



RENT SUPPLEMENT

Review

A publication for Rent Supplement Tenants

www.nrh.ca

Summer 2009

Summer is Here

Welcome to the Summer 2009 edition of Niagara Regional Housing's Newsletter for all rent supplement tenants in the Niagara region. This newsletter is designed to keep you informed of issues related to subsidized housing as well as provide articles of interest. We welcome your feedback. If you have any comments please contact Margaret Smith at 905-682-9201 ext. 3932.

New Domain Name/New NRH Website

As of September 30, 2008, Niagara Region changed it's domain name to:
www.niagararegion.ca.

NRH has also updated our website. Please visit our new website at: www.nrh.ca.

Inside this Issue

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Contact us

If there are any specific issues or topics that you would like to see in future publications, please forward your suggestions or comments to:

Margaret Smith, Rent Supplement
Coordinator

2201 St. David's Road
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Or by email:

margaret.smith@niagararegion.ca

Anniversary Dates

What is an Anniversary Date?

The anniversary date is usually the first day of the first full month in which you are housed.

Example: If you moved in January 15, 2009, your anniversary date would be February 1st each year.

Annual Income Review Form



Tenant(s) in receipt of rent-geared-to-income assistance need to report their total household income each year. Every year, Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) sends out an “Annual Income and Review Form” 150 days prior to the anniversary date (see above). These forms need to be completed and returned to NRH within 30 days.

If these forms are not returned by the due date, NRH will let the tenant(s) know in writing, 90 days prior to the anniversary date, that their rent may increase to Market Rent.

If these forms are returned BUT information is missing, the Tenant Support Representatives (TSR) will send a letter asking for the missing information.

If the required documents are not returned, the tenant’s rent will increase to the Market Rent on the anniversary date.

Misrepresentation of Income/Household Composition

What is misrepresentation?

Under the Social Housing Reform Act 2000 (Reg. 298/01), all tenants must be deemed eligible to receive rent-geared-to-income housing. Should the household not meet eligibility requirements, NRH has the authority to remove your subsidy.

Tenants who do not report any changes in income or household composition within 30 days of the change are deemed to have misrepresented their income or household composition.

Rent Supplement Payments

All tenants participating in NRH’s Rent Supplement Program, sign a “Letter of Agreement” which states that:

*The payment of the rent supplement by NRH during your occupancy of the unit is **conditional** upon your:*

1. *using and occupying the unit only as a private resident for yourself and the eligible household members*
2. *submitting to Niagara Regional Housing annually a statement signed by you in such form as Niagara Regional Housing may prescribe, together with supporting material as may be required, setting out the details of your gross family income, and details of all persons living with you in the unit;*

3. *notifying Niagara Regional Housing in writing of any changes in your gross family income, and any change in the numbers of persons living in the unit; and,*
4. *continuing to meet Niagara Regional Housing's eligibility criteria.*

If you fail to meet the terms of the above requirements, your rent may be increased to Market Rent.

Reporting Changes to Niagara Regional Housing

Report any changes in your household to your TSR in writing with supporting documents within 30 days of the change. Changes in household income can result from many things, including:

- an increase or decrease in the number of hours worked
- a wage increase
- getting a new job or a second job
- a change in the number of people living in the household (new baby/move outs)
- loss of job
- death of a household member
- your child is in full time school attendance

DRIVE SMART AND STAY SAFE

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Help prevent accidents by driving responsibly and courteously. Keep your cool and be patient. Don't insist on the right of way or expect other drivers to do the right thing. Stay alert and focused on the road as well as on other drivers. Never tailgate; leave at least a two-second gap between you and the car ahead. Obey traffic laws and signs. DON'T SPEED-it's the most common driver error in fatal accidents.

DISTRACTIONS, STRESS AND FATIGUE

If you get tense while driving, take deep breaths and try to relax. Reduce stress by allowing plenty of time to get to your destination. Avoid using cell phones, eating, reading maps or any other type of distracting activity while driving. Avoid driving if you're tired. Limit fatigue by getting at least eight hours of sleep before you go.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Any alcohol-even a small amount-can impair driving. Never drive after you've had alcohol, drugs or medications that make you sleepy. Don't accept a ride from anyone who's been drinking, and don't try to pass drunk drivers on the road. Stay a safe distance away and call the police to report them (get the license plate number).



