

Q: Will Reasonable Accommodations or HCV's due to Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) still be available during this time? Such as someone residing in a Project-Based Voucher (PBV) unit but needing to move for these reasons with a voucher.

A: Yes, Emergency Moves under VAWA and moves necessary as a reasonable accommodation are still allowable during this time.

Q: How do the various Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in Michigan work together to coordinate for residents?

A: Each PHA in Michigan is funded separately by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). An individual can only obtain rental assistance from one federally funded housing assistance program and each PHA is required to set their own policies and procedures based on HUD's rules. However, MSHDA regularly engages with other PHAs to discuss best practices and policies to streamline the process for those accessing the program.

Q: Is it standard to receive HCV funding notification from HUD only in May?

A: The HCV program is funded based on the calendar year. It is not uncommon for PHAs to receive the HCV program budget from HUD after the calendar year has begun; however, the 2024 budget was received later than expected.

Q: If a tenant already has an HCV and needs to move, they will lose their voucher?

A: No, during the shortfall period active HCV participants are allowed to move with continued assistance. While the shortfall designation affects MSHDA's ability to add new program participants, current HCV program participants will continue to receive rental assistance.

Q: Will this impact the Key to Own program?

A: No, the Key to Own Program is not impacted by the shortfall designation.

Q: Are tenants able to determine the specific type of voucher they hold? How would we be able to share the moving limitations that are specific to the PBV?

A: Participants are informed about their voucher type at the time they enter the program. If any participant is unsure about their voucher type, they can contact their local housing agent for guidance. A list of housing agents can be found here: <https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/rental/housing-choice-voucher/hcv-housing-agencies>

Q: With the administer incoming portability piece, are other PHA's likely to accept this? Are we going to see people getting denied porting vouchers to MSHDA?

A: While the decision to allow a participant to port out of their jurisdiction lies solely with the other PHA, MSHDA will not limit or restrict incoming portability within our jurisdiction.

Q: Why weren't the Continuum of Cares (CoCs)s asked to suspend putting clients on the Homeless Preference Waiting List sooner?

A: MSHDA continued to await a formal budget from HUD before making that determination. Upon receipt of our budget in May 2024, and after consulting with the HUD Shortfall team, MSHDA made the decision to close the waiting lists effective July 1, 2024.

Q: Does the shortfall impact the landlord damage reimbursement program? (and to clarify: does that program apply only to PBV units, or are open-market landlords eligible for it when renting to an HCV tenant?)

A: The Owner Damage Claim Payment Program is not impacted by the shortfall. This program is available to all HCV and PBV program owners/landlords.

Q: When will clients be receiving these notices of application expiration?

A: MSHDA will send notification to applicants shortly after their name has been removed from the waiting list. MSHDA has updated the Waiting List Expiration Notice to provide more information to applicants on the shortfall and how to stay connected to service agencies for other resources during this time. We expect to begin issuing notices to applicants with expired applications by August 30th. In addition, MSHDA is providing a list of all impacted applicants to the local Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) to support outreach efforts to these individuals and families.

Q: How long is this shortfall expected to last?

A: The duration is uncertain; however, it's expected that MSHDA will be working with the HUD Shortfall team at least through the end of 2024. The HUD Shortfall team makes the determination as to when a PHA can be removed from the shortfall designation.

Q: Why aren't pending applications only suspended, not expired (less than 3 months until FY 2025 starts)?

A: Rather than burden HARAs and applicants with continuing updates and recertifications for an unknown period of time, MSHDA made the determination to allow applications to expire. During the closure period, HARAs should encourage applicants to remain in contact so that they can be considered for other eligible resources and/or added to the waiting list when it re-opens. MSHDA will inform partners prior to re-opening the waiting lists to ensure adequate time to locate and prioritize individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness for entry to the waiting list.

Q: Is the resource list MSHDA have available to everyone?

A: All individuals and families in need are encouraged to contact the HARA for available assistance: <https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/homeless/looking-for-help>.

MSHDA's housing resource page is located at: [michigan.gov/mshda/rental/resources](https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/rental/resources).

Q: What should we say to clients that had been hoping for this voucher and now cannot receive it?

A: It should be explained that due to budget constraints, MSHDA is unable to issue any new vouchers for the foreseeable future. All individuals and families should be encouraged to contact the HARA or the applicable service agency for available resources and assistance.

Q: We have hundreds of homeless families and intimate violence survivors who are at risk of being killed who have been waiting for months to years. HARAs and CoCs say they have nothing to help who haven't helped for years. Now what?

