

Social Housing Notification

Policies & Procedures No. 16-02 February 22, 2016

The Requirements, Recommendations and Guidelines in this communiqué are to be implemented by the housing providers administered under the legislated programs/Operating Agreement identified below:

- √ Providers under Housing Services Act, 2011
- Providers under a Federal Operating Agreement
- √ Requirement
- Guidelines
- Information Only

Subject

Ranking Existing Market Rent Households applying for RGI Assistance - Change in Circumstances/Economic Hardship (in-situ)

Legislative Reference: O. Regulation 367/11 s. 48

Purpose/Overview

To establish rules for the Service Manager's system for selecting households that allows a housing provider, with the approval of the Service Manager, to provide rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance to a market rent household that already occupies a unit in the housing provider's project.

Background

The City of Greater Sudbury has approved the existing policy that permits existing market rent households living in social housing communities, who experience a significant change in their circumstances, to be given their original date of application for ranking purposes on the centralized wait list for rent-geared-to-income assistance.

All households seeking RGI assistance must be screened for eligibility by the City of Greater Sudbury Housing Registry. Housing Providers frequently receive requests from existing market rent households (in-situ households) for RGI assistance due to a change or loss of income.

The local rule will provide some relief to these households who could otherwise be faced with economic hardship or eviction. The intent of the policy is to provide an advantage to these households by assigning their original date of application on the centralized wait list.

Local Rule

In-Situ Market Rent Households

In order to qualify to receive the original date of application as a ranking date on the Housing Registry centralized wait list, in-situ market rent households are required to complete and submit an application to the Housing Registry. The application will be reviewed to ensure the household meets the eligibility requirements for rent-geared-to-income assistance.

In addition, the in-situ market household must demonstrate that they have experienced a change in circumstances that affects their ability to pay market rent (i.e. the household has experienced a significant loss of income.)

Once eligibility for RGI assistance and economic hardship is established, the in-situ market household will be added to the subsidiary wait list of only their current housing provider with their original date of application. This approach would offer long term households an advantage over new applicants on the wait list. It would not necessarily give the in-situ market rent household priority in receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance. The centralized wait list contains the names of both nonresident and in-situ market rent households waiting for rent-geared-to-income assistance.

In-situ market rent households who wish to transfer from one housing provider to another in order to receive rent-geared-to-income assistance are considered new applicants and do not get the benefit of backdating their application to their original date of application.

Households who have ceased to be eligible for RGI

Housing providers are required to forward to the Housing Registry a copy of all Cease to Qualify for RGI Subsidy letters provided to the tenants.

Households, who are paying market rent because they cease to qualify due to their failure to report a change or provide information when requested, whether or not there has been a change in the household's financial circumstances, would need to follow the same application process as new applicants. These households would not be eligible to have their application backdated to the date of their original application and will be assigned a current date of application.

If the in-situ market rent household seeking reinstatement of RGI assistance has any outstanding arrears with any social housing provider in Ontario, their application cannot be added to the Housing Registry centralized wait list until such time as: 1) the arrears are cleared, or 2) they can demonstrate to the CGS Housing Registry that they have entered into an acceptable repayment agreement, and are committed to making the payments in a timely fashion.

Sequence for Offer of RGI Assistance

The Housing Registry determines the in-situ market rent household's eligibility. If eligible, the household is placed on the centralized wait list for their current unit size, and current housing project with their original date of application.

The housing provider would proceed with the request for income declaration and income verification. Subsidy will be offered once the housing provider has completed a review of all documentation, completed income verification, and has reviewed the following scenarios to determine which one is applicable.

The scenarios are as follows:

1. Housing Provider is below RGI Target:

a. In-situ market rent household is at the top of the centralized wait list:

Where a housing provider is below their RGI target, and the in-situ market rent household is at the top of the centralized wait list for RGI assistance, the qualified in-situ market household may be offered RGI assistance immediately. Requests would be considered on a case by case basis.

b. In-situ market rent household is not at the top of the centralized wait list:

Where a housing provider is below their RGI target, and the in-situ market rent household is not at the top of the centralized wait list for RGI assistance, the housing provider would have to submit a Request to Offer RGI Assistance out of Chronological Order form to the Coordinator of Housing Programs. Should the request be approved the housing provider would be notified and subsidy would be offered immediately. Requests would be considered on a case by case basis.

2. Housing Provider is on RGI Target:

a. In-situ market rent household is at the top of the centralized wait list:

Where a housing provider is on RGI target, and the in-situ market rent household is at the top of the centralized wait list, the in-situ market rent household can only be offered RGI assistance when a vacancy occurs in an RGI unit.

b. In-situ market rent household is not at the top of the centralized wait list:

Where a housing provider is on RGI target, and the in-situ market rent household is not at the top of the centralized wait list, the in-situ market rent household is not eligible for RGI subsidy until such time as their name moves to the top of the centralized wait list.

However, in Option 2 a. and b., the housing provider will complete a Request to Deviate from the Market Rent Target form and submit it to the Coordinator of Housing Programs. The form must be signed by the Board of Directors, and accompanied with a Motion to Deviate from Target passed by the Board of Directors.

Additionally, in Option 2 b., the housing provider will complete a Request to Offer RGI Assistance out of Chronological Order form and submit to the Coordinator of Housing Programs.

The Coordinator of Housing Programs will review the request(s) received and advise the housing provider of the outcome of the request(s). RGI assistance can be offered to the in-situ market rent household if approval is received from the Service Manager. The next vacancy at the Housing Project must be filled with a Market Rent household in order for the housing provider to return to target. Requests would be considered on a case by case basis.

Please note there is no retroactive reinstatement of a subsidy. Subsidy is based on the date of approval and not date of application.

Special Priority (SPP) & Urgent Status (URG):

The inclusion of an SPP or URG household on the centralized wait list will not have an adverse affect upon the offer of RGI assistance to an in-situ market rent household. Households seeking in-situ RGI assistance will not be required to wait for assistance because there are SPP or URGENT households positioned above them on the wait list, as the offer of subsidy is not linked to vacancies but linked to the housing provider's RGI target plan.

Occupancy Standards – Over housed:

Market rent households seeking RGI assistance who are also identified as being over housed would not be eligible for RGI assistance in their current accommodations.

The housing provider would need to verify that the household qualifies for RGI subsidy. In these instances, the household would be placed on the wait list for the appropriate sized unit for the purpose of receiving RGI assistance. The household would be advised that in order to be eligible to receive RGI assistance, they must agree to move to the appropriate sized unit according to the approved Occupancy Standards. The housing provider will follow the policy for over housed households and either add the household to the internal transfer list at the time the RGI assistance is offered, or refer the household to the Registry's centralized wait list.

Should you have any questions please contact the Coordinator of Housing Programs.

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(Disponible en français)