



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

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

**PHN 2023-16
MRVP Program Notice 2023-05**

To: Local Housing Authorities (LHAs), Regional Administering Agencies (RAAs)

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

Re: MRVP Going Live and Centralizing Screening Determinations for Priority & Preference

Date: September 15, 2023

NEED TO KNOW

1. MRVP Going Live in CHAMP on September 27, 2023. MRVP Lottery will run between 9/27 and 10/27. There is a new CHAMP Paper App. MRVP training is available September – October.
2. Once LHAs migrate their MRVP waitlist, all MRVP Paper Applications need to be entered into CHAMP.
3. Centralizing priority screening and determinations for all Public Housing and MRVP applicants will begin on September 27, 2023.
4. LHA and Centralized Screener responsibilities
5. Training on centralized screening guidance is available September - October.

MRVP Going Live in CHAMP

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) has been working to incorporate the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) into CHAMP. On September 27, 2023, MRVP will be “Going Live” in CHAMP. This means that applicants will be able to apply for MRVP mobile vouchers, as well as MRVP project-based vouchers where LHAs and RAAs (“Housing Agencies”) control tenant selection, using CHAMP. Additionally, Housing Agencies will begin to administer their MRVP waitlists in CHAMP after this date.

The below information provides an overview of the MRVP Launch for LHAs that administer MRVP.

1. Exactly when LHAs can begin using CHAMP to administer MRVP depends on whether their MRVP waitlist is OPEN or CLOSED and whether their MRVP waitlist has been successfully migrated into CHAMP. LHAs with closed waitlists or who are establishing an MRVP waiting list for the first time will need to partake in the MRVP Lottery that will coincide with MRVP Going Live in CHAMP. LHAs that are migrating their MRVP waitlist by entering data into CHAMP can begin entering data into CHAMP upon receipt of this PHN.
 - a. If your waitlist is OPEN, you can begin using CHAMP to administer MRVP once your OPEN waitlist is migrated into CHAMP:
 - i. You can begin issuing vouchers on 9/27.
 - ii. You must enter any paper applications you receive into CHAMP.
 - b. If your waitlist is CLOSED, you can begin using CHAMP to administer MRVP once your CLOSED waitlist is migrated into CHAMP and the MRVP Lottery is completed in mid-November:
 - i. You can begin issuing vouchers after the lottery is run in mid-November.
 - ii. You must enter paper applications you receive after the lottery has begun on 9/27 into CHAMP.
2. MRVP Lottery Schedule
 - a. LHA access to MRVP in CHAMP for training and migration: September 13, 2023
 - b. Lottery begins and MRVP application opens in CHAMP to the public: 9/27/23
 - c. Lottery ends: 10/27/23 at 4:00 pm EST
 - d. Enter all received paper applications by 11/10/23
 - e. Lottery run by Zagarán in CHAMP week of 11/13/23
3. MRVP Lottery Details
 - a. Any applications (paper or digital) received during the lottery period for waiting lists that are being re-opened or created will be randomized via a lottery.
 - b. Any applications (paper or digital) received during the lottery period for waiting lists that are already open will be added based on date/time applied.
 - c. All existing MRVP applicants will be migrated into CHAMP. If they already have an application in CHAMP, their MRVP selections will be added. If they don't have an existing application in CHAMP, they can claim their application after 9/27/23* (subject to delay based on waitlist migration).
 - d. By 5:00 pm on Friday, November 10, ALL LHAs must enter ALL CHAMP paper applications received before 10/27/23 into CHAMP. All applications must be entered by that time so that a lottery can be run the following week.

