

Common Housing Application for Public Housing

**Tips and Instructions for Completing the Application for
MWCIL Consumers**

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Section 1: Creating an Account

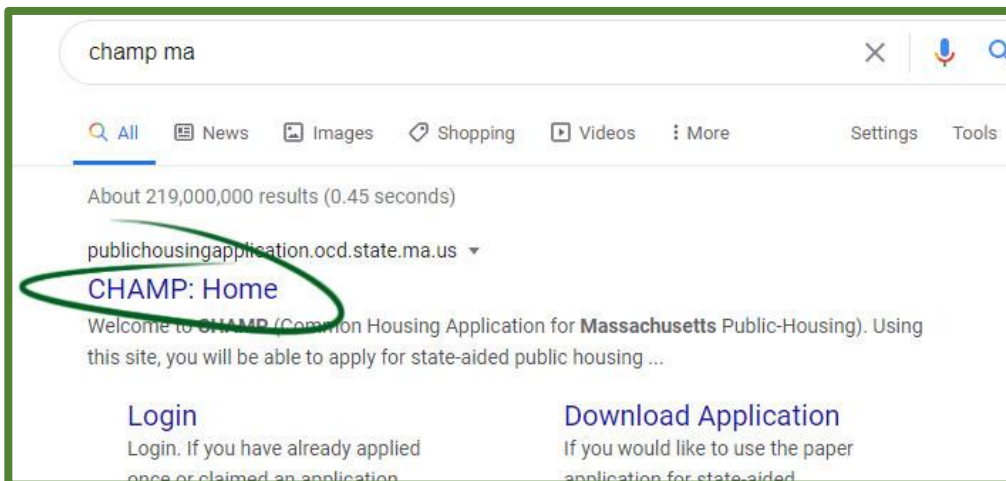
1. Creating an Account

What is the CHAMP Application?

The Common Housing Application for Public Housing, otherwise known as CHAMP, has replaced the DHCD Universal Standard Application, the CHAMP application is a centralized database used by all the housing authorities in the state of Massachusetts.

The application is meant to be filled out online. However, a paper version of the application is also available and, unlike the DHCD Universal Standard application, filling out a paper CHAMP application and submitting it to any one housing authority will allow an applicant to apply for any number of housing authorities at one time.

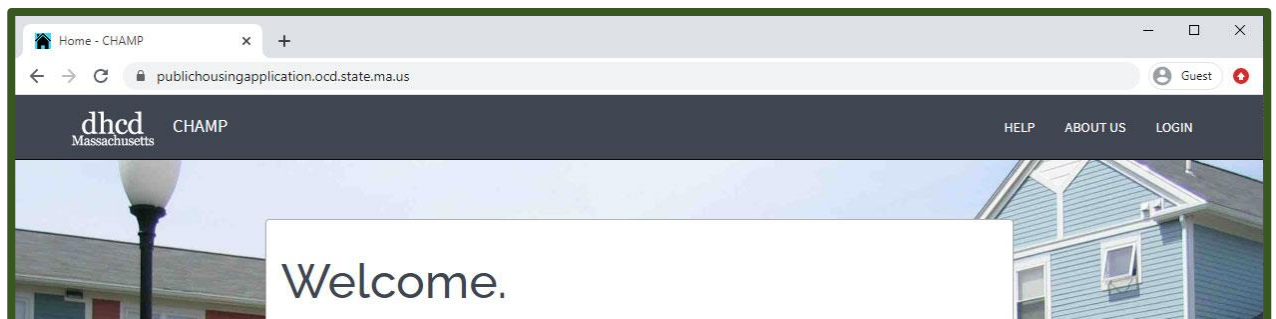
<https://publichousingapplication.oecd.state.ma.us/>



If a user happens to be in a situation where they need to access the website but they don't remember the URL, simply searching on a search engine like Google for "CHAMP Ma" will bring it up as the top result. It's important to note that the website can be accessed to change or update details on the application, including adding or removing towns

that the application is open to. As such, accessing the CHAMP site is relevant for more than just the initial application.

The landing page for the CHAMP website is straight-forward in terms of navigation. Returning users can use the login link, highlighted by the yellow arrow. However, for first time applicants, the big, green Get Started button is where they will begin.



How to Create


Applicants will see two navigation boxes, one for logging in and the other for creating an account. **Even if someone has turned in a paper application, if they are accessing that application for the first time online, they will need to create an account.**

Regardless of whether someone is accessing an account to edit a previous paper application, or if they're creating a new application entirely, CHAMP will search its database to see whether or not a new user has an application in anywhere.

First, an applicant will need to enter a **valid email** and an appropriate **password** for their account. The password must have *three of four* characteristics:

1. Uppercase letters
2. Lowercase letters
3. Numbers
4. Special characters (such as !, @, #)

NEW APPLICANTS



Create Account

For applicants new to CHAMP

If you have already applied for state-aided public housing and would like to find your existing application at one or more housing authorities, or if you have never applied for state-aided public housing before, please click the 'Begin' button below and we will help you get started with CHAMP.

BEGIN

Step 1: Create User Login

Before you get started on your application, you must first provide an email address to use as your username. You must also create a password following the password rules below.

Username

Please provide an email address below. This will be your username for the CHAMP website and the primary mode of contact for Housing Authorities. It is also required for resetting your password if you forget it and cannot log in. If you do not have an email address, you can use any free email service to create one.

Username (Email) *

john.smith@gmail.com

Password Rules


Passwords must be at least **8 characters long** and contain three of the following types of characters: **uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, or special characters** (for example !, @, #).

