



NRH Notice

NUMBER: 05-06 (a)
DATE: September 26, 2005

X	Mandatory
	For Information
	Not Applicable

Applicable to:

X	Municipal & Private Non Profit
X	Co-operatives
	Federal Non-Profits
X	OCHAP/CSHP
	Rent Supplement

Subject: Market to Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) Policy - REVISED

Revised Policy:

Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) has revised its market to RGI policy, originally issued on December 15, 2004 under *NRH Notice 04-01*. Changes to the policy include:

- Removing all references to “*permanent*” loss of income and “*permanently unemployable*”, as these circumstances are subject to various interpretations and are difficult to verify. Rather, all market households may apply for RGI subsidy under this policy regardless of specific circumstances*; and,
- Using the tenant/member’s move-in-date, as opposed to the original application date, for placement on the centralized waiting list. This will allow for a more balanced approach between meeting the needs of applicants and market households.

** Note: Some exceptions have been included in this revised policy.*

Market households who require RGI subsidy will now be added to the centralized waiting list based on their move-in date, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria as set out in the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*, accompanying regulations and procedures contained in this Notice.

Background:

On December 15, 2004, NRH issued its Market to RGI policy that included eligibility criteria for market households who wished to apply for RGI subsidy. Since release of the NRH Notice 04-01, Housing providers have experienced some difficulty with implementation. In consultation with the Provider Advisory Group (PAG), it was agreed that the policy would be simplified for administrative purposes and effectiveness.

Eligibility Criteria:

Households that are paying market rent must apply for RGI subsidy through the centralized waiting list with NRH. This MUST be done through the Housing Access & Community Programs Division. If they wish to remain with their current non-profit provider, NRH will give them priority by using their move-in date for placement on the centralized waiting list.

A market household who wishes to have their move-in date used for placement on the centralized waiting list must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Basic eligibility criteria for RGI assistance;
2. The household must not be in arrears as of the application date. If arrears do exist, a repayment agreement must be in place and the household must be adhering to the repayment terms and conditions; and,
3. The household must be in compliance with NRH's occupancy standards (*NRH Notice 03-02*). RGI subsidy cannot be provided to households who do not meet the occupancy standards. If a household is overhoused, they must be appropriately housed before RGI subsidy can be considered.

Exceptions:

1. *Market rent households who lost their RGI subsidy due to a breach of the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000:*

Market households who have been deemed ineligible for RGI subsidy, due to a breach of the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*, are not eligible under this policy. These households are eligible to re-apply for subsidy. However they will receive an application date based on the date they apply.

Some examples of a breach include:

- Failure to report a change in income or household composition
- Failure to submit annual review documents
- Being overhoused and refusing to move
- Being absent from their units for more than 60 days, as outlined in the NRH Notice #03-07 - *Absence from Unit*.

2. *Members of a market household who wishes to form a second household:*

Where one or more members of a market household wishes to split from that household and create a second household, application for RGI subsidy from any member(s) of the household will be considered a new application.

These households will receive an application date based on the date they apply for RGI subsidy.

3. Market households who apply for RGI subsidy with another housing provider or service manager:

These households will receive an application date based on the date they apply for RGI subsidy to the new provider or service manager.

Process:

The following procedures apply to market households requesting RGI subsidy:

- The household must apply for RGI subsidy using the attached form (Request for RGI Subsidy);
- The household MUST forward their request to the Housing Access & Community Programs Division for approval;
- NRH will contact the housing provider to confirm that the household meets all eligibility criteria under this policy;
- NRH determines the household's eligibility for RGI subsidy, and where approved, adds the household to the centralized waiting list for their current non-profit provider, based on their move-in date;
- NRH will advise the household in writing of the decision, whether approved or not; and,
- Where requests are denied, NRH will also advise the household in writing of their right to appeal through the NRH Appeals Committee.
- When the household reaches the top of the centralized waiting list, the housing provider may grant RGI subsidy to the household, based on waiting list rules (*NRH Notice 03-05*).

Implementation:

This Notice replaces *NRH Notice 04-01* in its entirety and is effective immediately.

Housing Provider's Role:

Housing providers are required to verify the market household's eligibility when requested by NRH. Please note that housing providers cannot grant subsidies to existing market households without going through this process, regardless of whether or not they are under target for RGI units. Housing providers are required to fill vacancies according to local priority household categories and chronological dates assigned to applications (*NRH Notice 03-05*).

Service Manager's Role:

NRH will review market household requests for RGI subsidy to determine the household's initial eligibility. NRH will contact the housing provider to verify all eligibility criteria under this policy. If deemed eligible, NRH will add the market household to the centralized waiting list for their current non-profit provider based on their move-in date. All households requesting RGI subsidy under this policy will be notified by NRH in writing of the decision and their right to appeal, if request is denied.

NRH will review compliance with the policy during the operational review process.

If you have any questions regarding this Notice, please contact your Housing Administrator.

Lora Beckwith, General Manager

Attachment: Appendix "A" - Form - Request for RGI Subsidy