



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Mitt Romney, Governor ♦ Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor ♦ Jane Wallis Gumble, Director

Memorandum

To: All Local Housing Authorities
From: Carole Collins, Director
Bureau of Housing Management
Subject: Domestic Violence Priority Status
Date: August 1, 2005

The Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence was established by the Weld/Cellucci administration in April 1992, shortly after domestic violence was declared a public health emergency in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Advisory Commission was formed in order to make recommendations to the Governor addressing this state of emergency. The Commission, through its multi-disciplinary membership, actively proposes innovative and coordinated policies to address domestic violence at the highest levels of state government. The Commission is currently chaired by Governor Mitt Romney.

Recently DHCD staff met with members of the Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee of the Governor's Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence to discuss impediments that survivors of domestic and sexual violence encounter as they relate to applying for and residing in public housing. The Committee Members sought to have special preference or priority given to survivors of such crimes. After lengthy discussions, we determined that changes to our regulations were not necessary in that the Emergency Case Plan, when correctly interpreted and applied by LHAs, provides relief in appropriate circumstances.

Recognizing that there has been a high turnover of LHA staff in the last few years due to early retirement at many LHAs, the enclosed memorandum, that was first issued by this office on September 9, 1996, is being reissued to all LHAs. The major thrust of this memorandum explains the verification that LHAs may require of applicants requesting Emergency Case status because of an Abusive Situation, and makes clear that an LHA may not insist upon any one form of verification, such as a restraining order against the abuser. It should also be noted that the term "domestic violence" includes sexual assault in accordance with the definition contained in the Abuse Prevention Act (G.L. c. 209A, §1), and the same types of documentation should be considered in the case of sexual assault victims.

In addition to notifying LHAs of the reissuance of that important memorandum from 1996, the purpose of this memorandum is to inform LHAs of the position that DHCD has taken in response to the Committee's recommendations regarding tenants and applicants who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence, and our intent to ensure that LHAs act accordingly. The following are clarifications to the DHCD regulations and guidelines regarding applicants and tenants of state-aided housing. Note that where ever the words

“applicant” or “tenant” appear, these terms are meant to include members of the applicant or tenant household as applicable.

Tenants

- Current or former LHA tenants with documentation showing that they are victims of domestic violence at their housing authority unit shall be considered in an Abusive Situation under another LHA’s Emergency Case Plan and be eligible for Emergency Case status at another housing authority. As in the grant of any Abusive Situation priority, the housing for which the application is made must place the applicant a reasonable distance away from the abuser(s). Since applicants determined by the LHA to be in an Abusive Situation will be offered housing ahead of other needy individuals or families on the LHA’s waiting list, the abuser must not be part of the applicant household, and the applicant must sign a form (see attached) certifying that the applicant realizes that he/she will be evicted if he/she allows the abuser to reside with him/her.
- If evidence is provided, and the housing authority feels confident that the abuser has been rehabilitated, the LHA may give written permission to add the former abuser to the lease in accordance with the provisions in the definition of Family (Household) at 760 CMR 5.03.
- If an existing tenant is a documented victim of domestic violence and removes the abuser from the unit, the LHA shall not evict the remaining household members for damage or disturbance caused by the abuser.
- Upon notification that an existing tenant is a documented victim of domestic violence and has removed the abuser from the unit, the LHA shall recalculate the household rent subtracting the abuser’s income from the household’s total income. In accordance with 760 CMR 6.04(3)(b), there may be good cause for a waiver of any late fees and interest that might otherwise have been charged if the tenant fails to pay the rent until the amount of rent has been recalculated after the removal of an abuser from the household.
- The DHCD form lease for public housing includes a provision in Section VIII.(S) of the Landlord Obligations that an LHA provide reasonable and appropriate assistance to a tenant who is a victim of domestic violence. Such reasonable and appropriate assistance may include granting the tenant a transfer for administrative reasons in accordance with the definition at 760 CMR 5.03.
- Where the abuser is not a member of a tenant household, in appropriate circumstances, the LHA may seek a court order to prohibit the abuser from entering or remaining upon LHA property in accordance with G.L. c.121B, § 32B-32F.
- LHAs must comply with the definition of Family(Household) at 760 CMR 5.03, which allows a Massachusetts court with jurisdiction to determine who shall be entitled to the public housing tenancy in the event of the break up of the tenant family. When the issue arises, LHAs should inform tenants and the courts of the existence of this regulation.