Password *

Re-enter Password *

Select a Language *

English (en)

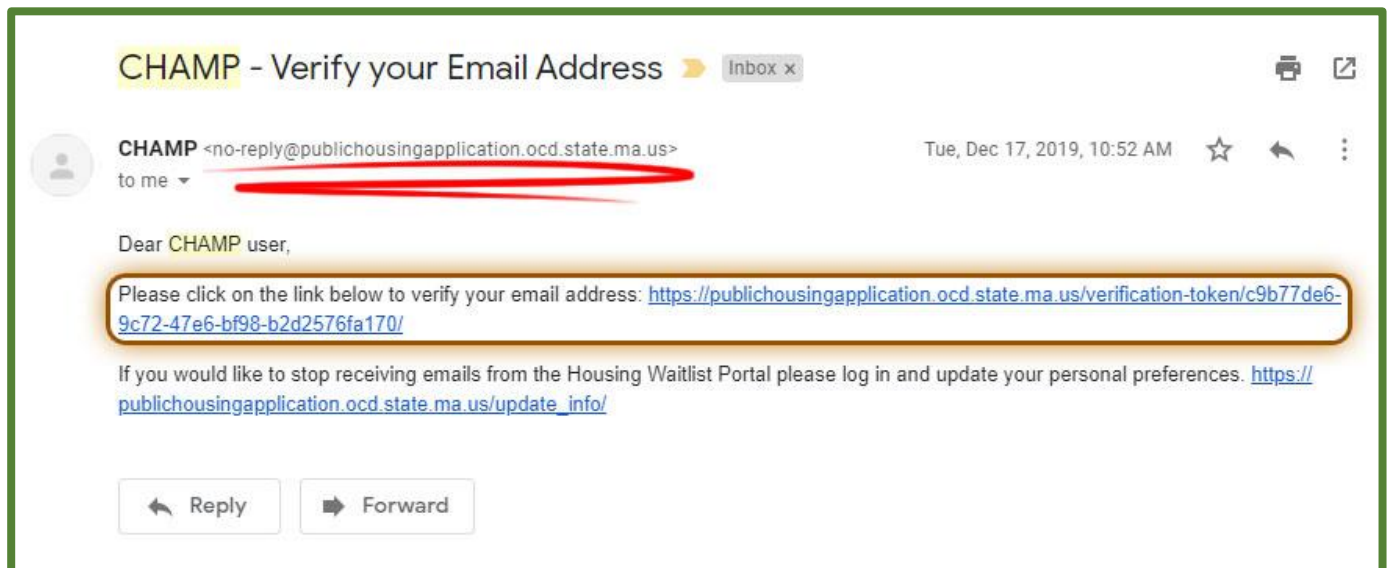
 I'm not a robot



CREATE USER

Additionally, passwords must contain at least **8 characters total**. After selecting language, users may be asked to verify that they are not bots with a reCAPTCHA puzzle.

When create user is selected an email should be sent to the email provided. This email must be accessed, and the verification link clicked, before the application can be filled out (or edited.)



The email used will be the email by which one will access the application going forward. As such, it's important to use an email which will be regularly used, and both the email and the password for the CHAMP application should be kept somewhere secure, such as with important papers, in a desk drawer by a computer, or using a password management software program.

Section 2: The Application

2. The Application

There are six parts to the application form. They can be accessed quickly by clicking on the appropriate link. However, for first applications, the user should select **Work On My Application Form**.

Each part can be completed separately, as the applicant will be prompted to save after the completion of each section. It's recommended that personal information, income information, and have a good idea of any reasonable accommodations one might need for an apartment.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Contact Information | 4. Language Access |
| 2. Current Housing Situation | 5. Household Makeup |
| 3. Employment & Veteran Status | 6. Public Housing Application |

STEP 1 My Application Form

Please complete your application form. After the application has been submitted, it can be updated at any time. Please be sure to make changes to your application if any of your information changes.

Application Progress

- | | |
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| 1. Contact Information | 5. Household Makeup |
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WORK ON MY APPLICATION FORM

Contact Information

Name and Date of Birth

An applicant's **First Name**, **Last Name**, and **Date of Birth** are required.

However, the **Middle Initial** and **Suffix** are important for distinguishing applicants from one another, so they are still required if they're part of an applicant's legal name.

1. Contact Information

The Head of Household is the primary contact person for questions or updates regarding your application. Please update the contact information for the Head of Household as soon as it changes. It is very important to always keep your contact information current so that we can reach you when housing becomes available. If there is a person who typically knows how to reach you such as a friend or relative, please also provide their name and contact information. If we are unable to reach you, you may miss an opportunity for housing.

Please provide your name and date of birth

First Name: *	Middle Initial:	Last Name: *	Suffix:
<input type="text" value="John"/>	<input type="text" value="H"/>	<input type="text" value="Smith"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>
Date of Birth: *			
<input type="text" value="1983"/>	<input type="text" value="Apr"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	

Section 2: The Application

Address

An applicant's address is wherever they're currently located. In the event of homelessness, the address should be from where you're currently sheltering or your most recent address. This should include the **Street Address** which will have the street name and number, the **City/Town**, State (which will almost always be Massachusetts), and the **Zip Code**.

Please provide your primary residential address

If you are currently homeless, please provide your shelter's address OR the address of your last primary residence. This address will be used to determine your local resident preference.

Street Address: *

15 Main St.

Apt., Suite, Floor, etc.