A: Those experiencing violence can be referred to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Victims Services (DVS) for available resources and/or connection to agencies that may have funding to assist: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/safety-injury-prev/publicsafety/crimevictims>. Help for Survivors can also be found at: <https://www.hud.gov/VAWA#helpforsurvivors>

Q: Are there audits being conducted on HARAs that have not been collecting information and giving people their homeless ID and registering them?

A: MSHDA completes regular audits of Homeless Preference documentation from each HARA to ensure program compliance. During the shortfall period and suspension of the waiting list, MSHDA will also suspend audits.

Q: What will happen to applicants that applied when HCV waiting lists were open? Will they stay on said waiting lists or expire as well?

A: Applicants on the waiting list **without** the homeless preference are not subject to recertification every 120 days. However, MSHDA will not be drawing any names from the waiting lists until there has been sufficient time for HARAs to re-populate waiting lists with homeless preference applicants.

Q: Lansing announced a waiting list opening for HCV applicants last week. How can they get HCV vouchers?

A: Each PHA in Michigan is funded separately by HUD. MSHDA's shortfall does not impact other PHAs and their ability to accept applications and issue vouchers.

Q: I reached out to the Detroit VA a couple weeks ago for a veteran and was told that the Detroit VA is out of HUD-VASH Vouchers "indefinitely". Is this related to the shortfall even though it is stated that they would not be affected?

A: The Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) program is not affected by MSHDA's shortfall designation so MSHDA can continue to issue and lease VASH vouchers that are available. When the VASH vouchers are fully leased with eligible veterans, no additional VASH vouchers can be issued, until one becomes available (family leaving the program or new award of vouchers from HUD or the Veterans Administration (VA)).

Q: When you talk about inconsistent practices in implementation of HCV homeless preference by local agencies, does this mean that local agencies don't necessarily add everyone to the homeless preference wait list that qualify?

A: MSHDA has found that some communities apply additional/unique requirements to the Homeless Preference process, including limitations on who can provide documentation of homelessness.

Q: As MSHDA works on more efficient processes has there been talk/discussion about having MSHDA agents have access to Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)? This might assist in locating folks who have moved around - a HARA may not be able to locate them, or they moved to a different county.

A: MSHDA will be reviewing all processes related to HCV homeless preference to determine areas for improvement.

Q: Where can one find more information about the history of homeless preference as a policy, state and nationwide, and the data reasoning behind it?

A: Information on MSHDA's homeless preference can be found in Chapter 4 of the HCV Administrative Plan:

- <https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/rental/housing-choice-voucher/housing-choice-voucher-administrative-plan>.

Information on preventing and ending homelessness can be located at:

- Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness website at: <https://www.michigan.gov/mcteh>;
- HUD's website: www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning, or
- National Alliance to End Homelessness website: <https://endhomelessness.org/>

Q: Is MSHDA going to move to paperless process for all its programs (ex. ESG)?

A: HCV is the only program planned for system change at this time.

Q: Why is this being called a shortfall? A shortfall is generally when not all need can be met. At this point there is NO need being met and there aren't any vouchers being issued and no ability to submit applications.

A: The budget provided by HUD is insufficient to support adding new vouchers to MSHDA's HCV program. The shortfall designation allows MSHDA to be eligible to both apply for additional funding and retain currently assisted families.

Q: Will there still be a paper option for our populations who have limited access to the internet or low knowledge of technology?

A: MSHDA is committed to ensuring that all program participants can successfully participate in the program without significant barriers. The transition to paperless systems will provide improved processes for many participants, and MSHDA will provide options for assistance when needed.

Q: How are the number of vouchers aligned with the level of need? What local data is used to determine the need?

A: As MSHDA has statewide jurisdiction to administer the HCV program, each county is assigned an allocation of vouchers. When determining a county's allocation, MSHDA utilizes the following data sets:

- Percentage of families at or below the federal poverty level in each county
- Percentage of rental households in each county
- Percentage of homeless individuals/families per county in relation to the statewide total entered in the Homeless Management Information System

Q: What is ESG?

A: ESG is the Emergency Solutions Grant program funded through HUD. MSHDA is the non-entitlement recipient on behalf of Michigan. ESG supports street outreach, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, homelessness prevention, HMIS (Homeless Management Information System), and associated administrative costs for this program. More information on MSHDA's implementation of ESG can be found here:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/homeless/homeless-and-special-housing-needs-programs/emergency-solutions-grant-esg-program>

Q: Many individuals experiencing homelessness do not have access to a phone and/or the internet. Their items are often stolen, lost, or damaged, especially when experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Access to charging a phone and/or Wi-Fi is also very limited for the homeless because they are kicked out of public places. When individuals do gain access to a phone/computer, their phone number is likely different and they are usually unable to recall passwords, security question answers, etc. With this being said, are there any considerations for these barriers for individuals experiencing homelessness - especially regarding updates and communications? If so, what actions will be set in place to eradicate these barriers?

