



# City of Cambridge

## Executive Department

**YI-AN HUANG**  
City Manager

CMA 2026-33  
**IN CITY COUNCIL**  
March 2, 2026

To the Honorable, the City Council:

The Department of Human Service Programs' (DHSP) Planning and Development and Multi Service Center (MSC) teams are pleased to report that the Municipal Supportive Housing Voucher Program (MSHVP) has been fully established and is being actively implemented.

MSHVP represents the City's on-going commitment to housing and recognizes the need for continued and innovative programs and services that assist our most vulnerable residents. The program also aligns in intent, design, and prioritization of the City's Coordinated Entry System, Cambridge Coordinated Access Network (C-CAN), which is the system designed to create streamlined, equitable access to supportive housing programs for people exiting homelessness.

The Coordinated Entry System ensures that individuals who are unhoused are connected with housing navigation assistance and resources to access available housing. This past year, 137 unhoused persons have been housed in permanent supportive housing units including placement at 116 Norfolk Street, Wendell Street, and other units and programs in the Coordinated Entry portfolio. In addition, many individuals secured housing through general waitlist openings. The MSHVP program has been a welcome addition to these existing opportunities.

Since the inception of the MSHVP program in July of 2025, DHSP staff have worked in partnership with the City's Housing Department, the Office of the Housing Liaison, and the Cambridge Housing Authority to design and operationalize this new resource. This has included creating program applications and documents, determining program parameters, administrative guidelines, eligibility criteria, and the tenant selection processes, as well as establishing staff structure and service agreements.

Members of the Coordinated Entry Working Group reviewed all elements of the proposed program design and guidelines. This working group is comprised of both local providers as well as people who are currently or formerly homeless. As a body, they advise on policy, operations, and procedures for programs within the City of Cambridge's Cambridge Coordinated Access Network (C-CAN). This resulted in a collaborative and thoughtful review process of all standards and expectations to ensure inclusivity and buy-in from key stakeholders.



Throughout this planning phase, individuals (see eligibility information below) were matched with housing navigators to begin their own “start-up phase” of housing search. This phase includes significant work to obtain vital documents, mitigate barriers such as credit or CORI repair and preparation for the transition. CHA issued the first set of vouchers in January of this year.

To date, 17 vouchers have been issued, over three briefing sessions. One individual has moved into their new permanent home, 2 have submitted request for tenancy approval (RFTA), and 3 persons will receive a voucher at the next issuance on or near the beginning of March. Once all 20 participants have been housed, we will determine if funding allows for additional vouchers to be issued.

Below are highlights of the program parameters, administrative guidelines, eligibility criteria, tenant selection process, staff structure, and service summary.

### **Program Parameters and Guidelines**

The Municipal Supportive Housing Voucher Program is administered by the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA). As such, except for a geographic restriction, issuance procedures and program requirements follow the same administration practices currently employed by CHA.

This includes:

- Submission of required documents
- CORI Screening
- Attendance of a Voucher Briefing Session
- Use of small area payment standards
- 90-day initial search periods with two possible 60-day extensions, totaling 7 months with the ability to request reasonable accommodation for more time.

In recognition of the importance of ongoing connections to the community and the local source of voucher funds, the program includes a geographic restriction that requires participants to first search for a unit in Cambridge. If a participant is unable to secure a unit in Cambridge and/or needs a reasonable accommodation to seek housing, the voucher may be used in one of Cambridge’s 5 contiguous communities: Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Somerville or Watertown.

### **Eligibility Criteria and Tenant Selection Process**

It was determined that it would be most efficient to utilize the existing assessment and prioritization tool created through the C-CAN for the tenant selection process. By employing this strategy, staff are able to identify unhoused residents that had significant needs and were among those who were either longest street sleepers or longest shelter stayers.

This program utilizes the infrastructure through established C-CAN procedures for assessment and prioritization for referrals. To be eligible for the municipal voucher program, individuals must be currently homeless in Cambridge with a valid C-CAN assessment and an active record on the C-CAN community queue. Individuals with the longest histories of homelessness in Cambridge based on enrollment records in shelter and/or street outreach programs are prioritized for referrals to the program.

Individuals referred to MSHVP program complete a simple application form that includes confirmation of homeless status in Cambridge, one form of photo identification, and income documentation.

### **Staff Structure and Stabilization Services**

All eligible individuals are partnered with a Housing Navigator. Navigators are staff members within the City's provider network who have established relationships with individuals in the unhoused community. Staff have extensive expertise in supporting unhoused community members in transitioning to permanent homes. In addition, Navigators are skilled in landlord engagement and advocacy and are supported by the many departments and resources within the city.

Each Navigator works closely with individuals to ensure program compliance, apply for units, and obtain resources such as start-up funds and/or furniture. Navigators also provide emotional support to participants during the process and connections to various community services.

Once an individual is housed, their support is transitioned from a Housing Navigator to a Stabilization Case Manager. The City of Cambridge has contracted with Boston Medical Center's Living Well at Home Program to provide on-going stabilization support and intensive case management. This is a well-established program with staff who are highly experienced in working with newly housed individuals.

### **Reflection and Evaluation**

The Coordinated Entry Working Group has been kept apprised throughout the process. A formal evaluation will be conducted upon utilization of all vouchers.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yi-An Huang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Yi-An Huang  
City Manager