Wear a seatbelt every time you drive or ride in a vehicle

Tenant Insurance



The Social Housing Services Corporation has launched SoHo Insurance Inc., a Tenant Insurance product which is available to all social housing residents in Ontario.

In the case of a disaster such as a robbery or major fire, most households could not afford to replace their belongings, such as furniture and clothing, without appropriate insurance coverage. It has been proven that personal insurance is essential for all households in Ontario.

SHSC's new insurance program allows residents to protect themselves for as little as 40 cents a day. All social housing tenants are eligible as long as they pay their premiums. Tenants in receipt of Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Benefits may be covered for free, through their shelter allowance. Tenants in receipt of Ontario Works or ODSP should contact their caseworker to determine their eligibility.

Tenants can purchase this insurance by downloading and completing the application form from www.sohoinsurance.ca. For more information, please contact them directly at:

SoHo Insurance Inc.
390 Bay Street, Ste 705
Toronto, ON M5H 7O5
1-866-440-2492

Dr. Albert Rose Bursary Fund

The Dr. Rose Bursary Program is offered to students who are tenants in rent-geared-to-income housing.

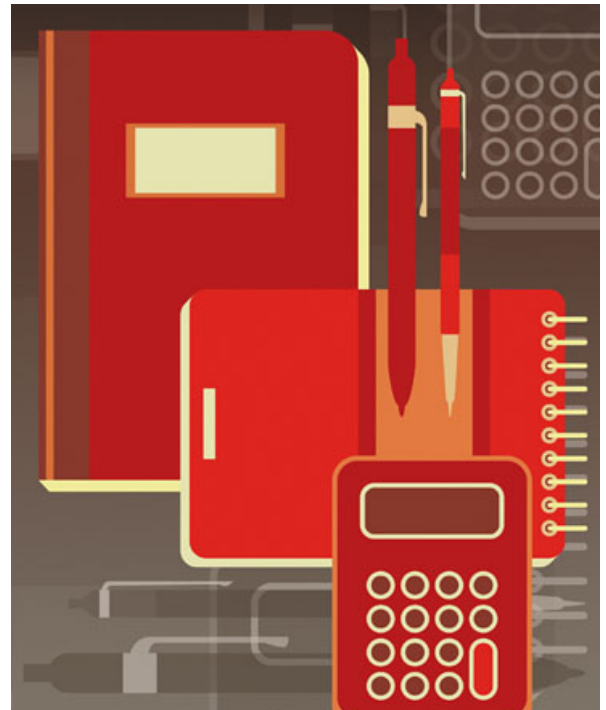
Bursaries will be available to tenants graduating from high school in 2009 intending to enroll in a full-time post secondary education program (1st or 2nd year). Bursaries are available to a maximum of \$3000 annually.

There will also be annual awards available to tenants planning to enroll in short-term academic, trade or skill-based training. These awards are a maximum of \$1000.

Mature students may also apply for the bursary.

The amount of the awarded bursary will depend on the number of qualified applicants. Applications can be received by e-mail at: bursary.mah@ontario.ca or by phone at **416-585-6021**.

For further information and assistance, please contact Melissa Colitti or Julia Chikombero, Community Programs Coordinators at 905-682-9201 ext. 3935 and 3936.



2-1-1: Your Community Connection

We have the information that you need!

DIAL 2-1-1 if you have questions about...

- Applying for financial assistance
- Children and youth services
- Finding a residence for a senior
- Services available for abused women
- Where to volunteer
- How to contact your MPP or MP
- Where to find a support group
- Assistance with housing
- How to obtain legal assistance
- Employment training programs
- Programs for seniors
- Where to go for food and clothing
- Multicultural associations
- And much more.....



Information Niagara

301 St. Paul Street
St. Catharines, ON L2R 3M8
Dial 2-1-1
905-682-6611
1-800-263-3695
TTY: 905-682-5409
www.211ontario.ca

Live answers 24/7 – All Languages

What is 211?

211 is your first call for free information about community, social, health and government services... and you speak with a REAL person!

When can I call 211?

Trained 211 Information and Referral specialists are available 24 hours per day, every day of the year.

Why call 211?

Sometimes people do not know where to call when help is needed. 211 has over 3,000 services listed for the Niagara region as well as volunteer and donation opportunities.

What is 911?

911 is the number to dial for police, fire and medical emergencies.

What is 411?

411 is the number to dial for directory assistance when you are looking for business or residential phone number.

