



# Preference Point Updates

Understanding how the program  
changes impact applicants

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- Determining if you need to update your application
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# What Are Preference Points?

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The City assigns Preference Points to applications that meet the following criteria as a way of prioritizing households in the applicant pool.

- Cambridge Residents
- Cambridge-based workers
- People with Emergency Need
- Families with children under 18
- U.S. Military Veteran

# What is New with the Preference Points?

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The City gives Preference Points to applications that fit these criteria. This helps prioritize households in the applicant pool.

- **Cambridge Residents**

**12 points**

Previously assigned 4 points.

- **(New) Cambridge-based workers**

**5 points**

Only assigned if not a Cambridge Resident.

- **People with Emergency Need**

**3 points**

Previously assigned 1 point. There are also new qualification criteria.

- **Families with children under 18**

**2 points**

We no longer assign a point for households with children under 6.

- **(New) U.S. Military Veteran**

**1 point**



# Why the Changes?

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- There are a limited number of affordable housing units.
- The need for affordable units outnumbers available units.
- The City needs to share this limited resource in a fair and equitable way.





# 2

## Cambridge Resident Preference Points

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The Inclusionary Rental Housing Program focuses on helping households already living in Cambridge.

This approach aims to reduce displacement in a tough housing market. It also strengthens community connection.

The Inclusionary Rental Housing Program is increasing the Cambridge Resident preference points. They are changing from **4 points to 12 points**

# Overview Of Cambridge Resident Preference Points

## Cambridge Residents

The Inclusionary Rental Housing Program prioritizes households already living in Cambridge as a way to limit displacement in a competitive housing market and strengthen community ties.

Cambridge Residents

**Currently 4 Points**



Cambridge Residents

**Updated to 12 Points**

## Cambridge Resident Definition

- The applicant's permanent home is in the City of Cambridge.
- The applicant lives outside of Cambridge. They had to leave their home in Cambridge within the last 12 months after a "no fault" court judgement.
- The Cambridge Housing Authority issued a tenant-based voucher to the applicant within the last 12 months, but the applicant lives outside of Cambridge.
- Applicant is living in a shelter or transitional housing facility operated by a social service provider in Cambridge, or;
- The applicant lives in a shelter or isn't permanently housed. Their last stable home was in Cambridge.

# Cambridge Resident Preference Points

## How to Qualify

For current Cambridge residents: People currently living in Cambridge must provide supporting documents from the chart below.

- Option 1:** Provide **one** document from Category A and **one** document from Category B; **or**
- Option 2:** Provide **three** documents from Category B; **or**,
- Option 3:** Provide **two** documents from Category B and **two** documents from Category C.

### Category A

- Current lease
- Letter from shelter or transitional housing facility in Cambridge
- Current Section 8 Agreement or Income Verification Worksheet