Applicants

- Applicants who have been displaced by an “Abusive Situation” are not required to be in a continuing situation of immediate risk of harm in order to be eligible for the priority under the Emergency Case Plan. Such applicants must only show that domestic violence was the cause of their homelessness.
- While victims of sexual violence not constituting “domestic violence” as defined by the Abuse Prevention Act do not receive priority based on that fact alone, if the victim becomes homeless as a consequence of the sexual violence, he/she may be eligible for the Homeless priority under the Emergency Case Plan. As in cases of Domestic Violence, there should be a presumption that victims did not contribute to their circumstances. If actual or feared contact with the perpetrator in the present housing has caused severe medical or psychiatric illness, applicants should be granted a priority for a Severe Medical Emergency under the LHA’s Emergency Case Plan.
- When an LHA determines that an applicant may be disqualified for housing because of damage or disturbance at a prior tenancy, if the applicant shows that she/he was a victim of domestic abuse or sexual violence and that the damage or disturbance was caused by the perpetrator of domestic abuse or sexual violence, then these facts shall be considered by the LHA as mitigating circumstances pursuant to 760 CMR 5.08(2).

Because of the complex and sensitive nature of the determinations that must be made in state-aided housing regarding survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, and, in light of the significant staff turnover at LHAs, I am asking the Regional Attorneys to conduct regional workshops and trainings on these and other tenant selection issues. You should be receiving information from them shortly scheduling these important educational events.

(Sample certification for applicant granted Abusive Situation priority)

In recognition of the fact that I have been granted a priority that will require the _____ Housing Authority (__ HA) to offer me housing ahead of other applicants on its waiting list, I,

_____ (Applicant's name) hereby certify that

_____ (name of former abuser) will not reside with my family and me in __ HA housing unless I apply to the _ HA to add him/her to my household and the __ HA gives advance written approval.

I understand that if _____ (name of former abuser) returns to my household without prior approval then this will be grounds for the __ HA to terminate my lease and to initiate eviction proceedings against me.

Signed this day of _____, 20__.

Under the pains and penalties of perjury.

Tenant

(date)

__ HA Representative

(date)

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



William F. Weld, Governor
Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor
Jane Wallis Gumble, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Local Housing Authorities

FROM: Carole E. Collins, Director
Bureau of Housing Management

RE: VERIFICATION OF PRIORITY STATUS

DATE: September 9, 1996

In response to questions raised at the recent Seacrest panel on Domestic Violence by local housing authority staff, we have clarified our applicant and housing authority verification checklists for this priority status. These forms have been revised for clarification only; this is not a change in regulation. The changes make it clear that all forms of verification listed are not required, only a combination of the items listed depending on the individual circumstances. We have also added language stating that there is a presumption that victims of domestic violence did not contribute to their circumstance and are, therefore, not required to document or provide proof of this factor. We hope this clarification of existing practices that are followed by your housing authority will make the process clearer for you and the applicant.

Please note that since the health and safety of victims of domestic violence can be threatened when they attempt to obtain certain forms of verification, an LHA cannot require any particular form of verification. On the other hand, since victims of domestic violence will receive a priority over other needy applicants, it is important that the verification you receive substantiates a reasonable finding that this person(s) deserves priority status. Additionally, in all instances, the named abuser can not be part of the household. In exceptional cases after satisfactory documentation that the abuser has successfully addressed his/her issues of abuse he/she may be considered by the LHA to be added to the tenant household.

Tom Connelly recently told me that because so many authorities are raising issues of domestic violence and because of the importance of this issue NAHRO is including a workshop on domestic violence at its 1996 Fall conference to discuss these matters.

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INSTRUCTIONS: COPY ON LHA LETTERHEAD. EACH APPLICANT REQUESTING PRIORITY STATUS MUST BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION AND CHECKLIST. IN ADDITION, ONE COMPLETED CHECKLIST SHOULD BE MAINTAINED BY THE AUTHORITY FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE SEEKING PRIORITY STATUS. THE CHECKLIST, ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION, AND THE APPLICATION SHOULD BE APPENDED FOR THE AUTHORITY'S PERMANENT RECORDS.

OVERVIEW

In order to be placed as a priority in either state-aided conventional public housing or a project based unit under the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) or the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) in accordance with 760 CMR 5.00, an applicant household must meet requirements regarding: 1) eligibility; 2) qualification for placement; and 3) entitlement to priority and preference status. The applicant household is the primary source of information. It is the applicant household's responsibility to obtain and provide the Authority with all appropriate written documentation and/or authorization to obtain documentation, as required, to substantiate that the applicant household meets each of the above requirements. The attached information is intended to clarify both the process and the documentation requirements for priority status. This will ensure that all local housing authorities (LHAs) and potential applicants have consistent requirements for certification of an applicant household's eligibility and priority. Further, all applicants will have equal opportunity to document their housing circumstances.

