

RENT SUPPLEMENT TENANT GUIDE



Welcome To Your New Home.



Niagara Regional Housing (NRH)

Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell East
2201 St. David's Road
Thorold, Ontario

P.O. Box 344, Thorold, ON L2V 3Z3

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday
except for holidays.

Phone and fax numbers:

Phone: 905-682-9201

Toll Free: 1-800-232-3292

Fax-General: 905-687-4844

To meet with a staff member at our office, please call ahead and make an appointment.

The telephone numbers of key staff are listed below:

Rent Supplement Coordinator: 905-682-9201, ext. 3932

Rent Supplement Analyst: 905-682-9201, ext. 3955

About Niagara Regional Housing (NRH)

NRH helps people with housing that is affordable and meets their needs.

NRH continues to look for opportunities for affordable housing in Niagara in order to house applicants more quickly.

NRH offers the following affordable housing options in Niagara:

- More than 2,700 units in high-rise and low-rise apartment buildings, townhouses and detached houses, owned and managed by NRH
- More than 3,900 units operated by non-profits and cooperative housing providers
- More than 800 units through private market landlords
- New communities through new development

In Niagara, NRH provides affordable housing for approximately, 15,000 people in 11 of the 12 municipalities.

Rent Supplement Tenant Guide

This guide provides general information about the Rent Supplement Program, your rent and your tenancy. You can find more information about the Rent Supplement Program by visiting our website at www.nrh.ca. A Rent Supplement Newsletter will provide you with updates and information from NRH. All other concerns regarding your tenancy should be addressed to your landlord.

What is the Rent Supplement Program?

The Rent Supplement Program offers rent-geared-to-income accommodations in privately owned buildings throughout the Niagara region.

What does rent supplement mean?

A “rent supplement” is a subsidy provided to landlords to bridge the gap between the market rent for the unit and the amount the tenant can pay based on their income. For example, if the market rent on a unit is \$700 per month and the amount the tenant can pay is \$200, the rent supplement portion paid to the landlord would be \$500.

How does the Rent Supplement Program work?

The following describes the program in general:

- NRH inspects privately owned units to make sure they meet basic maintenance standards
- NRH provides ongoing administration of the program (assigns tenants from Affordable Housing Waiting List, calculates rent-geared-to-income, notifies landlord, etc.)
- Selected tenants pay rent-geared-to-income (generally 30% of their gross monthly income in rent) to the landlord
- NRH pays the landlord the difference between the rent paid by the tenant and the full rent for the unit

- Tenants sign a standard lease with an approved private landlord. The landlord is responsible for the normal landlord/tenant relationship, such as rent collection, maintenance, repairs and services offered to all tenants in the building.
- Tenants sign a Letter of Agreement with NRH which outlines program requirements and responsibilities



You and your landlord

- You will sign a lease directly with the landlord. NRH does not enter into a landlord lease with you.
- If you would like to paint or decorate your unit, please obtain your landlord's approval **before** you start
- Please take care of your unit. If the premises have been damaged, you will be responsible for the expense of repairing the damage.
- New tenants are encouraged to buy insurance coverage of his/her personal property and public liability
- Once a year you may receive a Notice of Rent Increase, Form N1, from your landlord. This form will notify you that the market rent on your unit will increase by the rent control guideline for the year. **This will not affect the amount of rent you pay.**

This form is for your information only. NRH will increase the NRH rental subsidy that is automatically sent to the landlord.