Apt 3

City/Town: *

Framingham

State: *

Massachusetts

Out of state

Zip Code: * [Zip Code Lookup](#)

01702

☐ Check here if your mailing address is different from your residential address

If the address has an **Apartment, Suite, or Floor Number**, that can be included in the second line of the address field. If the address isn't in Massachusetts then **Out of State** should be checked off. If an applicant has a mailing address separate from wherever they're sheltering, then they can check off the **Second Checkbox** and fields will show up allowing them to add a mailing address.

Phone and Email

All of these fields are optional. However, applicants should try to fill in at least one of the phone fields (**Home Phone**, otherwise known as a landline; **Mobile Phone**, otherwise known as a cell phone; and **Work Phone** if available at work). Additionally, if the email an applicant provided isn't the one they use most frequently, they should put the email they use most frequently in the **Email Address** field.

Please provide your phone and email

Please provide phone numbers where you can be reached. Only use numbers and dashes. If you have an additional or backup email address where you would like to receive extra copies of communications provide it below. This email address will not receive notifications related to password or username changes and cannot be used to log in to your CHAMP account.

Home Phone:

Mobile Phone:

555-505-4545

Work Phone:

Email address (strongly recommended):

john.h.smith@gmail.com

Section 2: The Application

Secondary Contact

The option for a secondary contact allows a Housing Authority to reach out to someone else in the event that they're having trouble reaching out to the applicant themselves. This is particularly useful if the applicant ends up indisposed, such as in the hospital for a long-term stay.

1. **First Name**
2. **Last Name**
3. **Street Address**
4. **City/Town**
5. **State**
6. **Zip Code**
7. **Phone Number**
8. **Middle Initial**
9. **Suffix**
10. **Address Line 2**
11. **Out of State**
12. **Email Address**

Please provide a secondary contact person or alternate address

Sometimes it's difficult to find applicants over time. If there is a person who knows how to contact you such as a friend or relative, please provide their name, phone number, and address.

First Name:	Middle Initial:	Last Name:	Suffix:
<input type="text" value="Linda"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Smith"/>	<input type="text"/>

Street Address:

Apt., Suite, Floor, etc.

City/Town:	State:	Zip Code: Zip Code Lookup
<input type="text" value="Framingham"/>	<input type="text" value="Massachusetts"/>	<input type="text" value="01701"/>

☐ Out of state

Phone Number:

Email address (if available):

Current Housing Situation

The waiting lists for public housing only weigh chronological order of applications turned in by a small amount. Instead, a list of different priority situations end up being the biggest factors in determining who gets housing first. The single biggest priority boost, however, comes from being homeless.

Homeless has a handful of different definitions:

1. **Streets:** Those who are homeless on the streets include those living out of their cars, or even for those who are physically outside. Proof of this state of homelessness is the most difficult to come by. However, reaching out to a town social worker where someone is currently considering their town of residence and asking for a letter of verification is a common method of proof.
2. **Wandering:** Some who are homeless find friends or family to stay with for brief periods of time. Generally, if they spend less than half a month somewhere, they can't consider that place to be enough

Section 2: The Application

2. Current Housing Situation

Please tell us about your current housing situation. Depending on your current housing situation and your ability to verify your circumstance, you may be placed higher on specific waitlists. Making a false statement or misrepresentation may result in the denial of your application.

Note: You will be required to provide documentation to verify your current housing situation. The types of documents you may need to verify your housing situation may include, but are not limited to, a lease, rent receipts, utility bill, etc.

Are you now homeless or in imminent danger of becoming homeless?

Note: The definition of homeless for state-aided public housing programs is not the same as the definition used by homeless shelters and other subsidy programs.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

of a shelter to be considered homeless. In this instance, proof of homelessness could be verified from a letter from someone that the applicant is staying with, mentioning that the place can't function as an actual residence for that person.

3. **Shelter:** Those who do have a shelter to stay in are still considered homeless as a shelter cannot be considered a permanent residence. A letter from the case worker working with the applicant is usually sufficient for verification.

4. **Imminent:** In certain situations, someone who does have a permanent residence, but is in imminent danger of homelessness can also qualify for the status. There's a difference between the general use of the term and its use as a definition of homelessness for housing authorities. Typically, for imminent homelessness to qualify for emergency status, there must be a specific date upon which someone will become homeless. Living with family or a friend who could kick someone out at any time is more difficult to prove. Typical verification would be something along the lines of an eviction notice or foreclosure.

5. **Abuse:** There's one other way in which someone who has a permanent place to live can be considered to have homeless status. A victim of domestic abuse, whether physical or emotional, is considered eligible for emergency status. However, if an applicant is in such a situation, it's important that they are aware of available resources to get them out of the dangerous situation and into somewhere safe while they await new housing.

Section 2: The Application

3. Employment & Veteran Status

You may receive local resident preference based on where you are employed in addition to where you live. For some programs, you may also receive a preference for Veterans of the U.S. Military and some members of their families.

Where is your current place of employment located?

City/Town:

Framingham

State:

Massachusetts

Zip Code:

[Zip Code Lookup](#)

01702

☐ Out of state

Are you a Veteran of the United States Armed Forces?

You must meet certain criteria to qualify for Veteran status. [You'll need to provide your form DD 214, which you can get from the National Archives](#)

☐ I am a Veteran, or a member of my household is a Veteran.

☐ I, or a member of my household, is the spouse, surviving spouse, dependent parent or a child, or divorced spouse with a dependent child of a Veteran.