Priority status may only be granted to an applicant who has been or is imminently faced with displacement from his/her primary residence (a primary residence is your principal home occupied not less than 9 months of the year) as a result of specific circumstances and who:

(a) is without a place or is about to be without a place to live or is in a living situation in which there is a significant immediate and direct threat to the life or safety of the applicant or a household member which situation would be alleviated by placement in an appropriate unit. (Applicants temporarily residing in a shelter should be considered without a place to live.); **and**

(b) has made reasonable efforts to locate alternative housing; **and**

(c) has not caused or substantially contributed to the safety or life-threatening situation, in the case of victims of domestic violence there is a presumption that they did not contribute to the safety or life-threatening situation; **and**

(d) has pursued available ways to prevent or avoid the safety or life-threatening situation by seeking assistance through the courts or appropriate administrative or enforcement agencies.

General Description of Priority Application Process

The following outlines in general terms the obligations of the applicant and the LHA throughout the process of tenant selection for priorities. A copy of DHCD's regulation, 760 CMR 5.00 which governs these tenant selection matters is posted in the LHA's main office. In addition a copy of our approved Emergency Case Plan is also posted. If you have questions, you should contact the us at the number above.

STEP ONE: APPLICATION

Applicant

LHA

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Applicant contacts LHA for housing assistance. | a. LHA explains various housing options available through the Authority and application screening process. Provides applicant standard application and emergency application. |
| b. Applicant completes both application forms and returns to the LHA. In addition, applicant must complete all LHA authorization forms for verification of income, assets, medical, and age of applicant. | b. LHA date and time stamps standard application, assigns control number and gives receipt. Logs in Master File. LHA accepts emergency application and gives applicant the documents required for verification of priority status. LHA explains that applicant will be screened and processed as standard applicant only until all documentation substantiating emergency priority status is received. LHA should emphasize to applicants that they must make sincere and concerted efforts to locate alternative housing. LHA has obligation to verify applicants efforts to locate alternative housing. |

STEP TWO: ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION

(In some cases an applicant may have some/all documentation with them. You should review and determine acceptance/rejection of documents. Some documentation may require additional or more complete information.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| c. No further action with regard to submission of documentation required by applicant at this time. Applicant must continue his/her search for alternative housing. | c. LHA reviews standard application to determine preliminary eligibility/ ineligibility and qualification. Thorough verification of qualification is determined at this time because it is anticipated that the applicant will be seeking immediate placement. LHA notifies applicant by mail of determination. Should applicant be found ineligible or unqualified, process ends here. Applicant may pursue appeal process. When applicant is found to be both eligible and qualified, the process continues after the LHA has placed control number on the proper waiting list(s). |
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STEP THREE: ENTITLEMENT TO PRIORITY

- | | |
|--|---|
| d. Applicant contacts all appropriate third party sources and requests that verification be sent directly to LHA. | d. LHA receives all required verification to complete emergency application and assigns new control number as of that date. Logs in Master File. LHA must insure that control number for standard application remains on the list, as these applications are treated separately. |
| In some cases an applicant may have some/all documentation with them. You should review and determine acceptance/rejection of documents. Some documentation may require additional or more complete information. | |
| e. No action required by the applicant at this time. Applicant continues his/her search for alternative housing. | e. LHA reviews each piece of verification which must document the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Applicant household is without a place to live or is in a significant immediate and direct threat to life or safety of a member(s) of the applicant household; and,2. applicant household has made sincere and concerted efforts to locate alternative housing; and3. applicant household has not caused or contributed to the present living situation, in the case of victims of domestic violence, there is a presumption they did not contribute to the situation; and,4. applicant household has pursued ways to prevent or avoid the living situation. |
| f. No action required by the applicant at this time. Applicant continues his/her search for alternative housing. | f. LHA assigns priority selection category as appropriate and documented. Logs control number issued at "d" above on the applicable waiting list. Notifies applicant of determination in writing. |
| g. Applicant finds other suitable housing and notifies LHA. | g. LHA removes applicant control number from priority waiting list(s) only. Unless applicant requests removal, standard application control number remains on standard waiting list. |

OR

Applicant does not find other suitable housing.