### Category B

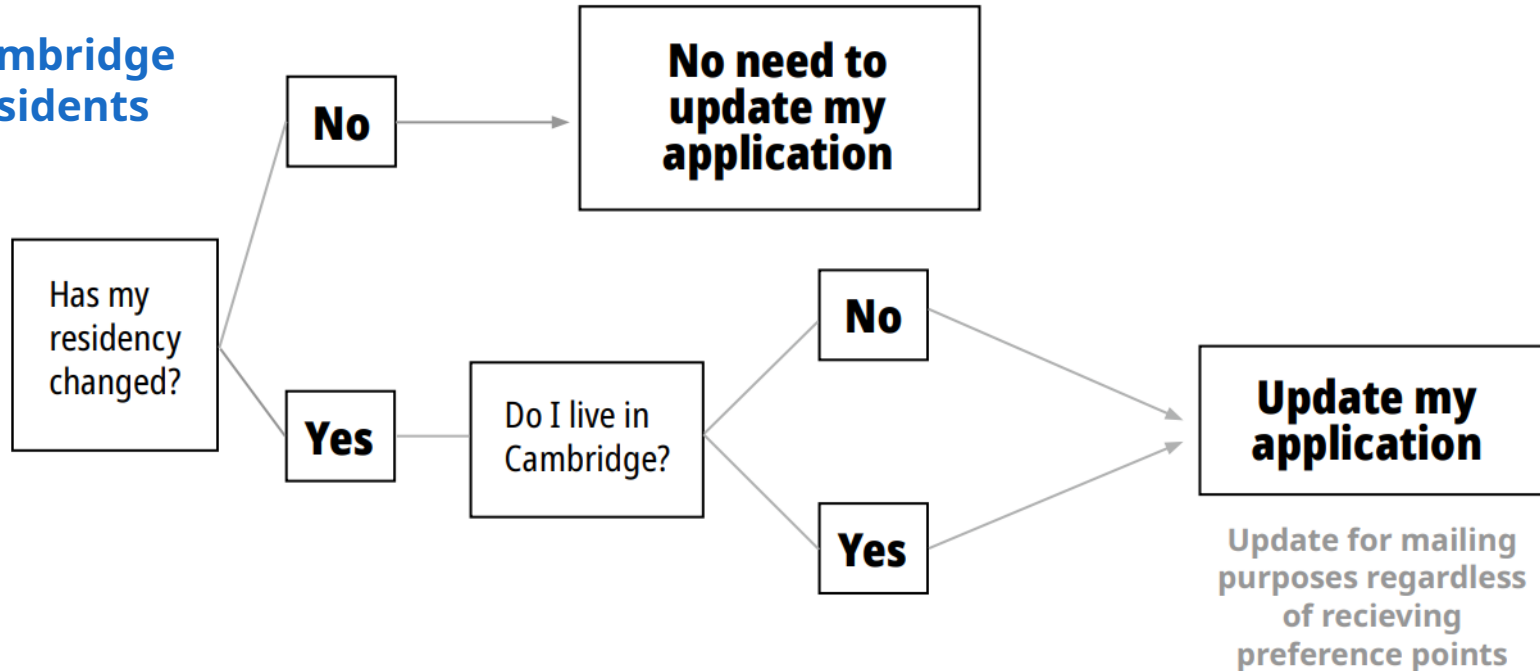
- Current Utility Bill (electric, gas, oil, cable)
- Massachusetts ID
- Current Cambridge Public School Enrollment
- Car Registration
- Federal Tax Return (Form 1040)
- Renter's Insurance Statement
- Three months of rent
- Excise Tax Bill

### Category C

- Bank or other Financial Institution Statement
- Credit Card Statement
- Cell Phone Bill
- Public Benefit Letter or Statement
- Medical Bill or Statement
- Current Voter Registration

# Do I Need to Update My Application

## Cambridge Residents





# Cambridge-Based Worker Preference Points

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The Inclusionary Rental Housing Program values the contributions of Cambridge workers. By providing housing options for Cambridge-based workers, we can reduce the climate effects of commuting.

The Inclusionary Housing Rental Program now includes **5 preference points** for Cambridge-based workers.



# Overview Of Cambridge-Based Worker Preference Points

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## New Cambridge-Based Workers

The Inclusionary Rental Housing Program now assigns 5 preference points to people who are employed in Cambridge.

