



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

Maura T. Healey, Governor ◆ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor ◆ Edward M. Augustus Jr., Secretary

PUBLIC HOUSING NOTICE 2023-15

To: Local Housing Authorities

From: Fatima Razzaq, Acting Director, Division of Public Housing & Maryssa Schneider McLean, Acting Director, Division of Rental Assistance

RE: Revised Housing Situation Priority Policy and Issuance of a Homeless Priority Verification Checklist

Date: September 14, 2023

Need to know:

Two new tenant selection policies are issued

- [Revised Housing Situation Priority Policy \(HSPP\)](#)
- [Homeless Priority 1-4 \(A-C\), Eligibility Checklist](#)
 - [Homeless Priority 1-4 \(A-C\), Eligibility Checklist Condensed Version](#)

EOHLC continues to make progress in its effort to modernize and streamline tenant selection for state subsidized housing through the implementation of Centralized Screening of Priority 1-4 claims by the Centralized Screening Office (CSO). As part of that process, and in coordination with the launch of Centralized Screening, EOHLC revised the Housing Situation Priority Policy (HSPP) and developed a new homeless verification guide called *Homeless Priority 1-4 (A-C), Eligibility Checklist*. The checklist describes the homeless verification requirements applied by the Centralized Screening Office (CSO).

Housing Situation Priority Policy (HSPP):

The HSPP defines the eligibility requirements for homeless priorities and establishes specific requirements for the following:

- Priority 4A: No Fault Loss of Housing
- Priority 4B: Severe Medical Emergency
- Priority 4C: Abusive Situation

The HSPP has been revised to make the language clear and accessible to applicants and to reflect the role of the Centralized Screening Office (CSO administered by Archipelago Strategies Group). The eligibility criteria for homeless priorities reflect the requirements of 760 CMR 5.00 and remain largely unchanged with the following exceptions:

Priority 4A: No-Fault Loss of Housing

Requires verification of No-Fault Loss of Housing through housing or district court Judgement, Agreement for Judgement, Agreement of the Parties, or other court document requiring the applicant to vacate a Primary Residence. A Notice to Quit is not sufficient verification.

The goal of this change is to provide greater clarity for applicants and the CSO and to identify applicants at greatest risk.

Priority 4C: Abusive Situation

Expands the definition of Abusive Situation to include stalking and sexual assault by a non-family member. The goal is to ensure that the priority reflects applicant experiences.

Homeless Priority 1-4 (A-C), Eligibility Checklist:

The new *Homeless Priority 1-4 (A-C) Eligibility Checklist* provides guidance to the CSO and applicants about the verification requirements for claims of Priorities 1-4 (A-C) and claims of Veterans and Local Preference. The verification requirements are largely unchanged with the following exceptions:

Proof of displacement or imminent displacement from primary residence

The document clarifies that imminent displacement is defined as a known date of displacement from a Primary Residence rather than a date within 90 days.

Priority 3: Displaced by Public Action: Sanitary Code Violations (Type B)

Checklist clarifies that Priority 3 includes displacement from a Primary Residence due to enforcement of minimum standards of fitness for human habitation established by the State Sanitary Code (105 CMR 410.000), and also includes:

- the Massachusetts State Building Code
- other local ordinances, by-laws, rules or regulations.

Priority 4A: No-Fault Loss of Housing

As noted above, requires verification of No-Fault Loss of Housing through housing or district court Judgement, Agreement for Judgement, Agreement of the Parties, or other court document requiring the applicant to vacate a Primary Residence. A Notice to Quit is not sufficient verification.

Priority 4C- Abusive Situation

Expands the definition of Abusive Situation to include stalking and sexual assault by a non-family member. The goal is to ensure that the priority reflects applicant experiences.

Any questions regarding this PHN should be directed to Melanie Loveland Hale at melanie.loveland-hale@mass.gov.