OR.

Applicant refuses unit offer made in response to priority application.

LHA makes unit offer to applicant when control number reaches the top of the list.

LHA removes applicant priority control number from the Waiting List. Applicant that is removed that files a new application with the LHA shall not be entitled to any priority or preference received on the prior application for a 3 year period. The standard application control number remains on the waiting list.

FOR APPLICANT USE

CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS FOR PRIORITY STATUS

Given to Applicant Control # _____
Date _____ Given By _____
Date _____ Rec'd By _____

You are again advised that your request for priority consideration (emergency application) cannot be processed and will not be effective until such time as you have fully verified your housing circumstances and the events leading to your present situation. Until such time, we will process your standard application for housing. If you are found eligible pursuant to that application you will be assigned selection category 7, Standard, in the meantime. In doing so, should you fail to document priority status you will be on the waiting list as a Standard Applicant at the original date the LHA received your application.

You should understand that priority status is only for an applicant who has been or is imminently faced with displacement from his/her **primary** residence (a primary residence is your principal home occupied not less than 9 months of the year) as a result of circumstances described below and who:

- (a) is without or about to be without a place to live or is in a living situation in which there is a significant immediate and direct threat to the life or safety of the applicant or a household member which situation would be alleviated by placement in an appropriate unit . (Applicants temporarily residing in a shelter should be considered without a place to live.); **and**
- (b) has made reasonable efforts to locate alternative housing; **and**
- (c) has not caused or substantially contributed to the safety or life-threatening situation (In cases of domestic violence, there is a presumption that victims did not contribute to their circumstances.); **and**
- (d) has pursued available ways to prevent or avoid the safety or life-threatening situation by seeking assistance through the courts or appropriate administrative or enforcement agencies.

We have marked the documents which you are responsible for obtaining based upon the information you provided in your emergency application. You must submit, at least, all of the following marked items. If you feel that you have documents over and above those required below, please feel free to give us copies. If you need clarification or have questions, please call at the telephone number listed above.

Priority #1 - Homeless Displaced By Natural Forces

If you can no longer live in your residence due to a fire, flood, or earthquake submit:

___ **Fire:** Copy of the Official Fire Report. Report must be mailed directly by the Fire Department to the Housing Authority. Report should be attested as a true copy.

Flood/Earthquake: Copy of official report from the Red Cross or Federal Disaster Agency (FEMA). Report must be mailed directly to the Housing Authority. Report should be attested as a true copy.

 Proof that you were a resident of the affected property. You should submit such items as: rent receipts, copy of your lease or rental agreement.

Priority #2 - Homeless, Displaced By Public Action (Type A)

If you have been displaced within the past three (3) years due to public works, urban renewal, or public usage or improvement; submit the following:

 Copy of the official notification of land/property taking and the stated purposes thereof from the public agency involved. Notification should include legislation authority exercised and date of displacement.

 If public action is impending, notification should be sent from the public agency directly to the Housing Authority.

 Proof that you were a resident of the affected property. You should submit things as: rent receipts, copy of your lease or rental agreement.

Priority #3 - Displaced By Public Action (Type B)

If you have been displaced due to a public health agency's enforcement of local, state health codes:

 Copy of the official order of displacement due to code enforcement. Order should be sent directly to the Housing Authority by the public health department involved. Document may be known as Declaration of Condemnation and should include the specific property involved.

 A statement of efforts taken by you, the applicant, to remedy the situation prior to the actual condemnation and subsequent to the condemnation.

 Attached documents, to demonstrate your action(s), such as letters to the landlord, previous board of health notices, or court records.

 Proof that you were a resident of the affected property. You should submit such items as: rent receipts, copy of your lease or rental agreement.

Priority #4 - Emergency Case Category(ies)

Our approved Emergency Case Plan is posted in our administrative offices and available for your review. Our emergency case plan is for applicants who have been displaced or are imminently faced with displacement because of circumstances as follows:

 A. HOMELESS; applicant is homeless and facing an immediate and direct threat to life or safety through no fault of their own and for reasons outside their control including substandard housing conditions which directly and substantially endanger or impair the health, safety or well being of the household.

B. SEVERE MEDICAL, applicant household member is suffering from severe medical emergency, illness, or injury which is life-threatening and has been caused by the lack of suitable housing or the lack of such suitable housing is a substantial impediment to treatment or recovery.