Employment & Veteran Status

Employment

One of the priority preferences an applicant can receive is in the city or town in which they are employed. For an applicant who both lives and works in a town they're applying to, they will get both of those taken as priority points toward their place on the waiting list.

Because not everyone has employment, a fact

which is unfortunately even more true among the disability community, this entire section is optional. There's no need to put N/A or any sort of note about not being employed, an applicant can simply skip the section all together.

Veteran Status

As far as Veteran Status is concerned, this too is a simple matter of either checking off the appropriate box or skipping it altogether.

1. **City/Town:** This is the city or town in which the applicant is primarily employed. If the applicant works multiple jobs, they should designate one job as their place of primary employment and use only it for this portion of the application.
2. **State:** This defaults to Massachusetts and, in the vast majority of cases, this will remain true. However, there may be isolated instances where Out of State might be checked off.
3. **Zip Code:** Some cities and even towns have more than one zip code, as such, it is important to specify the zip code in which an applicant's employment is located.
4. **Veteran Status:** Separate from current employment is an applicant's status as a veteran of the United States Military. In the event that an applicant is a veteran, they can check off the box for an additional priority preference. A link above this checkbox lays out the specific criteria to qualify for veteran status.
5. **Family of Veteran:** One can also qualify for veteran preferences if they are family under one of these specific criteria:
 - a. Their spouse is a veteran
 - b. They are a dependent parent or child of a veteran
 - c. They are a divorced spouse *with* a dependent child of a veteran

Section 2: The Application

Not being a veteran doesn't count against applicants. Rather, veteran status merely provides an additional priority on the waiting list for those who are veterans. The place of residence, employment, and emergency status priority preferences all still have significant weight.

Language

Initially there are no textbox fields. If one's primary language is English they can simply select "Yes" and move on to the next section. However, if their primary language is anything other than English, when they select "No" a textbox will appear, allowing them to enter what their primary language is.

The two questions are split into *Spoken* and *Written*. In most cases this will be the same, but this is not always the case, hence the distinction. This is particularly true for individuals with English as a second language who might speak English well enough to consider it their primary language, but perhaps haven't picked up written English to the same level, or even vice versa, depending on how they learned the language.

4. Language Access

Your status with respect to tenant selection procedures will not be affected by your answers to the two questions below.

Do you understand spoken English?

☐ Yes
☒ No

What is your primary spoken language?

Spanish

Do you understand written English?

☐ Yes
☒ No

What is your primary written language?

Spanish

Household Makeup

The household makeup will determine how many bedrooms you can request for your housing. It's important to be as thorough and complete as possible when filling in this information.

1. **First Name:** This should be the full first name, as opposed to a nickname, though as long as it matches an applicant's ID it will be acceptable.
2. **Last Name:** Like first name, the last name is required.
3. **Gender:** At the moment, CHAMP only accepts Male or Female, select the one that best fits the applicant.

Section 2: The Application

5. Household Makeup

Please enter the name and personal information of each member of the household who will be living in the unit, starting with the Head of Household. Please note:

- Responding to the racial and ethnic designation questions is optional. Your status with respect to tenant selection procedures may be affected by this information.
- Gender, relationship to head of household, and date of birth are required to determine your appropriate unit size. For household members who do not identify as Male or Female, please identify the Gender with which they will share a bedroom.
- If provided, the social security number will be used to verify income and assets.
- Responding to the disability question is optional. Your income determination may be affected by this information.

Please provide the names and personal details of the Head of Household

Household Member 1 is always the head of the household.

First Name: *	Last Name: *	Relationship to Head of Household	
<input type="text" value="John"/>	<input type="text" value="Smith"/>	<input type="text" value="I am head of household"/>	
Racial Designation:	Ethnic Designation:	Gender: *	Occupation: *
<input type="text" value="White"/>	<input type="text" value="Not Hispanic/Latino"/>	<input type="text" value="Male"/>	<input type="text" value="Employed"/>
Social Security:	Date of Birth: *		Disabled:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="1970"/> <input type="text" value="May"/> <input type="text" value="12"/>		<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
<input type="button" value="CLICK TO ADD ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD"/>			

4. **Occupation:** The options here are general as opposed to specific. If receiving disability and not working, the “Stay At Home” option is the most accurate. However, this field is separate from the field asking about disability. Therefore, someone with a disability who is working can still select employed.

5. **Date of Birth:** This is the last piece of required information. The Head of Household must at least over 18 years old.

6. **Relationship:** By default, the first person is listed as the head of household. However, for additional household members, one should specify the person’s relationship to the head of household, such as child or spouse. However, it’s not a required field.

7. **Racial:** Both the racial and ethnic fields will have a potential impact on priority status, but it cannot hurt someone’s status. For the purposes of this question, race is designated as White, Black, Asian, etc...

<input type="text" value="Not Hispanic/Latino"/>
<input type="text" value="Hispanic/Latino"/>
<input type="text" value="Not Hispanic/Latino"/>

8. **Ethnic:** The ethnic status of an applicant or a member of their household is a binary choice of Hispanic or Not Hispanic. This distinction matters because there are both Black people who identify as Hispanic as well as White people who identify as Hispanic.

<input type="text" value="White"/>
<input type="text" value="American Indian"/>
<input type="text" value="Alaska Native"/>
<input type="text" value="Asian"/>
<input type="text" value="Black or African American"/>
<input type="text" value="Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander"/>
<input type="text" value="White"/>
<input type="text" value="Other"/>

9. **Social Security:** While one’s social security number isn’t required, it will be a part of the documentation that most people need to provide along with their application. Exceptions would include recent immigrants who might not yet be citizens and therefore do not have a social security number.