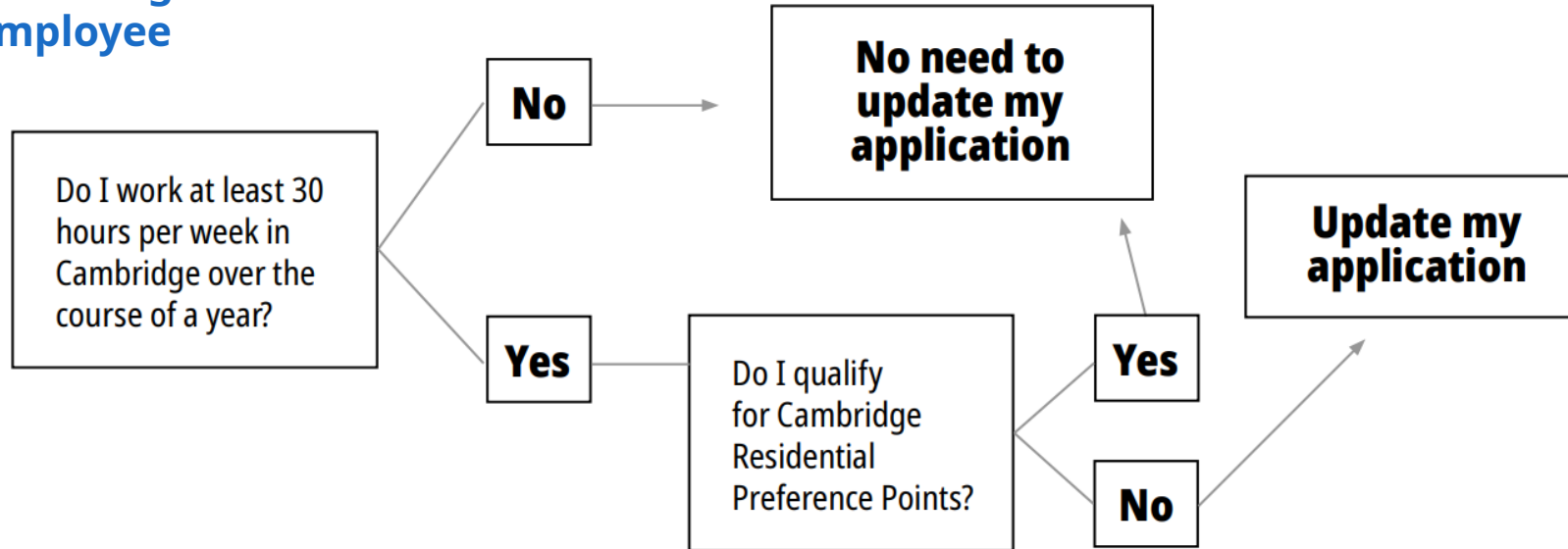
Cambridge-Based Worker Preference Points: **5 Points**

## Cambridge-Based Workers

- A current pay statement that indicates the location of the applicant's employment. An employment letter may be required if it's unclear based on paystubs.
- **For self-employed applicants:** Documentation of specific arrangements to carry out their employment in Cambridge by maintaining a permanent workspace in Cambridge, or demonstrating that their work is limited to or predominantly within Cambridge

# Do I Need to Update My Application

## Cambridge-Based Employee





# 3

## Emergency Housing Need Preference Points

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The city of Cambridge gives preference points to households with qualifying emergency housing needs. This helps speed up housing for those who meet the standards.

The Inclusionary Rental Housing Program has **updated what qualifies** and how for emergency housing need preference points. Households are only eligible for **3 Emergency Need Preference Points**. They are not cumulative.

# Emergency Housing Need Preference Points

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## Emergency Housing Need Points

For households experiencing specific crises, there are 3 points

Updated Emergency Need Categories  
Beginning July 25th, 2025: **3 Points**

## Emergency Housing Needs

- Applicant is facing a no-fault eviction, or was displaced from a home within the last 12 months due to a non-fault eviction
- Applicant's home has been deemed uninhabitable by the City, or applicant was displaced from the home following a natural disaster or other causality which was beyond their control (e.g., fire, flood).
- Applicant is paying more than 50% of gross income for rent and in that home for at least 12 months
- Applicant is facing a rent increase of 25% or more, which would result in paying more than 50% of gross income for rent. This must be an increase within the home they've lived in for at least 12 months
- Applicant isn't permanently housed, is living in a shelter or transitional housing facility, or is unhoused.
- Applicant has fled within the last 12 months or is attempting to flee **domestic violence**



# Overview of Emergency Housing Need: No-Fault Eviction

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## Updated Criteria

Have you faced or are you facing no-fault eviction within the last 12 months?

## How to Qualify

The following documentation must be submitted:

- A copy of a court filing indicating that a summary process action has been started and remains active; **or**
- A copy of a judgment or agreement that has entered against the applicant; **and**
- In either case such filing must show that the action was not brought as a result or fault of the applicant or member of the applicant's household.

# Overview of Emergency Housing Need: Displacement

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## New Emergency Need Category

Since you applied, have you been displaced due to a disaster not of your making? Or, since you applied, has your home been deemed uninhabitable by Inspectional Services?

## How to Qualify

The following documentation must be submitted:

- Notice to vacate or condemnation from the building commissioner or other local code enforcement official which indicates that repairs are estimated to require more than two months to complete.