Paying your Rent

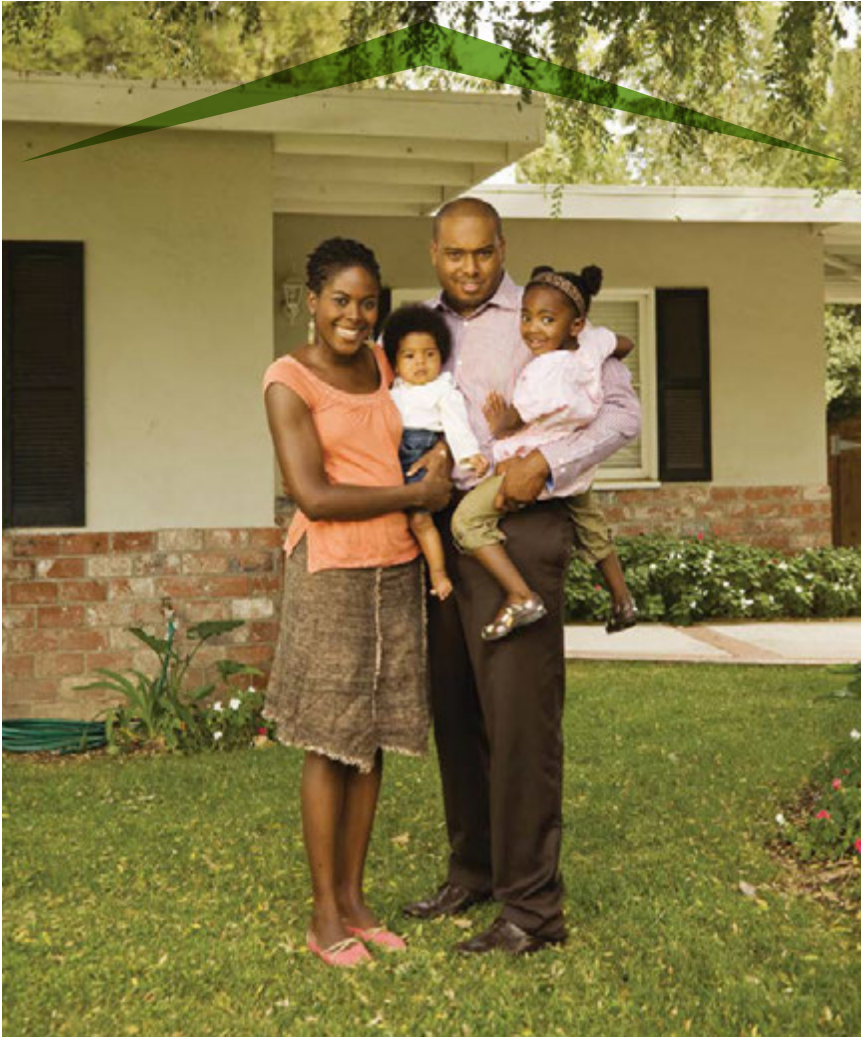
Rent is due on the first of the month. Rent is paid directly to your landlord and not to NRH. According to *The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA)*, landlords can evict tenants who do not pay their rent or who continue to make late payments.

Notice to Vacate

If you wish to move out of your unit, you are required to give 60 (sixty) days written notice to your landlord from the first day of the next month. For example, if you give notice on April 23, you must pay rent until June 30.

Noise and Disturbances

You and your neighbours are entitled to privacy and quiet enjoyment of your homes. Please make sure that you, your household members and guests live and/or behave in a way that does not have a negative impact on your neighbours. Please note that noise and disturbances may lead to eviction. (Refer to your lease.)



You and NRH

- You will sign a “Letter of Agreement” with NRH that covers your responsibilities
- Questions regarding your portion of the rent should be directed to the Rent Supplement Coordinator or Rent Supplement Analyst
- Please notify NRH if there is any change in your family income and any change in the number of persons living in the unit within 30 days after the change occurs. If your household does not report changes, you may be ineligible for a rent subsidy.

Annual Income Verification

At least once every 12 months you must complete a review to determine your continued eligibility for a rent supplement subsidy and for the size and type of unit that you occupy. You must complete the forms, provide proper verification of income and return the entire package by the due date stated on the form. If you do not return this package by the due date, you may lose your subsidy.

Failure to report changes in household income is considered “misrepresentation” and could result in the loss of your subsidy.

Once you lose your subsidy, your rent charge will be increased to the market rent. You would then need to re-apply for your subsidy, which could take a considerable amount of time.

Changes in household income can occur for many reasons including:

- An increase or decrease in the number of hours worked
- A wage increase
- A new job or a second job
- A change in the number of persons living in the household
- Loss of job
- Death

Do not take a chance on losing your subsidy; report all changes immediately. If you are unsure as to whether you are required to report a change, please call the Rent Supplement Coordinator/Analyst.

