



Notice

No: 10-08

APPLICABLE TO:

DATE: July 19, 2010

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Municipal & Private Non Profit |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Co-operatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Federal Non Profits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | OCHAP/CSHP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Rent Supplement |

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | For Information |

SUBJECT: Market to Rent-Geared-to-Income Policy – (Revised)

Policy

Niagara Regional Housing has revised its market to rent-geared-to-income policy (MKT-RGI), originally issued on December 15, 2004 under *NRH Notice 04-01* and September 26, 2005 under *NRH Notice 05-06*.

Market households who require rent-geared-to-income assistance will be added to the centralized waiting list for their existing housing provider community 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

Establishing a MKT-RGI policy that is fair, consistent and relevant for market households residing in housing provider communities has proven to be a challenge. NRH has found that the current MKT-RGI policy is not being applied consistently among housing providers and is open to various interpretations.

NRH has consulted with the Provider Advisory Group (PAG) to obtain input on a revised policy that is clear, simple, easy to implement, and meets the needs of the market households.

As a result, the MKT-RGI policy has been revised and incorporates 2 options and processes as follows:

1. **Option A: No Vacant Units & Under RGI Target**

Market households in existing housing provider communities that have applied for and obtained MKT-RGI status, can receive RGI subsidy where there are no vacancies and the provider is under their RGI target as follows:

- a) The housing provider reviews their waiting list and identifies the earliest application date from all existing market households with MKT-RGI status. These applications are identified on the waiting list with a special icon next to the tenant/member name.
- b) The housing provider submits the following information, via email, to their Housing Administrator for approval:
 - Name of existing tenant/member with MKT-RGI status that has the earliest date; and,
 - Copy of their up-to-date *Unit Activity Form* from the *FMT Monitoring Tool*.
- c) The Housing Administrator will verify the information, approve the MKT-RGI tenant for receipt of subsidy, and advise the housing provider by email;
- d) The housing provider will advise the household accordingly and update the waiting list through the “*Add Comment*” button on the waiting list.

Note: Option A is not available if the provider is on target or over target in RGI units, or if there are vacancies in the portfolio.

Please refer to Appendix A for a process flowchart.

2. **Option B: Vacant Units & Under RGI Target**

- a) The housing provider has a vacant unit and is under its RGI target;
- b) The housing provider is required to offer the vacant unit to the top name on their waiting list for that applicable bedroom size;
- c) If the top name on the waiting list is an existing tenant/member with MKT-RGI status, the provider can offer RGI subsidy to that tenant/member;
- d) If subsidy is provided to the existing tenant/member, the provider picks the next name on their waiting list for that bedroom size and follows the same procedures until the unit is filled.

Housing Administrator verification/authorization is not necessary in these cases.

Note: Option B is not available if the provider is over target in RGI units.

Please refer to Appendix B for a process flowchart.

Eligibility Criteria for MKT-RGI:

An existing market household who wishes to apply for MKT-RGI status for their existing housing provider community must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The household must have lived in their current accommodation for a minimum of 12 months before an application can be made for MKT-RGI status;
- 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,
- The household must be in compliance with NRH's occupancy standards (*NRH Notice 03-02*). RGI assistance cannot be provided to households who do not meet the occupancy standards. If a household is overhoused, they must be appropriately housed before the MKT-RGI application can be reviewed.

The market household must complete a MKT-RGI application form using their move-in date as the date of application. The housing provider must complete the verification section of the MKT-RGI application.

NRH will review the application and, where approved, will add the household to the centralized waiting list for their current housing provider community, using their original date of move-in. NRH will advise the market household in writing of the outcome of the eligibility review.

If denied, market households can appeal to the NRH Appeals Committee.

Exceptions to Eligibility Criteria:**1. Members of a market household who wish to form a second household:**

Where one or more members of a market household wish to leave that household and create a second household, application for RGI assistance from any member(s) of the household will be considered a new application. Their application date will be based on the date that they apply to the centralized waiting list and not the household's original move-in date.

2. Market households who apply for RGI assistance with another housing provider or service manager:

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

Housing Provider's Role

Housing provider staff are required to forward this Notice to their Board of Directors for their information.

Housing providers are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Notice for all MKT-RGI applications.

Service Manager's Role

NRH will review all market household requests for MKT-RGI status to determine eligibility. If deemed eligible, NRH will add the household to the centralized waiting list for the household's existing housing provider community using their original move-in date, and will advise the household in writing.