# Overview of Emergency Housing Need: Rent Burden

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## Updated Criteria

- Do you pay over 50% of your household income for housing?
- Have you lived there for at least a year?
- Or, will your rent increase by more than 25%, making it more than 50% of your income?

## How to Qualify

The following documentation must be submitted:

- A copy of a lease or other written tenancy agreement for an applicant's residence;
- Documentation showing at least 2 months of income for all adult members of an applicant's household; **and**
- Bank statements for all accounts for all household members.

For those facing a rent increase of 25%:

- In addition, a letter from the property manager indicating both the current and increased rent amounts.

# Overview of Emergency Housing Need: Homeless or Unhoused

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## Updated Criteria

Are you unhoused, or living in a shelter, or in time-limited transitional housing?

## How to Qualify

The following documentation must be submitted:

- A letter from an emergency shelter;
- A letter from a transitional housing facility; a document signed by the applicant and a housing search caseworker, a social service provider, shelter staff, school personnel, attorney, medical professional or social worker or mental health professional from whom the applicant has sought assistance relating to homelessness or housing search. The document must specify under penalty of perjury that the professional believes the applicant is not permanently housed or is living unsheltered.

# Overview of Emergency Housing Need: Domestic Violence

## New Emergency Need Category

Have you fled or are you attempting to flee Domestic Violence within the last 12 months?

## How to Qualify

- 1) The incident or incidents of abuse occurred within 12 months of
  - A) Applying for Inclusionary Rental Housing, **or**
  - B) the applicant's request to be considered for this status; **and**
- 2) The abuser is a member of the victim's household; **and**,
- 3) The applicant has been displaced from their residence and has not secured permanent housing, or is at risk of being displaced from their residence as a result of domestic violence or loss of income from an abuser who is a member of the applicant's household.



# Overview of Emergency Housing Need: Domestic Violence

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## New Emergency Need Category

Have you fled or are you attempting to flee Domestic Violence within the last 12 months?

