIA

To qualify for emergency status the applicant must meet and be able to verify ONE of the criteria listed below.

1. **Domestic Violence**: The applicant or a member of the household is a victim of domestic violence, the incident occurred in Cambridge; and
   - The applicant has been displaced from his/her Cambridge dwelling unit, where he/she was a permanent and approved resident, due to domestic violence; AND the applicant has not secured permanent housing; AND the last incident of abuse (threatened, attempted, or actual) occurred within 6 months of CHA’s receipt of the emergency application; OR
   - The applicant or household member is recently displaced or likely to be displaced from his/her Cambridge dwelling unit due to the loss of income from an abuser (who is/was a permanent and approved resident of the unit) who must leave the home; AND the applicant’s rent is documented to be more than 50% of his/her monthly adjusted income as a result of the loss of income from the abuser being separated from the household.

   Emergencies due to domestic violence will mostly be addressed by the issuance of a voucher. However, in some cases an offer of a public housing unit may be granted. If the applicant is granted emergency status, the applicant must provide the name of the abuser and certify that the abuser will not reside with the applicant.

2. **Natural Disaster**: The applicant has been left without housing because of a natural disaster, such as a fire or a flood AND;
   - The applicant was a permanent and approved resident of the property; AND
   - The applicant or any member of the household was not responsible for the situation that caused the displacement; AND
   - The damage to the property is sufficient enough that the property has been condemned and repairs are estimated to exceed two months.

3. **Ordered to Vacate**: The applicant has been given notice by the City to vacate an apartment AND
   - The applicant was a permanent and approved resident of the property; AND
   - The applicant or any member of his/her household was not responsible for or substantially contributed to any of the issues that led to the order to vacate; AND
   - The conditions that led to the order to vacate the property could not have been evident at the time that the applicant moved into the apartment.

4. **Imminent Displacement**: The applicant is facing imminent displacement by court order in a “no fault” eviction case and has been given an absolute deadline to vacate his/her current home within 90 days or a time set by a court order or the applicant has been displaced by court order in a “no fault” eviction case within 6 months of the CHA’s receipt of the emergency application and has not secured permanent housing;
   - Receipt of a notice to vacate from the landlord is not sufficient. Applicant must show documentation that the landlord has received a judgment for possession; AND
   - The court ordered eviction was not based on a default by the applicant; AND
   - Total household income is, and has been for the preceding 12-month period, less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).
   - “No fault” evictions shall not include evictions for nonpayment of rent unless the applicant can show that the applicant’s shelter burden exceeded 50% of adjusted income due to a change in circumstances which was beyond the control of the applicant or applicant’s household member and such change was caused by an event or events other than, or in addition to, loss of employment;
5. **Disability makes current housing impractical:** The applicant or a member of the applicant’s household is an individual with disabilities whose condition has changed within the past ninety (90) days making continued residency in his/her current housing impractical; AND
   - The issues making the current housing impractical were not known and/or a concern at the time that the applicant moved into his/her current housing; AND
   - The housing cannot be reasonably modified to allow continued occupancy; AND
   - The applicant’s total household income is less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).

6. **Rent Increase to 50% or More of Adjusted Income:** (Applicants in this category will be given an in place voucher for assistance) The applicant currently resides in a Cambridge apartment AND:
   - During the last six months, the applicant’s shelter burden (rent plus Section 8 Utility Allowance) has been increased to 50% or more of the applicant’s monthly adjusted income; AND
   - In cases where the increase in rent coincides with a loss or reduction of income, the applicant must show that the increase in shelter burden would have met the 50% threshold based on his/her former income; AND
   - The owner agrees in writing to enter into a Housing Choice Voucher contract with a minimum one year lease that will allow the applicant to stay in place; AND
   - The applicant has lived in his/her current apartment for at least two years; unless
   - The shelter cost increase is due to a legal condominium/cooperative conversion or an affordability agreement with the City of Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust, in which case the time limit can be waived provided the applicant resided in the unit prior to notice of the conversion or award of Affordable Housing Trust money.
   - Applicants residing in inclusionary zoning units cannot qualify under Criteria # 6 unless they moved into the unit prior to September 25, 2008 (or a later date in some buildings) and if he/she receives a voucher; its use is restricted to the applicant’s current unit and is not mobile.
   - With the exception of applicants residing in the inclusionary units, applicants that receive a voucher by qualifying under Criteria #6 must use the voucher in their current unit for the first year but are free to move after this point.

**Applicants that do not fit into one of the six criteria will not be considered for emergency status and will be provided a “Failure to Meet Criteria” letter and given the right to appeal the staff decision to the Executive Director.**

CHA’s Conference Panel will only hear appeals from applicants whose situation has meet one of the six criteria and has had their case presented to the Emergency Review Committee and has been denied emergency status.

This is only a summary of the policy, more details may be found in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (for federal public housing) and Section 8 Administrative Plan (for vouchers), copies of which are available online or at the CHA’s main office.