

Amherst Housing Authority
33 Kellogg Avenue, Suite 81
Amherst, MA 01002-2169

Housing Management
(413) 256-0206

TTD Available
FAX (413) 256-8551

Section 8, MRVP, AHVP Programs
(413) 256-8128

Public Notice

The Amherst Housing Authority (AHA) is adding a limited preference to its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher waiting list for applicants who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The preference will be limited to 13 eligible families. The AHA will begin implementing this limited preference on July 31, 2020.

To qualify for the limited preference, families must be currently experiencing homelessness, at-risk of homelessness, transitioning out of an institutional or segregated setting, at serious risk of institutionalization, or residing in a Rapid Rehousing or Permanent Supportive Housing program and be at-risk of homelessness.

An eligible family is defined as:

A family composed of one or more non-elderly persons, ages 18-61, with a disability. A family whose sole member is an emancipated minor is not an eligible family.

Homeless is defined as:

(1) An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
- An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
- An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

(2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

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Equal Housing Opportunity

- The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
- No subsequent residence has been identified; and
- The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing.

(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

- Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a);
- Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;
- Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
- Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities; chronic physical health or mental health conditions; substance addiction; histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect); the presence of a child or youth with a disability; or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment; or

(4) Any individual or family who:

- Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence; and
- Has no other residence; and
- Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

At risk of experiencing homeless is defined as: An individual or family who:

- (1) Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency

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shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the "Homeless" definition in this section;
and

(2) Meets one of the following conditions:

- Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
- Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
- Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days of the date of application for assistance;
- Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
- Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons, or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 people per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;
- Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
- Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

Institutional or other segregated settings include, but are not limited to:

- (1) congregate settings populated exclusively or primarily with individuals with disabilities;
- (2) congregate settings characterized by regimentation in daily activities, lack of privacy or autonomy, policies limiting visitors, or limits on individuals' ability to engage freely in community activities and to manage their own activities of daily living; or
- (3) settings that provide for daytime activities primarily with other individuals with disabilities.

At serious risk of institutionalization: Includes an individual with a disability who as a result of a public entity's failure to provide community services or its cut to such services will likely cause a decline in health, safety, or welfare that would lead to the individual's eventual placement in an institution. This includes individuals experiencing lack of access to supportive services for independent living, long waiting lists for or lack of access to housing combined with community-based services, individuals currently living under poor housing conditions or homeless with barriers to geographic mobility, and/or currently living alone but requiring supportive services for independent living.

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A person cannot be considered at serious risk of institutionalization unless the person has a disability.

Rapid rehousing means time-limited housing assistance in which supportive services are provided to assist homeless persons rapidly connect to and maintain permanent housing.

Permanent supportive housing means permanent housing in which voluntary supportive services are provided to assist homeless persons with a disability to live independently.

In addition, the Amherst Housing Authority is removing local preferences from its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher waiting list for applicants who have been displaced due to natural disaster or board of health condemnation.

These changes to the AHA Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program waiting list will be effective July 31, 2020. If you believe you may be eligible for the limited homeless/at-risk preference, please apply or update your application prior to July 31, 2020.

Applications can be obtained at the AHA, or you may apply online at www.gosection8.com/masscwl . If you have already applied, you can update your application at www.gosection8.com/masscwl .