Adding Someone to Your Lease

Prior to having another person live in your unit, you must obtain approval from your Rent Supplement Coordinator/Analyst and Landlord. This person must complete an application and must meet the NRH eligibility criteria. If the application is approved, a new lease with the new rent amount will be issued and must be signed by all members. Income will be taken into consideration and a new rent will be set.

Absence from Unit

If you and your household members are absent from the unit for more than 60 (sixty) consecutive days or 90 (ninety) non-consecutive days in a year for reasons other than medical, your rent-gear-to-income subsidy may be discontinued. Please notify NRH Rent Supplement Coordinator/Analyst if you are planning to be out of your unit for a significant period of time.

Tenant Appeal

As tenants in the Rent Supplement Program you are subject to *The Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA)*, and you have a right to appeal the following:

- Rent based on wrong information
- Rent incorrectly calculated
- Termination of subsidy

Send your request in writing to: The Appeals Committee, Niagara Regional Housing, P.O. Box 344, Thorold, ON L2V 3Z3 (within ten business days from the date you receive the decision letter).



Special Programs

Sports, Recreation and Culture Program

Niagara's ProKids program supports the participation of eligible children and youth in the sport, recreational or cultural activity of their choice.

Eligibility

ProKids can assist in covering some or all of the cost of recreational/cultural programs if you:

- Live in Niagara
- Have a child between 0-18 years old
- Have a taxable family income below \$40,000 (per year)

Contact

For eligibility or general information call 905-984-6900 or 1-800-263-7215 ext. 3797 or email prokids@niagararegion.ca



Niagara Region Bursary Program

The Niagara Region Bursary Program is designed to help students with financial needs cover the cost of college, university or post-secondary education. Bursaries of \$500 or \$250 are available if you are between the ages of 18-34 and receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance or on the waiting list for housing through NRH. If you want further information to see if you are eligible please visit www.niagararegion.ca or call 905-984-3688.



Fire Safety

Please discuss your fire escape plan with your landlord. Your safety is important to us.

Fire Safety is up to you!

- Know your building, learn the locations of all exits, stairways, pull stations and fire extinguishers
- Participate in fire drills - valuable information is shared
- Have questions or concerns? Speak with your Landlord.

Smoke Detectors

Your apartment has been equipped with a smoke detector. It may save your life. **Please check your smoke detector often to verify that it is working.**

A working smoke detector will detect smoke and sound an alarm to alert you, giving you precious time to escape.

The Ontario Fire Code requires a working smoke alarm on every level of a home and outside all sleeping areas. Failure to comply with the Fire Code smoke alarm requirements could result in a ticket for \$235 or a fine of up to \$50,000. If you do not have working smoke detectors on all levels of your unit, please contact your landlord immediately.

For more information, please visit the Office of the Fire Marshal's website: www.ofm.gov.on.ca

10 Fire Safety Tips

1. Keep candles away from children, pets and flammables
2. Place your candles on a fire-proof base or in holders that can't easily be knocked down
3. Don't overload your electric outlets and circuits by using multiple plugs, circuit extenders and multiple extension cords
4. Check that your lights, extension cords and electrical decorations don't have broken ground plugs, frayed wiring, broken sockets or gaps in insulation
5. Use only approved (CSA) electrical decorations and lights
6. During the holiday season, if you have a real tree in your home, make sure you keep it watered - dry brittle trees are more prone to fire
7. If you have small children or infants in your home, make sure you keep bits and pieces of lights, ornaments and tinsel off the floor and out of reach
8. Use only non-flammable decorations and synthetic trees
9. Know who to call for help in an emergency
10. Practice your home escape plan. Make sure your plan identifies two ways out of each room, if possible and a meeting place outside. Once outside, stay outside. Call 9-1-1 immediately.

Note: It is your landlord's responsibility that all door closers are in proper working order. If you have a fire in your apartment, the door closer will shut the door behind you. This limits the spread of smoke and fire throughout the building. Please do not remove door closers or door stops. They can save your life.

Legislation

Landlord and tenant concerns are governed by *The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA)*. The RTA is intended to provide balanced protection to both landlords and tenants.

The Landlord and Tenant Board sends information notices about the eviction hearing process to tenants who have had eviction applications filed against them. Landlords are responsible for giving the formal “Notice of Hearing” to their tenants.

