

## Q&A MassHousing/EOHLC DMH/DDS Set-Aside and 3% Priority programs MRVP PBV Initiative

- **What is MRVP? How is this different from a voucher?**
  - MRVP stands for the [Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program](#). MRVP provides a rental subsidy to eligible low-income participants. MRVP is largely like Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP or Section 8), with a couple of notable exceptions. The income limit at initial eligibility for MRVP is 80% AMI. As a state funded program, MRVP does not require a verified or approved immigration status. MRVP vouchers are divided into two basic categories—mobile and project based. Mobile, also called “tenant based,” vouchers are awarded to a participant and can be used by the participant throughout the state in any eligible unit. The participant is responsible for finding a unit. Project-based vouchers, on the other hand, are awarded to a specific contract unit. A participant receives the benefit of an MRVP subsidy only when occupying that particular contract unit. If the participant leaves the contract unit, they also lose the benefits of the MRVP rental assistance.
  
- **Will the MRVP PBVs have the same contract rent as Section 8 PBVs?**
  - Currently, the maximum contract rent for MRVP PBVs is 100% area-wide Fair Market Rent (FMR). Note that rents would need to be reasonable when compared with other unassisted units at the property and/or in the area. “Contract rent” is the total rent the owner receives. While MRVP does have utility allowances, they are not subtracted from the contract rent for PBVs. For example, an owner requests a contract rent of \$1,000 and the tenant is responsible for electricity. The contract rent, if rent reasonable, will be set at \$1,000 and the utility allowance will be subtracted from the tenant’s rent and paid by the MRVP subsidy.
  
- **Can you use the MRVP PBV at a project-based Section 8 property?**
  - An MRVP PBV cannot replace or supplement a Section 8 unit, however, if the site is not 100% project-based Section 8, then the non-Section 8 units could be used for the MRVP PBVs.
    - For example, a site has 100 units at or below 80% AMI and is required to have 3 units for the 3% Priority program ( $100 \times .03 = 3$ ). Of the 100 units, 60 of the units are under a project-based Section 8 contract; the other 40 units are LIHTC. The 3-unit MRVP PBV contract can be from among the 40 LIHTC units.
  
- **Which agency would issue the project-based vouchers?**
  - EOHLC contracts with [regional administering agencies](#) for the issuance of the PBV contracts and the applicant subsidy screening.

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- **Do market rate units qualify for the program?**
  - The number of required units is calculated based on the total number of units at or below 80% AMI. However, if a site also has market rate units and their rents are within the MRVP PBV rent limits (currently 100% area wide FMR), they do qualify for this initiative.
    - For example, a site has 50 units at or below 80% AMI and 5 market units. For the 3% Priority, 2 units are required ( $50 \times .03 = 1.5$ , round up to 2). If the rents for the market rate units are within, or lowered to, the MRVP PBV rent limit, then 2 of the market rate units could be used to meet the 3% Priority requirement using the MRVP PBVs.
  
- **Can the MRVP PBVs be moved to other units?**
  - The MRVP PBVs can float and be moved to other units at the site for the DMH/DDS Set-Aside or 3% Priority programs but only applicants for those programs will be leased with the MRVP PBVs.
    - For example, a DMH client is eligible for a 1BR unit with a MRVP PBV. After a year of tenancy, the DMH client has a child and becomes eligible for a 2BR unit, and the MRVP PBV is moved to an available 2BR unit. If, in this scenario, the DMH client instead moves out and there are no new DMH or DDS applicants for the vacated unit, then the MRVP PBV is held for the next available unit with a DMH or DDS referred applicant.
  
- **What if I already have a Set-Aside unit leased without a voucher?**
  - If the tenant and the Set-Aside unit qualify for MRVP, then the PBV contract can cover that unit. If the tenant doesn't qualify, then upon unit turnover, the unit can be placed under the MRVP PBV contract. If there are other unleased units, those can be placed under the contract immediately.
    - For example, a site has 3 DMH/DDS Set-Aside units; all 3 are LIHTC. One of those units is leased to a DDS client who is paying the LIHTC rent with assistance from family members. If the tenant is eligible for MRVP, they can be assisted by the MRVP PBV contract; if the tenant is not eligible, they would continue paying the LIHTC rent. The other 2 units are vacant and can be filled and placed on the MRVP PBV contract immediately.
  
- **Will there be on-going support services for the residents of these units?**
  - All applicants to the DMH/DDS Set-Aside and 3% Priority program have case managers (or their equivalents) and are eligible for state-funded services. If there are future concerns about a resident's lease compliance or well-being, the case manager and/or state agency can be contacted for follow-up. MassHousing can facilitate these conversations, whenever necessary.