- e. EOHLC will affirmatively market the opening of the MRVP mobile waiting list in regional and minority newspapers, as well as host an information session. EOHLC will post additional information/FAQ on MRVP.
 - f. LHAs with project-based waiting lists that are re-opening or being created must affirmatively market those lists. Please reach out to Micqueen Clerger with any questions or for a template.
 - g. LHAs are encouraged to widely distribute information that the waiting lists are opening to CHAMP to their communities, etc.
 - h. While EOHLC hopes applicants will apply via CHAMP, LHAs should prepare for more CHAMP applications than normal and additional CHAMP questions. Note that www.mass.gov/mrvp and the CHAMP help page will have helpful information.
 - i. MRVP mobile vouchers will be “Apply All” on the paper application and online. If an applicant would like to remove themselves from a mobile list, they can do that in CHAMP on their selections screen.
 - j. It is in an applicant’s best interest to apply to ALL mobile MRVP lists. Applicants already on one or two mobile MRVP lists should still log into CHAMP and apply for the remaining MRVP mobile waiting lists.
 - k. Several LHAs are also opening their mobile AHVP waiting lists during this time. In general, all of the MRVP lottery information applies to these lists as well.
 - l. MRVP-specific CHAMP trainings will begin in mid-September. Please refer to the CHAMP Help page to view training opportunities.
4. New CHAMP Paper Application
- a. The CHAMP Paper Application has been updated to include MRVP. Some other minor changes have been made to the CHAMP Paper Application. Please discontinue use of any older versions and utilize the updated CHAMP Paper Application.
 - b. The English and Spanish versions of the updated paper application are attached to this PHN as Attachments A and B. The other language versions can be found on the CHAMP Help page at How to Apply for Public Housing | Mass.gov.
 - c. Once LHAs with MRVP migrate their MRVP waitlist, all MRVP Paper Applications need to be entered into CHAMP.
 - d. Once MRVP Goes Live on September 27, 2023, all LHAs that receive CHAMP Paper Applications must enter them into CHAMP even if they do not have MRVP.

Centralized Priority/Preference Screening Launch for Public Housing and MRVP

EOHLC previously announced that it would move to a centralized priority/preference screening model for tenant selection in CHAMP. In this model, one centralized screening agent will make **all** determinations on priority/preference claims for all applicants claiming Priority 1-5 or Veterans Preference. These determinations will be made centrally on behalf of all housing agencies, with each applicant receiving one determination applying to all waitlists they have

applied to. Housing Agencies will continue to review and make determinations on Local Preference for Priority 6 (Transfer for Good Cause) and 7 (Standard) applicants. The attached regulatory waiver provides for these changes (Attachment C).

EOHLC selected [Archipelago Strategies Group](#) (ASG) as the Centralized Screening Office. ASG will be making determinations for applicant priority and preference claims in CHAMP. On July 13, 2023, ASG began making priority/preference determinations for Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) applicants. On September 27, 2023, ASG will begin making priority/preference determinations for Public Housing and MRVP applicants.

After Go Live on September 27th, applicants will only appear on LHA waitlists with **verified priority 1-5** claims; they will have Priority 7 (Standard) status until ASG determines they made a valid priority claim. NOTE – If applicants have already verified claims at certain LHAs, they will maintain those claims; ASG will not overturn Granted determinations made **prior** to implementation of centralized screening.

ASG's priority and preference determinations will be the **official and final determinations in CHAMP** (see Attachment C). LHAs may NOT overturn ASG's determination. LHAs will only make Local Preference determinations if the applicant does not claim any priority or Veterans Preference. Applicants may still request a private conference with ASG and appeal to EOHLC following a negative private conference determination.

ASG will use EOHLC guidance on priority verification following [760 CMR 5.00](#), the Housing Situation Priority Policy and the Homeless Priority 1-4 (A-C) Checklist.

LHAs continue to be responsible for:

- Mailing Vacancy Screening Packages for eligibility and qualification;
- Determining applicants' program eligibility and qualification;
- Determining applicants' Local Preference if no other priority or preference is claimed;
- Determining Priority 6 (Transfer for Good Cause) for applicants;
- Entering any paper applications received into CHAMP in a timely manner;
- Helping applicants with their CHAMP application, either via CHAMP or otherwise;
- Uploading any priority and preference documents received into CHAMP;
- Answering applicant questions about programs; and
- Holding private conferences for negative eligibility and qualification determinations.

ASG will be responsible for:

- Sending out priority and preference verification requests to applicants claiming Priority 1-5 and to all applicants claiming Veterans Preference;

- Receiving priority and preference verification documents from applicants;
- Following up with applicants to gather all necessary priority/preference documentation;
- Uploading any priority/preference verification documents received into CHAMP;
- Determining priority and preference;
- Sending notice to applicants of priority/preference determinations; and
- Holding private conferences for negative priority determinations.

ASG Contact Information for Housing Authorities:

- LHA Email: HACQuestions@discoverasg.com
- LHA Inbound Line: (978) 955-7009

ASG Contact Information for Applicants:

- Applicant Email: CSquestions@discoverasg.com
- Applicants Inbound line: (978) 935-4900

Any questions regarding this PHN should be directed to Andy Clinton (andrew.clinton@mass.gov) and/or George King (george.king@mass.gov).

Attachment A: English Version of the CHAMP Paper Application

Attachment B: Regulatory Waivers

Attachment C: CyberSense Training Schedule