More information about the RTA is available by calling toll free 1-866-342-6153 or by visiting www.mah.gov.on.ca

As a rent supplement tenant, your eligibility is governed by *The Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA)*. More information on this legislation is available by visiting www.e-laws.gov.on.ca.

All information relating to rent supplement tenants that is provided to, collected or maintained by NRH is subject to the provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*. Owners must respect the privacy of the rent supplement tenants and their rights regarding their subsidy.



Help Numbers

Fire, Police, Ambulance 911
Community & Social Services Information 211
Niagara Regional Police Services 905-688-4111

Community Legal Services

Niagara North - Office (St. Catharines) 905-682-6635
Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara Falls,
Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines, West Lincoln
Justice Niagara - Main Office (Welland) 905-735-1559
Chippawa, Crystal Beach, Fort Erie, Pelham,
Port Colborne, Ridgeway, Stevensville,
Thorold, Wainfleet, Welland
(Satellite Offices - Fort Erie, Port Colborne & Thorold)
Crisis Line 1-800-263-4944



Distress Centre

St. Catharines 905-688-3711
Fort Erie 905-382-0689
Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln 905-563-6674
Port Colborne, Welland 905-734-1212

Emergency Assistance (food, etc.)

Community Care, St. Catharines & Thorold 905-685-1349
Community Care West Niagara 905-563-5822
Community Outreach Program Erie (COPE) 905-871-2526
Fort Erie
Port Cares - Port Colborne 905-834-3629
Project Share - Niagara Falls 905-357-5121
The Hope Centre - Welland 905-788-0744
Family & Children’s Services Niagara 905-937-7731

Financial Assistance

Health and Welfare Canada - Income Security . . . 1-800-277-9914
Ontario Works
Fort Fort Erie & Niagara Falls 905-354-3561 or
1-877-403-8799

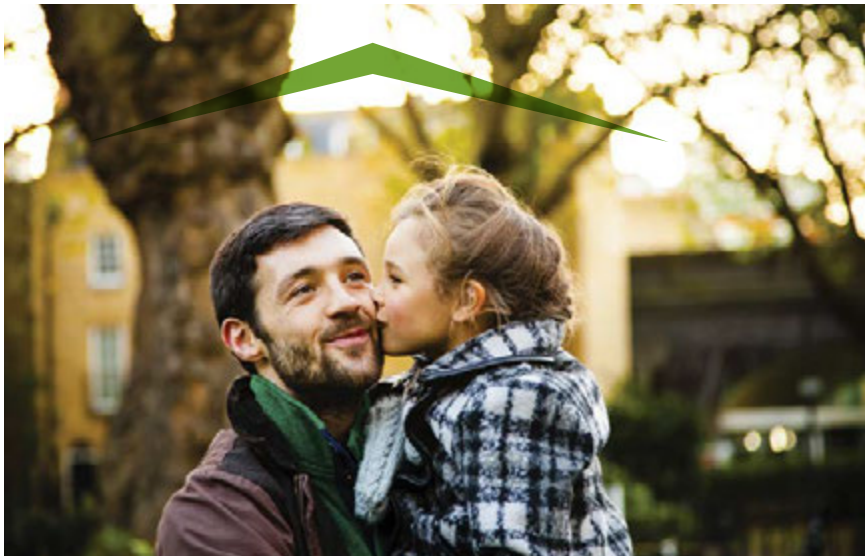
Port Colborne & Welland 905-734-7975
St. Catharines 905-641-9960
Health Services 1-800-263-7248
Home Care 1-800-263-5480
- HNHB Community Care Access Centre (CCAC)

Housing Assistance

Housing Help Centre - St. Catharines 905-984-8955
The Hope Centre - Welland 905-788-0744
The Hope House (Emergency Housing) 905-734-8492
- Welland
Human Rights Legal Support Centre 1-866-625-5179

Multicultural Centres

Fort Erie Multicultural Centre 905-871-3641
Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre 905-685-6589
- St. Catharines office
Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre 905-358-3452
- Niagara Falls office
Welland Heritage Council 905-732-5337





Niagara Regional Housing

www.nrh.ca