10. **Disabled:** Another binary choice, an applicant can select Yes or No, no further information is required about a specific disability.

<input type="text" value="Male"/>
<input type="text" value="Male"/>
<input type="text" value="Female"/>

Section 2: The Application

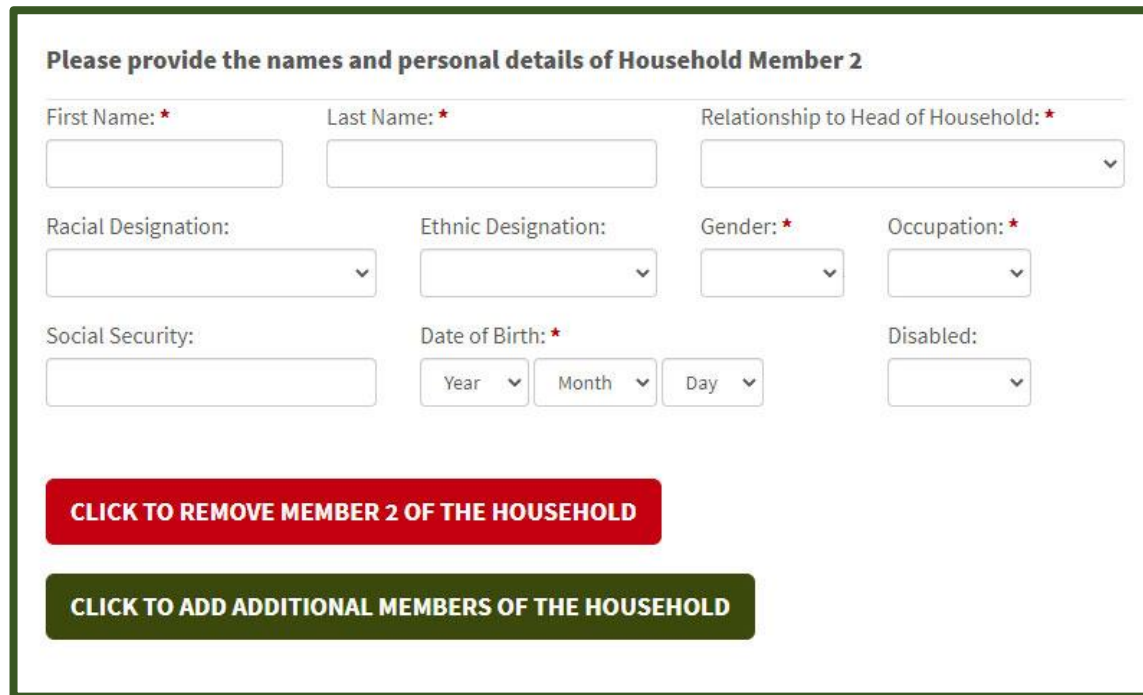
Selecting the *Click to Add Additional Members of the Household* button will add another set of fields that can be used to add the information for other people. This button can be clicked multiple times. Furthermore, a *Click to Remove Member N of the Household* can be used to remove someone, either before or after the application is submitted.



A dropdown menu with a green border. The top item is 'Employed' with a downward arrow. Below it is a blue highlight bar. Underneath the highlight are four more options: 'Employed', 'At Home', 'Student', and 'Retired'.

A single individual is still considered a household of one, and remains the Head of Household for their household of one. A household can add additional members even after the application has been submitted. However, in such

instances, the same identifying documentation that a housing authority requests of an applicant will also need to be submitted whenever additional household members are added.



Please provide the names and personal details of Household Member 2

First Name: * Last Name: * Relationship to Head of Household: *

Racial Designation: Ethnic Designation: Gender: * Occupation: *

Social Security: Date of Birth: * Disabled:

Year Month Day

CLICK TO REMOVE MEMBER 2 OF THE HOUSEHOLD

CLICK TO ADD ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD

Section 2: The Application

Is anyone in your household a Board Member or employee, or immediate family member of a Board Member or an employee, of any housing authorities where your household is applying?

If so, this will not disqualify your application.

☐ Yes

☒ No

Conditions and Income

The next three questions are related to eligibility for the applicant. Most people who apply will not have family that are on the board of a housing authority. However, in the event that an applicant does fall under this condition, they will need to identify the person or persons who they are related to, how they are related, and what position they have on the board.

What is the estimated annual income for your household next year? *

Please enter the total combined amount that all household members expect to receive from all sources next year. [Learn more about income limits.](#) (Read the document "State Public Housing & State Alternative Housing Voucher Program Income Limits" under the "Income Limits" section.) If the estimated annual income is none (\$0.00) please enter 0.

Annual Income (omit \$ and ,): *

\$ 30000

The income section on the application is a best estimate of a person or household's income over the *next 12 months*. This means an applicant isn't looking at their previous year's tax statement. Rather, they are being asked to project what their income will be over the coming year. In many cases, this will be roughly equal to one's yearly income as reported on their most recent tax return. However, if there's an expectation of a raise, a loss of income, or any other number of factors that might change what the estimate is for the next 12 months, and that's the number that is being looked for. Additionally, the estimated income is for the entire household if there are more than one source of income in that household. If an individual has a live-in PCA, that PCA is not considered a part of the household and so their income isn't considered.

