



NIAGARA
REGIONAL
HOUSING



NRH Notice

NUMBER: 03-20
DATE: November 26, 2003

Mandatory
 For Information

Applicable to:

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

Subject: Age Requirement for Senior Mandated Housing

Policy:

Niagara Regional Housing has approved a local policy that defines the age requirements for senior mandated housing, where at least one member of the household is 55 year of age or older.

This change in senior age requirement is considered by Niagara Regional Housing to be a special program under Section 14 the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) that is intended to relieve hardship or economic disadvantage of persons who are aged 55 and older.

Background:

Niagara Regional Housing has been placing households where at least one member of the applicant household was 60 years of age on the subsidiary waiting lists of housing providers with senior mandates. This practice was previously endorsed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing prior to the establishment of the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*. The OHRC defines seniors as those 65 years of age and older. However, Section 14 of the OHRC allows special programs to be implemented that might otherwise be considered to be discriminatory if the program is intended to relieve hardship or economic disadvantage of targeted groups.

Since the establishment of the Niagara Regional Housing centralized waiting list, the demand for affordable housing options for low-income persons under the age of 60 far exceeds the demand for seniors over the age of 60. In Niagara people who where not yet 60 had very few affordable housing options available and yet were considered to be more economically disadvantaged. Defining the senior age requirement to 55, will provide more affordable housing options and reduce the RGI waiting time for persons over the age of 55. This age requirement change will also reduce the need for housing provider mandate changes, for housing providers who are reluctant to do so.

Implementation:

This policy is effective immediately.

Service Manager's Role

- Housing mandated for seniors in the Niagara Region will be defined as a Special Program per Section 14 of the OHRC.
- NRH will place applicants aged 55 years and over on senior mandated subsidiary wait lists.
- NRH will use the date that the household indicates a senior community preference as the chronological date.
- NRH will monitor housing providers to ensure that tenants/members are selected in accordance with the SHRA, associated regulations and local priority rules.

Housing Provider's Role

- Housing Providers with senior mandates will begin to see applicants 55 years and over on their senior wait lists.
- Housing Providers are to select tenants/members in accordance with SHRA, regulations and local priority rules.
- Housing Providers with senior mandates will house persons 55 years and older.
- Housing providers are to advise their tenants/members/applicants of any changes to their housing policies.

If you have any questions regarding the Centralized Wait List or Senior Mandate, please call Housing Access & Community Programs at (905) 935-7645.

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

(Original signed by Lora Beckwith)

Lora Beckwith
General Manager