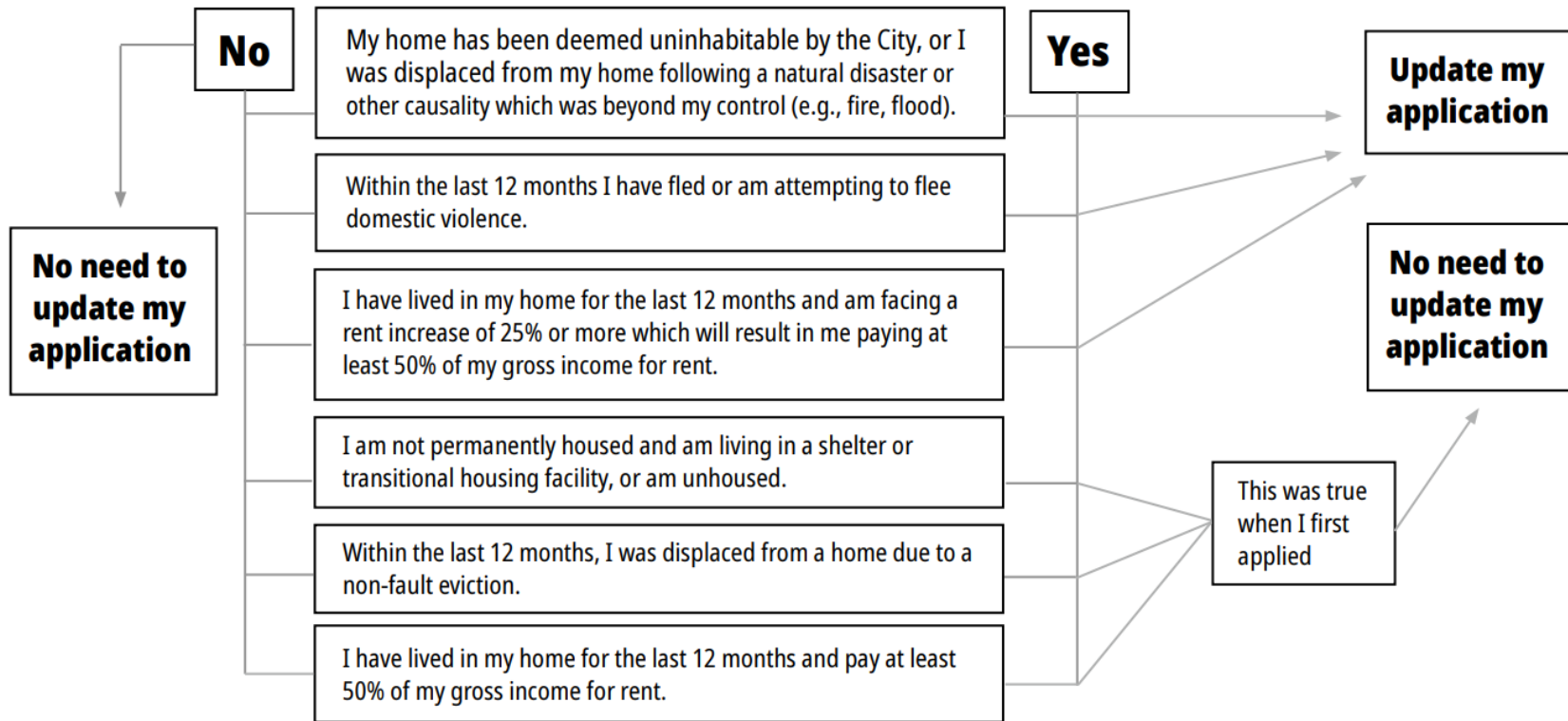
## How to Qualify

The following documentation must be submitted:

- **A)** A lease or other document showing members of the victim's household; **and**
- **B)** A copy of a police report or court record showing of the incident of domestic violence with identification of the abuser; **or**
- **C)** A document signed by the victim and an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, a social service provider, domestic violence shelter staff, school personnel, attorney, medical professional, or social worker or mental health professional.

# Do I Need to Update My Application

Emergency  
Housing Need





# 4

## Households with Children Preference Points

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With a limited number of 2- and 3- bedroom apartments, the Inclusionary Rental Housing Program has **updated** the households with children preference points criteria.

Households with children who are **6 years old** or younger **no longer receive** an additional point.

This will offer more equitable access to family-sized units.

# Overview of Households with Children Preference Points

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To help address the demand for housing for families, households with children are afforded preference points.

The preference points for households with children under 6 years old is no longer applicable.

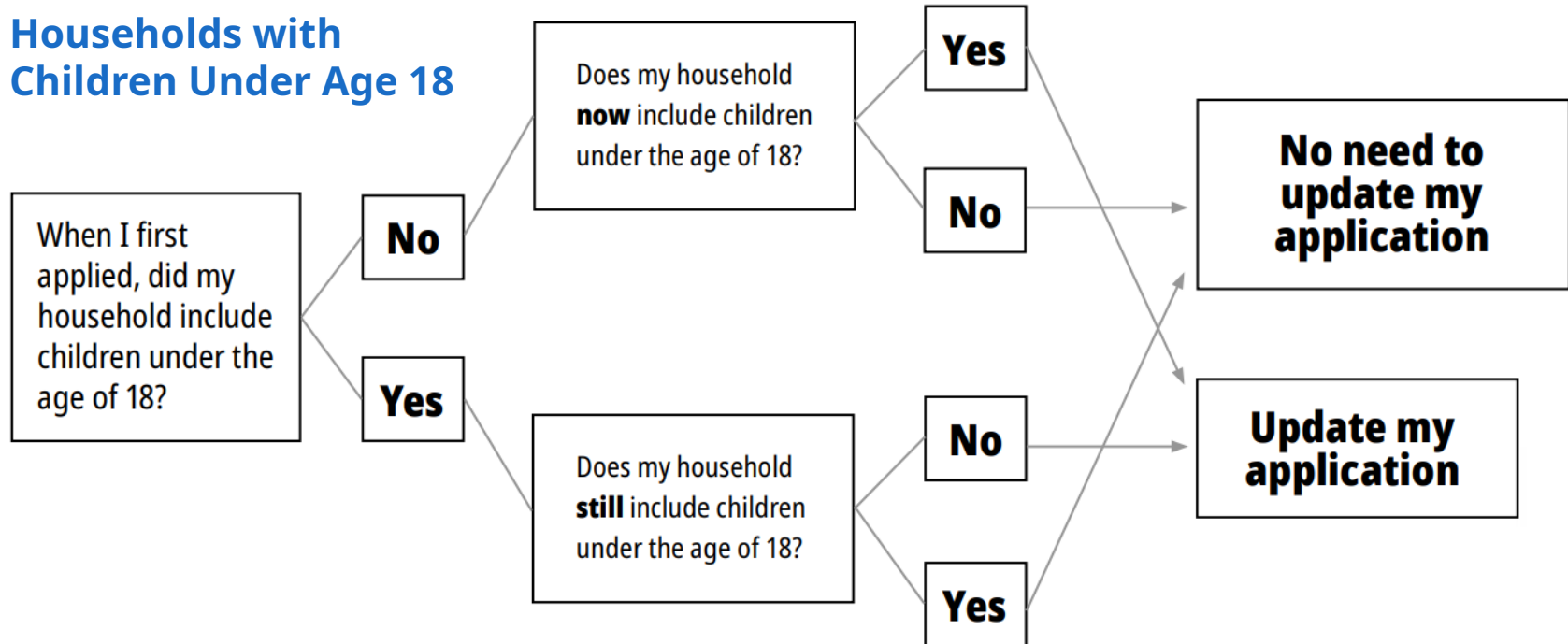
Households with children under 18 will receive **2 preference points**.