Finally, if a change in the household composition is expected, then the change needs to be explained. This is separate from adding an additional household member. Rather, this question is for situations in which either a household member doesn't have the information needed to be added, such as when expecting a new child, or because the person is expected to potentially have a residence elsewhere even

Is a change in household composition expected?

Examples of a change in household may include an expected birth or a relative moving in or out.

☐ Yes

☒ No

Section 2: The Application

after the household has moved in. Another example of a yes to this question would be if one expected to have to take care of an aging family member in the near future. In such an instance, the expected date would be more of an estimate.

Accommodations

Still listed under Step 6, the next section of the application covers the various sorts of accommodations that someone might need from their housing.

Are you applying for Elderly/Handicapped Housing? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

First and foremost is whether or not an applicant will be eligible for and seeking Elderly/Handicapped housing. Unlike other instances of disability, for the purposes of Elderly/Handicapped housing, one's disability must provide some sort of physical barrier to functioning which might be alleviated by being placed in housing that is specifically designed with physical function limitations in mind. Invisible disabilities with physical function issues are still eligible for this sort of housing. This would include, but is not limited to, disabilities such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or Fibromyalgia.

With any sort of reasonable accommodation request for housing, the housing provider has the right to ask for documentation to support an applicant's need for that accommodation. They do not, however, have the right to ask for an individual's specific disability or for medical records related to that disability. Based on the documentation they receive, a housing authority will make its own individual judgment on whether the request is reasonable and workable. If a request is rejected, applicants have the ability to appeal it. Furthermore, so long as the documentation provided meets the criteria, being a document from a related professional attesting to the need for a specific accommodation, the housing authority will be required to grant the accommodation or an alternative accommodation that still meets the needs of the individual.

Bedrooms as an Accommodation

In most cases, the number of bedrooms needed will be fairly straight-forward: one bedroom for a single individual or couple, with additional bedrooms depending on the number of children in the household's composition. Typically, children of the same gender are assumed to be able to share a bedroom, unless there is a significant difference in age between them, or if there are more than two children of the same gender in which case a single bedroom might not be enough.

In example, a family of four: with a pair of spouses, and a boy and a girl would be eligible for a three-bedroom. If that family instead has two girls or two boys then a housing authority may determine that only a two-bedroom is needed, unless the family can present a reason for separate bedrooms for the children (such as a drastic age difference as mentioned previously.)

Section 2: The Application

How many bedrooms do you believe you need?

We use guidelines to determine the number of bedrooms you qualify for. Boys and girls under the age of eight are expected to share a bedroom. Married couples (or those in a similar living arrangement) are also expected to share a bedroom. We realize that there may be special circumstances that affect how many bedrooms you need and the local housing authority staff will discuss those circumstances with you when your application is reviewed. Note that not all of these apartment sizes may be available.

Please select the number of bedrooms you think you need: *



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

However, there are instances where someone might request additional bedrooms as part of a reasonable accommodation:

- If someone has a live-in PCA
- If medical equipment needed requires additional storage room
- If a child with a disability might need their own bedroom

There are other situations where another bedroom might require an additional bedroom, but these are some of the most common reasons.

Mobility/Wheelchair Access

Regardless of whether someone applies for Elderly/Handicapped housing, there are instances in which their housing will require numerous accommodations in order to work for them so that they might function independently. This is covered in the next question which asks whether or not the housing needs to be wheelchair accessible.

Does your household need a unit that is wheelchair accessible? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section 2: The Application

Wheelchair users are not the only ones who should answer yes to this question, however. In general, anyone who requires mobility aids in order to get around should consider whether or not a wheelchair accessible apartment makes sense for them. Walkers often take up even more space than a wheelchair does and, as such, the hallways and door frames in a dwelling will need to be wide enough to accommodate them. Someone who simply uses a cane may still benefit from additional grab bars and a walk-in shower where they don't have to risk falling by lifting their leg to get into a traditional shower tub.

Sensory Impairments

For those applicants who might be deaf, have a hearing impairment, blind, or have a visual impairment, there might be necessary modifications in order to live independently which aren't immediately obvious to others. This includes visual arms and notifications such as when a doorbell is rung or a smoke alarm goes off.

Do you, or does a member of your household need a unit that is accessible for persons with sensory impairments such as visual alarms and notification devices for persons with hearing impairments?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please enter some additional details:

I require a smart door bell, either with a flashing light or connectivity to my smart device so that I do not need to rely on hearing a doorbell in order to know when someone is at my door. I further require flashing fire alarms and a system compatible with my bed shaker so that I am woken up in the event of a fire emergency.

Other Accommodations

For all other reasonable accommodation requests, including some that were mentioned earlier, such as the need for additional bedrooms, there is a catch-all question.

Something to note is that the question is specific to what accommodations an applicant might need. It does not, and shouldn't, ask what someone's disability is. As mentioned earlier, no housing provider, public or private, has a right to know about an applicant's disability nor do they have the right to ask for someone's medical records to prove they have a disability.

In most cases, a letter from an appropriate health professional, stating their relationship to the applicant, and explaining the accommodation is needed, will suffice as proof to a housing provider that the accommodation is both reasonable and needed.

In the example provided, someone who may have some form of deafness or may be hard of hearing is requesting a small modification so that they can know when someone is at their door, just like a hearing person would be able to expect from a doorbell to their home or apartment. The request is simply

Section 2: The Application

stated, and the reason provided helps to tie in the accommodation to why the expectation is reasonable. There's no mention of the person's disability and someone would not need to prove that they have some diagnosis of deafness or hard of hearing in order to make the request. A letter from a primary care physician or a hearing specialist stating that the requested accommodation or accommodations is necessary is sufficient to make an applicant's case.