C. ABUSE, applicant is in an abusive situation.

(D. Each LHA should further detail case types, if any, covered by their Department approved emergency case plan.)

If you feel that your situation is one or more of the above, you need to submit the following:

A. HOMELESS If you are homeless and living in a hotel, motel, or shelter, your housing search worker or a shelter staff member must send written justification which certifies your homelessness directly to the Housing Authority. Substandard housing conditions must be verified as indicated by the X's above under Priority No. 3.

B. MEDICAL reasons need to be documented by your medical records. Your doctor needs to submit written certification of your medical condition, the contributing factors to that condition, and the prognosis of your condition directly to the Housing Authority.

C. ABUSIVE situation needs to be documented through some combination of the following, based on the applicant's individual circumstances. Since certain actions on the part of victims of domestic violence can trigger violent acts by the offenders, no particular item can be mandated as the required form of verification. Please remember that if any verification appears vague, an LHA must obtain additional documentation until the LHA feels that a reasonable showing of the abusive situation has been made. Examples of documentation could include one or more of the following:

- medical incidences - pattern or repeated occurrence
- police report _____ # reported occurrences
- court reports
- applicant has attempted to get restraining order
- applicant has filed charges against accused
- legal action
- letter from attorney stating case
- counseling
- psychological report
- director, social service agency
- last permanent address
- changed address

(D. LHA insert language as appropriate. Applicable only if your LHA emergency case plan has additional case types defined.)

In all instances, you must be homeless as defined below:

- a. you are without or about to be without a place to live or are in a life threatening situation
- b. you have made efforts to locate alternative housing;
- c. you did not cause or contribute to your present housing situation; (In cases of domestic violence, there is a presumption that victims did not contribute to their circumstances.); and,
- d. you have pursued ways to avoid or prevent the threatening situation.

If you believe that you meet all of the items "a" through "d" then you should write a detailed explanation of the circumstances that led to your present housing situation. Include names, address and relationship, if any, for each person(s) involved in the circumstances who can support your statements. **It is your responsibility to prove your situation.** When writing your explanation, you should try to detail what happened, why it happened, how you tried to prevent it from happening, what you did once it did happen, and what you have been doing since it happened. We will contact you if we need any additional information.

Transfers: Priority #5 - Transfer For Good Cause

Any current tenant of the housing authority seeking a transfer from his present unit must qualify for the fifth selection priority transfer. You must meet requirements as follows:

 MEDICAL documentation from physician that current housing circumstances are a contributing factor to the overall health of the applicant. The documentation must be sent directly to the authority by your physician.

 HOUSEHOLD SIZE, a change in your household composition now requires that you move to a different size apartment. You must submit copies of official documents which verify the change such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, adoption papers, or legal custody documents.

If you can verify the above, you must also be a tenant in good standing. All monies due the Authority must be current and you must be in compliance with the terms of your lease.

LHA USE ONLY Applicant Verification for Priority Status

Applicant Name: _____ Control Number:* _____

**Remember Control # only issued for the emergency application once the Authority has determined verification complete and priority is approved. Otherwise include standard application Control # for cross referencing purposes only. Be sure you know what # you are referring to here. Also, be sure to assign a new (second) control number for the approved emergency application.*

PRIORITY #1 - Natural Disaster

STEP 1 (Criteria must be met before proceeding to Step 2.

ALL applicants must fully document the following:

- ___ without or about to be without a place to live; and
- ___ life or safety threatening situation; and
- ___ made reasonable efforts to locate alternative housing; and
- ___ housing search verification attached
- ___ applicant did not contribute to circumstances; and
- ___ applicant has tried to prevent the life threatening situation (No particular form of action or inaction can be mandated. Determination shall be made on the reasonableness of the total individual circumstances)
- ___ applicant's narration verified by: _____

Notes, Basis for Acceptance

STEP 2 (The following is the type of documentation required for verification)

___ **A. FIRE**

- ___ Attested fire report
- ___ Applicant listed as occupant of fire damaged property; if not, rent receipts, lease, or rental agreement showing resident of property at time of fire.
- ___ Extent/dollar amount of damage suffered; unit is uninhabitable.
- ___ Cause of fire - not tenant negligence or tenant related.
- ___ Anticipated time required to make repairs and make unit habitable.

___ **B. FLOOD**

- ___ Red Cross Report
- ___ FEMA Report
- ___ Address of flood property, same as applicant's.
- ___ Extent of damage suffered - unit is uninhabitable.
- ___ Applicant's primary residence verified through rent receipts, lease, or rental agreement.