## How to Qualify

- Households with children under 18 must provide birth certificates
  - If there is shared custody, households must demonstrate that the child(ren) spend at least 30% of their time living with the applicant household

# Do I Need to Update My Application

## Households with Children Under Age 18







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## U.S. Military Veteran Preference Points

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U.S. Veterans, who are honorably discharged can receive **a preference point** for service.

# Overview of Households with Veterans

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- Are you an honorably discharged U.S. veteran
- Are you a widow of an honorably discharged U.S. veteran

**You cannot combine points.**

**Veteran Household Preference Point: 1 Point**

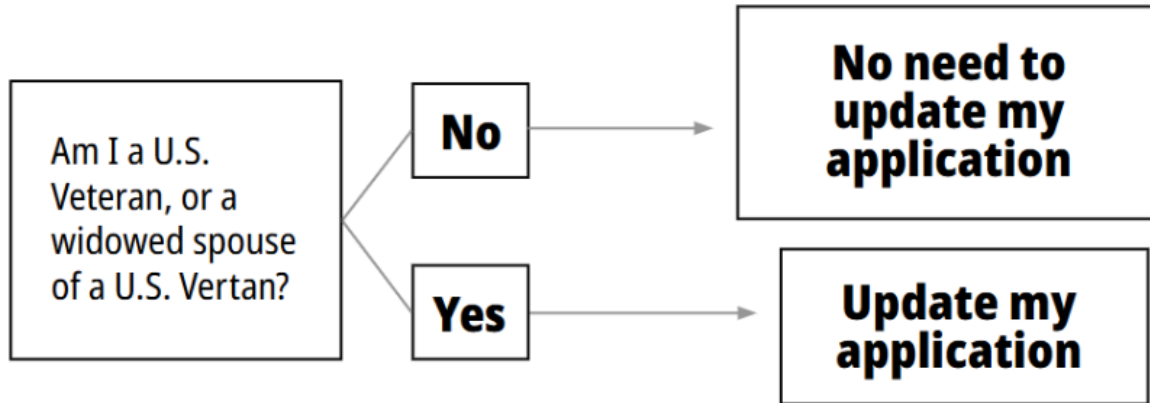
## How to Qualify

- DD-214 or similar discharge papers

# Do I Need to Update My Application

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## U.S. Veteran Update



# What is Next?

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- Try the [online checklist](#) to help determine if you need to update your application with the Cambridge Housing Department
- Use the checklist to collect any paperwork needed to update your application
- Submit the updated paperwork using the unique link you received when we emailed you to notify you of the changes or mail the paper version sent through the mail.

## Reach out to Cambridge Housing Department with any questions



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