With the proper supporting documentation, a housing authority will need to either provide the accommodation or provide an alternative that will still meet the needs of the applicant. The housing authority doesn't have the right to refuse an accommodation, and if the accommodation they offer is insufficient, an applicant can appeal the decision.

There are some cases in which someone's reasonable accommodation needs are rather simple: they might not need a wheelchair accessible apartment, but can't do stairs. This is a very common request and is reflected with its own question on the application.

Do you need a unit that does not require you or any member of your household to climb stairs? *

If you answer 'yes' to this question, you will not be placed on waiting lists for any apartments that require you to climb stairs.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you, or does a member of your household have a disability for which you need reasonable accommodation such as grab bars in the bathroom? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Finally, in a similar vein, many people won't need full wheelchair accessibility, but might still benefit from something as simple as grab bars in the bathroom in order to facilitate getting into and out of the shower or up and down from a toilet. In such instances the reasonable accommodations question can be skipped in favor of selecting yes to the specific question.

Section 2: The Application

Public Housing Application

There are instances in which someone who already has public housing may still want to maintain their applications open for other public housing in the CHAMP system. This includes people who may already have a voucher, such as the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP).

Do you currently have a voucher from the Massachusetts Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)?

- ☐ Yes
☒ No

Are you requesting to move from one apartment to another within the same Housing Authority?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

Housing Authority where you currently live: *

Reason for transfer request: *

Please provide some additional details about your transfer request: *

SAVE & KEEP WORKING

SAVE & GO TO STEP 2

Section 2: The Application

It's also possible for someone who is living in public housing to move from one location within the same housing authority to another. No reason is needed for trying to move to a different housing authority. However, if an applicant needs to move from one place to another in the same town, then the housing authority has the right to know what precipitates the request.

Reason for transfer request: *

Apartment too small for household

Apartment too big for household

Medical reason(s)

Other (Describe below)

There are a number of reasons why someone might need to change housing within the same town. The main ones are covered but there's also an Other option for situations other than the common reasons.

However, some sort of reason is ultimately required. Being unhappy with one's housing placement is generally not reason enough to

request a housing change. That being said, if the reason for an individual's unhappiness is due to something which cannot be remedied with an accommodation or modification, then the request is likely to be considered and granted. An example could be from someone with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Disorder (MCD) whose apartment isn't isolated enough to stop them from suffering from their neighbors' use of cleaning products.

Please provide some additional details about your transfer request: *

For my health it is important for me to relocate to an apartment that is less susceptible to chemicals from my neighbors, particularly fragrant odors from cleaning products.

And that's all there is for the application questions. Applicants should review their answers. However, assuming that everything is filled out properly, applicants should click *Save & Go to Step 2* if they want to continue their application. Even though the questions are complete at this point, both Steps 1 & 2 must be completed before an application can be submitted.

SAVE & KEEP WORKING

SAVE & GO TO STEP 2

Section 3: Housing Selection

3. Housing Selection

Housing Lists

In order to submit the application, CHAMP needs to know where applicants want to submit applications to. This is perhaps the longest of the two steps, depending on how many places an applicant wants to apply to. The list of housing can be filtered by area in order to make it a little more manageable. However, for applicants who have few restrictions on where they can move to, selecting the option to show all housing will bring up the entire list and the more places applied to, the better one's chances of something coming up sooner rather than later.

The options are checkboxes, meaning you can check off more than one. Doing so will allow applicants to select from more places at once rather than having to check off single locations, searching, closing the

Add Housing Selections

Select a location to start your housing search

- ☐ Show housing in my home location (Ashland)
- ☐ Show housing in my work location (Framingham)
- ☐ Show housing in another location
- ☐ Show all housing

SEARCH FOR HOUSING

1

Search Results (1)

0 Selections

You are viewing search results based on your choices. Please check the box of the program(s) you wish to apply to, then click on the SELECTED HOUSING AUTHORITIES button below.
Make a housing selection now in order to submit your application. After you have submitted your application, you can return here and add more housing selections at any time.

HOUSING TYPES

2 bedroom unit requested, 1 bedroom unit calculated

LOCATIONS

Framingham (Where I work)

Framingham Housing Authority

508-879-7562

☐ Family housing at Framingham Housing Authority includes 1, 2, 3, 4 bedroom units

CANCEL

2

Search Results (2)

0 Selections

You are viewing search results based on your choices. Please check the box of the program(s) you wish to apply to, then click on the SELECTED HOUSING AUTHORITIES button below.
Make a housing selection now in order to submit your application. After you have submitted your application, you can return here and add more housing selections at any time.

HOUSING TYPES

2 bedroom unit requested, 1 bedroom unit calculated

LOCATIONS

Framingham (Where I work), Andover

Andover Housing Authority

978-475-2265

☐ Family housing at Andover Housing Authority includes 2, 3, 4 bedroom units

Warning: Housing Authority does not have your requested bedrooms. You may not be housed given their current inventory.

Framingham Housing Authority

508-879-7562

☐ Family housing at Framingham Housing Authority includes 1, 2, 3, 4 bedroom units

CANCEL

3

Search Results (190)

0 Selections

You are viewing search results based on your choices. Please check the box of the program(s) you wish to apply to, then click on the SELECTED HOUSING AUTHORITIES button below.
Make a housing selection now in order to submit your application. After you have submitted your application, you can return here and add more housing selections at any time.

