

ALLOCATIONS (MASP properties) Policy and Procedure

QA REFERENCE	M't P&P No 35
DATE INTRODUCED	29 03 2019
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REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY	Chief Financial Officer
APPROVAL BY	Chief Executive Officer
REFERENCES –	
Relevant Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Act 1983 (Vic) • Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies • DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines • Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS • Residential Tenancies Act 1997
Other relevant MASP Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bond payment • Code of Conduct • Complaints and Appeals • Property Damage by tenant • Eligibility • Inspections • Maintenance and Repairs • Property Damage by Tenant • Privacy and Confidentiality • Privacy Information Sharing • Rent Arrears Management and Evictions • Rent Setting and Collection
FORMS & TEMPLATES	

Purpose

This policy establishes the approach of MASP to:

- eligibility for its rental housing programs;
- the prioritisation and allocation of vacant properties in its rental housing portfolio; and
- successful and sustainable tenancies and communities through the matching of applicants to properties.

Scope

This policy applies to all rental properties owned or managed by MASP.

Policy Statement

Guiding principles

Eligibility for housing

MASP establishes eligibility criteria for housing allocation to fulfill its social mission and to ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress.

Accordingly, MASP will:

- only allocate housing to eligible applicants;
- communicate clearly to applicants and the community as to who is eligible for housing with MASP; and
- comply with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for housing.

Approach to allocation

MASP will allocate housing to eligible applicants and in a manner which:

- is fair, transparent and equitable;
- relieves households from housing stress;
- is in accordance with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations; and
- supports the financial viability of MASP's housing programs.

MASP is committed to promoting a successful and sustainable tenancy when matching applicants to its properties. This means that MASP will allocate housing in a way that:

- gives appropriate priority to households in need of housing assistance;
- considers the health, safety and support needs of applicants;
- matches individual housing needs with available properties; and
- supports sustainable and harmonious communities.

Eligibility for housing

Priority will be given to those where the following circumstances are present as defined in the Opening Doors Prioritisation Grid

- Domestic Violence;
- Prevention of Child Protection involvement;
- Abuse or trauma family may have been exposed to;
- Size of household e.g. 5 – 10 children in family indicates difficulty of finding alternative short-term accommodation to suit size of family;
- Current state of housing situation - degree of homelessness (e.g. sleeping rough, impending eviction or homelessness, currently housed in a personally dangerous situation.)

Other important factors include

- Presence of mental health issues;
Medical needs and/or disabilities e.g. if wheel chair bound short-term accommodation options may not be suitable;
- Needs of children e.g. behaviour issues, reunification;
- Presence of drug and/or alcohol abuse issues.

MASP will communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the particular eligibility criteria that apply to that program.

Approach to allocation

Sourcing applicants

MASP's Property and Tenancy Worker will source applicants for available properties by internal email to all staff

- describing the property
- asking for MASP Case Managers / Support Workers to complete a "Housing Request Form" for eligible clients
- indicating a closing date and time for applications to be submitted

Other legal requirements

MASP will ensure in making any allocation that it complies any other legal requirements concerning eligibility for housing or allocation of housing.

Promoting successful and sustainable tenancies

MASP is committed to treating all applicants fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against any potential applicant or applicant.

MASP will assess all applicants before making an offer of housing to determine suitability for a particular vacancy. If MASP declines to offer an applicant housing, it will inform the applicant accordingly.

Matching households to the right house

In allocating housing, MASP will also have regard to the VHR operational guideline, *Clients with Special Accommodation Requirements*

MASP will match applicants to properties so that an allocation:

- is the right size for the applicant's household;
- is in an area consistent with the applicant's needs;
- assists the applicant to access employment or any support services that they need;
- makes the best use of housing stock owned or managed by MASP;
- encourages a sustainable tenancy; and
- meets any particular expressed needs of the applicant so far as they are known, such as modifications for people with a physical disability or mobility impairment, availability of car parking or room for carers.

MASP aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those applicants who need them, including:

- properties that are suitable for older people
- properties that have been built or modified to meet the needs of people with a disability;
- properties on the ground floor,
- properties with level access; or
- properties with a yard/garden.

MASP will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate any particular requirements.

Supporting sustainable and harmonious communities

MASP may, to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies in allocation in response to:

- a high concentration of public and community housing stock in a particular area;
- a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic issues in a particular area or building;
- existing tenancy management issues (or a potential for them to develop);

- existing neighborhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
- a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

Allocation Panel

An allocation panel of three MASP Managers and the Chief Executive Officer (as Chair) will convene within 24 hours of the application “closing time” to review applications for the vacant property.

Panel members are to declare any conflicts of interest in relation to the applicant and remove themselves from the panel. The position will then be filled by another appropriate MASP employee.

The allocation panel will review all applications and determine the successful applicant.

The successful applicant’s MASP case manager / support worker will be notified and the applicant will have 24 hours to accept the offer.

If the tenant refuses the property based on any reasonable grounds the allocation panel will offer the property to the next suitable applicant within 24 hours.

Definitions

In this policy:

Applicant	means a person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to MASP
DHHS	means the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
Director of Housing	means the Victorian government statutory authority that owns all public housing land in Victoria and which is the principal funding body for community housing
Nomination rights	means arrangements between MASP and third party support providers where the support provider nominates applicants for certain vacant properties
Priority Access	Applicants on the VHR who have been assessed as having a priority housing need. The Priority Access Categories are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Management Housing • Priority Transfers • Homeless with Support • Supported Housing • Temporary Absence • Special Housing Needs • Special Housing Needs (Aged 55 years and over)
Public housing	Housing owned and managed by DHHS
Targeted Social Housing	The properties that are considered Targeted Social Housing under agreements between MASP and the Director of Housing.

Transitional Housing means the Victorian Government program to provide housing on a short-term basis to people at risk of homelessness seeking housing options

VHR The Victorian Housing Register, the statewide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing

Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the MASP website www.masp.org.au