



NIAGARA
REGIONAL
HOUSING



NIAGARA REGIONAL HOUSING

DIRECTIVE

Number: 02-01
Date: July 26, 2002

Applicable to:

- Municipal Non Profit and Private Non Profit
- Co-operatives
- Federal Non Profit
- OCHAP/CSHP
- Rent Supplement

Subject: Application for Social Housing in the Niagara Region and related documents - Act/Regulation Reference: *Social Housing Reform Act*, Sections 65 to 68

◆ **Background – Legislative:**

Social Housing Reform Act, 2000

Under the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*, a Service Manager must establish and administer a centralized waiting list and set local rules and processes for administering the application process, determining eligibility and waiting list management. In the Regional Municipality of Niagara, a centralized waiting list has been established and is managed by Co-ordinated Housing Access Niagara (CHAN), a division of Niagara Regional Housing (NRH). The centralized waiting list is broken down into a number of subsidiary lists, one for each site of each housing provider in the Niagara area.

With the exception of alternative housing providers and the filling of special needs units, housing providers can no longer maintain their own waiting list. Instead, housing providers are required to assist applicants in the application process, house applicants from the established centralized waiting list and provide information to CHAN regarding vacancies and placement activities (see Reporting Requirements, page 3).

Niagara Regional Housing is required through legislation to provide a common application form to be used by all social housing providers. The purpose of the application form is to collect information needed to determine:

- the eligibility of the household for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance;
- the size and type of unit for which the household is eligible; and,
- the ranking of the household on the centralized and subsidiary waiting lists.

With the signing of a Service Agreement with Niagara Regional Housing, housing providers are mandated to utilize this standardized application form.

A new application form is attached to this Directive. This form is to be completed by applicants applying for RGI housing. A list of buildings and a list of Rent Supplement Units in the Niagara Region are also attached, along with a Notice of Vacancy Form.

◆ **Implementation of Application Form and related documents**

- ◆ All applicants for social housing in the Niagara Region must complete and return the Application for Social Housing in Niagara Region to CHAN. Given that a household may indicate their preference for a housing project, size of unit (if range of eligible unit sizes) and geographic area, the following documents should also be provided to applicants:
 - ◆ List of Buildings in the Niagara Region
 - ◆ List of Rent Supplement Units in the Niagara Region

The Notice of Vacancy Form will be used by housing providers to advise CHAN when vacancies occur.

Service Manager's Role

Niagara Regional Housing's Co-ordinated Housing Access division will process applications for housing, conduct the initial eligibility assessment and manage a centralized waiting list. Applicants will be referred to housing providers based on established local priorities and waiting list management processes. NRH has designated the housing provider to do income testing.

Housing Provider's Role

Housing providers are to provide the attached application form and site lists to applicants for RGI housing. Housing providers are required to house applicants from the established centralized waiting list and to retain documentation of the selection process by attaching a copy of the Notice of Vacancy Form and the waiting list used to fill the vacant unit to the successful applicant's application. Housing providers will undertake all income testing.

♦ Reporting Requirements

Housing providers are required to report the following to CHAN:

- ✓ When a unit becomes vacant (Notice of Vacancy Form)
- ✓ Former tenant/member arrears as soon as the tenant/member vacates
- ✓ Tenant/member evicted and consequently convicted under the *Criminal Code* or the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal regarding the receipt of rent-geared-to-income assistance
- ✓ Offer made to an applicant
- ✓ Housed applicant, including:
 - address they will be moving into;
 - effective date of move in; and,
 - whether an RGI or Market tenant/member.
- ✓ Refusal of offer by an applicant
- ✓ Refusal to offer unit by the provider including the reason for the refusal

Note: Housing providers can only refuse to offer a unit to an applicant for the following reasons:

- the selection of the household would be contrary to its mandate;
- the housing provider believes, based on the household's rental history, that the household would fail to fulfil the obligation to pay rent/housing charges for the unit in the amount and at the times when it is due;
- in the case of a non-profit housing co-operative, the housing provider believes that the household would not accept or would be unable to accept its responsibilities as a member;
- in the case of a unit in which the individual would reside in a shared living situation, the housing provider believes that it is unreasonable for the household to reside in the shared accommodation;

- the housing provider believes that the unit's physical characteristics do not match the needs of the household, given the number, gender and ages of the household members; or

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- in the case of special needs housing, the level of support available in a special needs unit is significantly greater or less than the support need by the applicant.

A housing provider cannot refuse to offer a unit to an applicant because of:

- A poor credit history (except for rental arrears)
- A history of damaging units, or behavioural problems

**THE ABOVE-NOTED INFORMATION MUST BE REPORTED WITHIN
10 DAYS OF THE EVENT IN ORDER TO BENEFIT ALL HOUSING
PROVIDERS**

Housing providers are required to report the above-noted information in writing. For all housing providers, reporting vacancies should be done by filling out and faxing the attached Notice of Vacancy Form. Housing providers with access to their waiting list via the CHAN website can report all other information by clicking on the "Add Comment" button at the top of the screen. Once the information is inputted, press the "Submit" button in order to send. For housing providers who do not have access to the CHAN website, the information should be faxed or mailed to CHAN:

CHAN
479D Carlton Street
St. Catharines, ON L2M 4Y6
Fax: (905) 935-0476

If you have questions regarding the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000* go to www.e-laws.gov.on.ca or contact your Housing Administrator.

The attached Application for Social Housing in the Niagara Region form is available on the CHAN website: www.chan-niagara.ca.

If you have questions regarding the attached forms/documents, contact CHAN at 905-935-7645 or visit their website.

Attachments: Application for Social Housing in the Niagara Region
List of Buildings in the Niagara Region
List of Rent Supplement Units in the Niagara Region
Notice of Vacancy Form

(Original signed by John Lovell)

John Lovell
General Manager
Niagara Regional Housing