A: MSHDA is committed to ensuring that all program participants can successfully participate in the program without significant barriers. The transition to paperless systems will provide improved processes for many participants, and MSHDA will provide options for assistance when needed.

Q: Regarding shelter diversion, does MSHDA have any guidance or best practices on where to send people when the shelters have been (over) full for years? And we've not been able to find other rentals or housing options available. We have a lot of people staying in extended stay hotels, which is not a great long-term solution, but there's nowhere else for them to go for the foreseeable future.

A: Please refer to MSHDA's website for more information regarding shelter diversion practice and guidance, as well as updates on the current Shelter Diversion Program pilot operating in six (6) communities:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/homeless/homeless-and-special-housing-needs-programs/shelter-diversion-pilot>

Q: The current application and waitlist maintenance system has been very difficult for those experiencing homelessness that do not have consistent phone service and internet access. How will the new system, being entirely electronic, make the process more accessible for these disadvantaged and extremely vulnerable applicants?

A: MSHDA is committed to ensuring that all program participants can successfully participate in the program without significant barriers. The transition to paperless systems will provide improved processes for many participants, and MSHDA will provide options for assistance when needed.

Q: Since we will be shifting some focus to Project Based Vouchers (PBV) for clients that are eligible, would it be possible for the HARAs to get access/visibility to the PBV waiting list, help maintain the list, and possible recertifications?

A: The lead agency for each PBV property can be found here: <https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/rental/project-based-vouchers/project-based-developments-listing>

Q: What type of work is MSHDA involved with to help local COCs create alternatives to the SPDAT? New systems of assessment could help strengthen prevention/diversion efforts.

A: The Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness (MCTEH) has partnered with racial equity consultant and trainer, ARC 4 Justice (forming of C4 Innovations), to complete a pilot with five (5) communities to develop and test new assessment and prioritization processes which will ultimately be considered for replication across the state in place of the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index - Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool). The pilot work began in the second quarter of 2024 and will continue for 12 months.

Q: You said it's the Federal budget for FY 2024 that is causing the shortfall. Is there advocacy we must do for HUD under the FY 2025 Federal budget?

A: Advocacy for increased funding in Calendar Year 2025 would be beneficial as Congress continues the budget discussions. There are state and national organizations to support advocacy efforts, including MCAH (Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness), CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing), NLIHC (National Low Income Housing Coalition), and NAEH (National Alliance to End Homelessness).

Q: Would MSHDA consider asking HUD for a waiver that would allow CoC-funded rapid rehousing housing programs to extend the 24-month limit on RRH rental assistance to 30 months through March 31, 2025?

A: As the funding is coming directly from HUD and not MSHDA, the CoC would need to make the waiver request to HUD.

Q: How long do you foresee the HCV WL being closed for?

A: MSHDA anticipates waiting lists will be closed at least through the end of 2024. The HUD Shortfall team will determine when MSHDA can begin issuing new vouchers.

MSHDA's housing resource page is located at: michigan.gov/mshda/rental/resources

Q: What happens if there are continued shortfalls in 2025? Are there any further steps that will be taken?

A: MSHDA will continue working with the HUD Shortfall team at least through the end of 2024. The HUD Shortfall team makes the determination to remove an agency from shortfall designation. MSHDA's goal is to begin issuing new vouchers as soon as allowable.

Q: Did I hear it correctly that PBV clients can't obtain an HCV voucher? If so, what does this mean for clients housed in a PBV unit where the contract is not being renewed next year and were told they would be offered HCV prior to this HCV announcement?

A: Moves from PBV developments with a tenant-based voucher (HCV) are on hold during the shortfall. If a PBV HAP contract will be terminating and the PBV families have received notice of this action, the family will be provided a tenant-based voucher when the contract terminates.

Q: How will those with Lived Experience and direct care workers be notified about listening calls opportunities?

A: MSHDA will leverage multiple avenues to connect with people with lived experience of homelessness (PWLE), including those who were previously on the HCV waiting list and those who have received a voucher through the historic Homeless Preference process. These avenues include request via email and notifications to CoCs (Continuums of Care) to submit names of staff and PWLE.

Q: How can we best support those in the subsidized housing that are going to be asked to leave without a voucher so we can hopefully prevent another episode of homelessness for them? Will they be given another case worker or set up in another program?

A: Programs and supportive services should partner closely with households engaged in rental assistance to determine ongoing need and eligibility for any additional resources or programs. Households assisted through MSHDA ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant) can request extensions to rapid re-housing rental assistance as needed, even beyond the nine (9) month maximum noted in policy.