HOUSING TYPES

2 bedroom unit requested, 1 bedroom unit calculated

LOCATIONS

All Housing Authorities in Massachusetts

Boston Housing Authority

617-688-8000

☐ Housing at Boston Housing Authority includes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 bedroom units

Please note: Once you have selected Boston housing, your selection will always be visible on your application to serve as a link to the Boston supplemental form. You will need to complete Boston's supplemental form once you submit your application on CHAMP.

Quincy Housing Authority

617-847-4350

☐ Family housing at Quincy Housing Authority includes 2, 3, 4 bedroom units

Warning: Housing Authority does not have your requested bedrooms. You may not be housed given their current inventory.

Chicopee Housing Authority

413-582-6132

CANCEL

Section 3: Housing Selection

search, and then searching again.

Show All Housing is separated from the other checkboxes because it overrides the previous options. Since the previous three options are filters of the entire list, choosing to show the entire list effectively invalidates them. As pictured in the example, selecting filtering options can jump from 1 to 3 results, all the way to over 190 if an applicant selects *Show All Housing*.

The screenshot displays the CHAMP housing selection interface. It features two entries for housing authorities, each with a header bar, a checkbox, and a description. The first entry is for the Arlington Housing Authority, with a phone number 781-646-3400 circled in green. The second entry is for the Everett Housing Authority, with a phone number 617-387-6389 circled in green. Below the Everett entry, a yellow warning box is highlighted with a red border, stating: "Warning: Housing Authority does not have your requested bedrooms. You may not be housed given their current inventory." The text "Arlington Housing Authority" and "Everett Housing Authority" are underlined in orange. The checkbox for the Everett entry is also highlighted with a green circle.

Arlington Housing Authority 781-646-3400

☐ Family housing at Arlington Housing Authority includes 1, 2, 3 bedroom units

Everett Housing Authority 617-387-6389

☐ Family housing at Everett Housing Authority includes 2, 3 bedroom units

Warning: Housing Authority does not have your requested bedrooms. You may not be housed given their current inventory.

Housing Entries

Each housing entry is set up in the same way, though there are some parts which may or may not appear depending on the conditions of an applicant's search.

- **Housing Authority:** The list is sorted by Housing Authority. Most of the entries are individual towns with their own housing authorities. However, there are several areas in Massachusetts which are covered by regional Housing Authorities. An example would be Franklin County, not to be confused with the town of Franklin's Housing Authority.
- **Phone Number:** Though the application is online, each entry does provide a contact number, which allows people to reach out to housing authorities that they've applied to. It's good to keep a list of phone numbers so that, if an applicant's application does not generate a response from the Housing Authority, they have a way to reach out and discover what the problem is.
- **Housing Selection:** Some towns will have multiple selection options if an applicant checked off eligibility for Elderly/Handicapped housing. Any number of checkboxes can be selected, each represents a different waiting list for housing.
- **Warning:** The CHAMP housing selection list will include each town/city within the search parameters. However, many of the towns/cities on the list may not offer either Family or Elderly/Handicapped housing, and for the housing they do offer, the variety of available bedrooms may also shift. As a result, the CHAMP systems lets applicants know when a particular housing selection is offered but which they aren't eligible for. It's unclear what happens if an

Section 3: Housing Selection

applicant checks off one of these boxes, but since there's no valid waitlist for them to go on it ends up being an inconsequential selection.

4. Submission

Review & Certification

When an applicant has selected all of the housing they wish to apply for, they will be asked to verify their submission in the *Review & Submit My Application* page. It begins with the *Applicant's Certification* which lists several things for applicants to understand, the key takeaways are:

- The application itself is **not an offer** of housing. Housing authorities must still review the application before accepting it, and accepting the application is not a guarantee that housing will be provided.
- If an applicant refuses an offer of housing from any individual housing authority, they will be removed from that housing authority's waitlist. If they refuse **three offers**, those offers being from different housing authorities, their application will be removed from **all** of the waitlists for which they've applied.
- It's the responsibility of the applicant to **update** their application, whether online or in writing. Further, though not stated, it is the applicant's responsibility to respond to correspondence from housing authorities in a timely manner.
- An applicant understands how and why their information might be shared with housing authorities, other state agencies, and even third parties such as banks in order to verify identifying information as well as income and asset information.

Once the checkbox declaring an applicant's understanding is checked off, they can then click the *Submit Application* button and that will complete the application.

Next Steps

Once an application has been submitted, an applicant should expect mail from each of the housing authorities they applied to. The response time varies from housing authority to housing authority but can be anywhere from a week to four weeks. If one or more housing authorities don't respond within 30 days, that's when an applicant might want to begin reaching out, to see what the status of their application is.

Responding to the mailings in a timely manner is crucial. The first mail will request copies of documentation, as discussed in Section 1. Most housing authorities will also include supplemental material that needs to be filled out and sent back, as well as releases that need to be signed. The window for responding is usually 10 to 15 days. Because of this, it's usually best to have copies of your documentation ready. If an applicant needs more time, then they should call the housing authority during the time window and request more time. Most housing authorities will give small time extensions

Section 4: Submission

with little fuss. However, longer or repeated time extension requests may cue the housing authority to ask for the reason for the wait.

Most housing authorities will also send out mailing periodically in order to see whether or not applicants are still interested in the housing. Failure to respond to this mail will result in an applicant being taken off of the waiting list, and having to start all over again. There's usually very few exceptions to this, most of them centering around exigent circumstances like being hospitalized.