___ **C. EARTHQUAKE**

- ___ Red Cross Report
- ___ FEMA Report
- ___ LHA USE 9/96

- Address of impact, same as applicant's.
- Extent of damage suffered - unit is uninhabitable.
- Applicant's primary residence verified through rent receipts, utility receipts, lease, or rental agreement.

PRIORITY #2 - Public Action/Public Works

STEP 1 (Criteria must be met before proceeding to Step 2.

ALL applicants must fully document the following:

- without or about to be without a place to live; and
- life or safety threatening situation; and
- made reasonable efforts to locate alternative housing; and
- housing search verification attached
- applicant did not contribute to circumstances; and
- applicant has tried to prevent the life threatening situation (No particular form of action or inaction can be mandated. Determination shall be made on the reasonableness of the total individual circumstances)
- applicant's narration verified by: _____

STEP 2 (The following is the type of documentation required for verification)

- Official notification from public agency involved
_____ (Agency).
- Date of land/property taking within three years from date of application.
- If public action is impending, notification should be sent from the Public Agency directly to the Authority.

PRIORITY #3 - Public Action/Public Health

STEP 1 (Criteria must be met before proceeding to Step 2.

ALL applicants must fully document the following:

- without or about to be without a place to live; and
- life or safety threatening situation; and
- made reasonable efforts to locate alternative housing; and
- housing search verification attached
- applicant did not contribute to circumstances; and
- applicant has tried to prevent the life threatening situation (No particular form of action or inaction can be mandated. Determination shall be made on the reasonableness of the total individual circumstances)
- applicant's narration verified by: _____

STEP 2 (The following is the type of documentation required for verification)

- Date of displacement must be within 90 days of date of application.

- ___ Local Board of Health's Declaration of Condemnation of specific property.
- ___ Proof of residency as evidenced by rent receipts, lease/rental agreement.
- ___ Evidence of action taken by applicant to remedy situation prior to actual condemnation such as court records, attorney's letter, etc.
- ___ Evidence of payment of at least 50% of households monthly income for rent to former landlord.

PRIORITY #4 - Emergency Case

STEP 1 (Criteria must be met before proceeding to Step 2.

ALL applicants must fully document the following:

- ___ without or about to be without a place to live; and
- ___ life or safety threatening situation; and
- ___ made reasonable efforts to locate alternative housing; and
- ___ housing search verification attached
- ___ applicant did not contribute to circumstances; and
- ___ applicant has tried to prevent the life threatening situation (No particular form of action or inaction can be mandated. Determination shall be made on the reasonableness of the total individual circumstances)
- ___ applicant's narration verified by: _____

STEP 2 (The following is the type of documentation required for verification. For the category of Domestic Violence there is a presumption that the victim did not contribute to the circumstances.)

___ **HOMELESS.** Has been displaced or is imminently faced with displacement from his/her primary residence as a result of cause other than the fault of the applicant or member of the household, outside their reasonable control, including substandard housing conditions which directly and substantially endanger or impair health, safety, or well-being of the family.

- ___ Written documentation from housing search worker or a shelter staff member providing justification which certifies applicant's homelessness sent directly to the Authority.
- ___ Proof of primary residency as evidenced by rent receipts, lease/rental agreement.
- ___ Evidence of action taken by applicant to remedy situation prior to actual displacement including citations from the local Board of Health, court records, attorney's letter, rent withholding etc.
- ___ Evidence of payment, of at least 50% of households income each month, of rent due landlord.

___ **MEDICAL** reasons need to be documented demonstrating that applicant's or member's medical situation would be alleviated by placement in an appropriate unit. Doctor needs to submit written certification directly to the Authority of medical circumstances, the contributing factors to that condition, and the improved prognosis of the condition should appropriate housing be obtained.

— ABUSIVE situation needs to be documented through some combination of the following official reports, based on the applicant's individual circumstances. Since certain actions on the part of victims of domestic violence can trigger violent acts by the offenders, no particular item can be mandated as the required form of verification. Please remember that if any verification appears vague, an LHA must obtain additional documentation until the LHA feels that a reasonable showing of the abusive situation has been made. Examples of documentation could include one or more of the following:

- medical incidences - pattern or repeated occurrence
- police report ____ # reported occurrences
- court reports
- applicant has attempted to get restraining order
- applicant has filed charges against accused
- legal action
- letter from attorney stating case
- counseling
- psychological report
- director, social service agency
- last permanent address
- changed address