The Water Filter Fund



On June 7, 2007 the Ministry of the Environment announced Ontario's Action Plan on Lead. One part of the program is to provide funds for low income Ontario families for on-tap water filters to address identified elevated lead levels in drinking water. Niagara Region's Community Services is delivering the program locally.

Do I have lead in my drinking water?

Houses or apartments built before 1960 may have a lead water service. The water service is the pipe that brings water into your house or building from the water main. Sometimes the lead from the pipe gets into the water.

Lead can harm your health if you drink too much of it. Pregnant women and your children are most at risk.

What is the Water Filter Fund?

The Water Filter Fund helps households which may have lead in the water by providing a free filter system. The filter system attaches to your water tap and takes the lead content out of the water as it flows out of the tap.

Can I get a free water filter?

You may pick up a free on-tap water filter system if:

- You live in Niagara region in a house or apartment building built before 1960; and
- Your household includes a pregnant woman or one or more children aged 0-6; and
- You are part of the Ontario Works(OW) program or the Ontario Disability Support Program(ODSP); or
- Your net household income is \$20,000 or less as outlined on line 236 of the income tax return(s).

Do I need to have a water test?

You do not need to have your water tested to pick up a free filter system. Just call Wendy Taylor at Niagara Region's Community Service office:

905-641-9960 ext. 6026

Or toll free at 1-866-627-1100

Pick up will be arranged through one of the following Niagara Region Community Service offices:

WELLAND, 250 Thorold Road

NIAGARA FALLS, 5853 Peer Street

ST. CATHARINES, 234 Bunting Road

FORT ERIE, 469 Central Avenue

PORT COLBORNE, 92 Charlotte Street

Tenant Talents

We would like to introduce a new section in the Rent Supplement Review called "Tenant Talents" to showcase the talents of our rent supplement tenants.

Each issue of the Rent Supplement Review will highlight a tenant and their talents.

Our first talented tenant is Stan Dayboll.

Mr. Dayboll is a poet and has written many poems over the years. The following are just two of his many works.

(Printed with permission)

Tenants who would like to showcase a talent in our newsletter should contact:

Margaret Smith, Rent Supplement Coordinator

(905)682-9201 ext. 3932

FAX: 905-687-4844

email: margaret.smith@niagararegion.ca

"Knowledge"

As Each Minute In Life
Passes On And On
And As Each Day Has
Come And Gone,
One's Mind Continues
To Always Savour,
How Rich One's Life Is
In Velvety Flavour.

Always Knowing That
One Has Each Day,
A Glorious Wonderful Mind
That Is Forever Here to Stay.
Of the Knowledge, Wisdom And
Experience Which Life Has Brought,
Allowing One To Continue The Rails
The Rails Upon The Train of Thought!

By: Stan V. Dayboll

How Can One Deal
With Indignity So Real?
How Can One Overcome
The Sadness and Hurt,
That's So Troublesome?

The Singling Out Of
Someone to Enrage,
In All The Bigotry
That Continues to Page.

The Name Calling
The Constant Castigating,
Towards The Innocent.
Is The Most Difficult
For Recognizance.

What Makes Those
People Whom Deem
Themselves Superior,
Treat Those Others
As Such They Believe
To Be Inferior?

By Stan. V. Dayboll

Notice of Market Rent Increase

Landlords must provide notices of rent increase to the tenant and a copy to NRH, at least 90 days prior to the effective date.

Notice of Move-Out

Tenants must provide a Notice of Move-Out to the landlord and a copy to NRH at least 60 days prior to move-out.

Emergency Preparedness

You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for a minimum of 72 hours. If a disaster happens in your community, it may take emergency workers some time to get to you as they help those in desperate need. By taking a few simple steps today, you can become better prepared to face a range of emergencies – anytime, anywhere. Use the guides and checklists on <http://www.niagararegion.ca/government/health/emo/default.aspx> or <http://www.getprepared.gc.ca/index-eng.aspx> to create your own emergency plans. You can also pick up a brochure at the Clerk's Office at Niagara Region, 2201 St. David's Road, Thorold or call the Government of Canada at 1-800-622-6232.

HealthBytes

Niagara's Health News

HealthBytes is a free e-newsletter available to all Niagara residents. By subscribing, you will receive seasonal health messages, collect health tips you can use, and learn about upcoming events.

HealthBytes will be sent directly into subscribers' inboxes every September, January, April and July.

To subscribe, please send an email with your name and email address to healthbytes@niagararegion.ca or visit www.niagararegion.ca.