NRH will verify and authorize the receipt of RGI for households as requested by the housing provider, where there are no vacancies and the provider is under its RGI target.

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

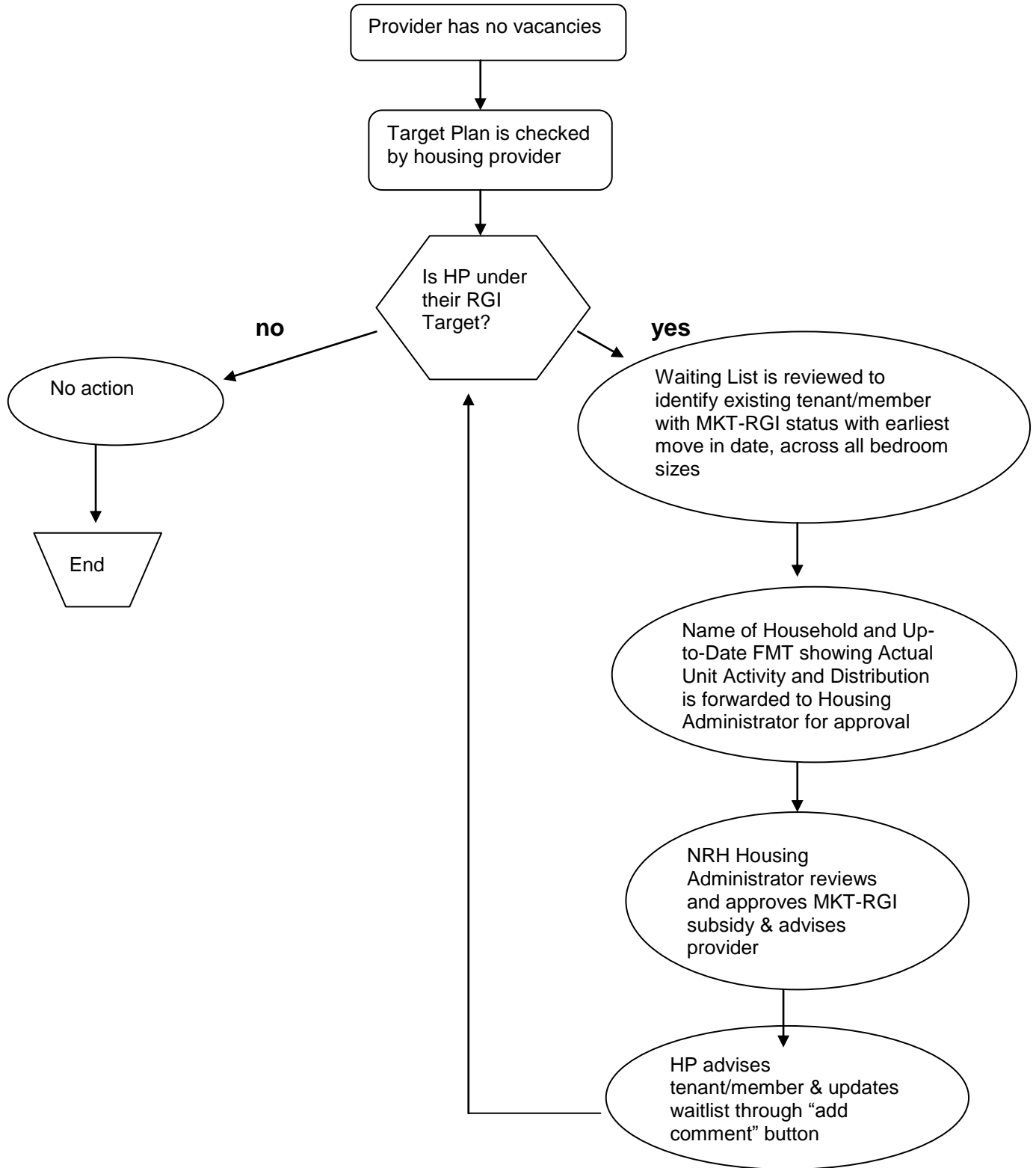
This Notice replaces *NRH Notice 04-01* and *05-06*.

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

Lora Beckwith, General Manager

Enclosure: Appendix A - No Vacant Units & Under RGI Target
Appendix B - Vacant Units & Under RGI Target

APPENDIX A
Market-to-RGI Process – Option A
No Vacant Units & Under RGI Target



APPENDIX B
Market-to-RGI Process – Option B
Vacant Units & Under RGI Target

