

APPLICABLE TO:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Provincial Reform Non-Profit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Provincial Reform Co-operative
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OCHAP Rent Supplement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal

DATE: February 6, 2012

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

SUBJECT: New Housing Services Act and Regulations

Background

The *Social Housing Reform Act* has been repealed and replaced with the *Housing Services Act (HSA)* effective January 1, 2012.

The HSA provides a new overarching framework for housing homelessness services, as well as social housing administrative provisions. The HSA and corresponding regulations gives Service Managers responsibility for establishing a number of rules, standards, and local policies. Some of the mandatory rules were previously set out as provincial requirements under the *Social Housing Reform Act* and are now subject to local discretion. This requires Service Managers to establish local rules and requirements that are both significant in number and substantial in scope.

Report

The HSA regulations released to date are:

- Regulation 367/11 - General
- Regulation 368/11 - Designated Housing Projects
- Regulation 369/11 - Subsidies for Part VII Housing projects
- Regulation 370/11 - High Need Households and Household Income Limits

A copy of the HSA and its Regulations is available at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca.

Consultation

A requirement of the HSA is stakeholder input and involvement. In November 2011, the following consultation occurred:

- NRH issued a survey to providers seeking input on several areas of minor flexibility (survey results are posted under HP Forum on www.nrh.ca);

- On November 29, 2011, a Housing Provider Forum was held to:
 - review the new HSA and to seek input from providers on several major areas of flexibility;
 - Obtain provider input on defining the role of the Provider Advisory Group (PAG) as it relates to the review and implementation of the HSA (survey results are posted under HP Forum on www.nrh.ca); the majority agreed that PAG should review and provide recommendation in the establishment of local rules;

Categories & Timelines

The local rules can be divided into 3 categories, as follows:

Mandatory Rules (Appendix A, sections A & B): The HSA includes several mandatory requirements that do not require PAG or NRH Board review. NRH Notices confirming eleven (11) new mandatory local rules will be issued in February and March. Three (3) are attached to this notice and relate to *Timelines for Processing Applications, One-Date Application Ranking, and Special Priority Policy*.

Please note that the implementation of the one-date ranking for applications may have a minor impact on providers' waiting lists, as existing applicants will be re-ranked chronologically based on their original application date. This may result in some applicants being placed higher on a particular waiting list if they had chosen that location after their original application date. This adjustment to the waiting list will be implemented on February 13, 2012.

New/Revised Local Policies (Appendix A, section C): The HSA includes several mandatory rules that require a revision to an existing NRH local policy or development of a new local policy. Since these are also HSA mandatory requirements, a review by PAG is not required; however, a change to local policies will require NRH Board approval.

Areas of Flexibility: PAG Review (Appendix A, section D): The bulk of the new legislation allows for local flexibility. The establishment of these local rules will require PAG review and approval by the NRH Board.

The three (3) mandatory local rules attached to this Notice (Appendix A, section A) are effective January 1, 2012. For all other rules and requirements that were in force prior to January 1, 2012, the previous provisions of the Social Housing Reform Act and related Regulations must be adopted by providers and implemented effective January 1, 2012, on an interim basis.

This constitutes notice to housing providers of these rules, to which providers are required to comply pursuant to their service agreement with Niagara Regional Housing.

Housing Provider's Role

Effective January 1, 2012, Housing Providers are directed to:

1. Adopt and implement the provisions of *Social Housing Reform Act*, related Regulations, Rules and Policies that were in force on December 31, 2011 unless implementation conflicts with a **New Policy or Rule** under the *Housing Services Act* and its Regulations as attached to this Notice and;
2. Where a conflict exists, implement the **New Policy or Rule** as the case may be, of the *Housing Services Act* and its Regulations as described in Appendix A, section A of this Notice.
3. Ensure board meeting minutes reflect the requirements of #1 and #2 above, and that all staff responsible for the administration and management of the social housing program to which this Notice applies is familiar with the *Housing Services Act* and its Regulations.
4. Ensure that a current copy of the *Housing Services Act* and its Regulations and this Notice is maintained for reference in the on-site office of all locations in the provider's portfolio.

Service Manager's Role:

Throughout 2012, NRH will:

- issue local rules related to mandatory requirements of the new HSA as per the attached schedule; and,
- develop and issue local rules where service manager flexibility allows, in consultation with PAG and approval by the NRH Board.

When all local rules are finalized later this year, NRH service agreements will be revised accordingly and forwarded to housing providers for execution.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this notice, please contact your Housing Administrator at (905) 682-9201.

Lora Beckwith, General Manager

Appendix A
Schedule of Local Policy Review & Release Date

Item	PAG Review	NRH Board Review	Issue Local Policy
A. H.S.A. Mandatory Rules – Policies Attached			
Timelines	n/a	n/a	Attached
Provincial Priority – Special Priority Policy	n/a	n/a	Attached
Provincial Priority – One-Date Ranking System	n/a	n/a	Attached
B. H.S.A. Mandatory Rules – Policies to be Issued			
Notice & Opportunity to Comment	n/a	n/a	Feb 2012
Insitu Households	n/a	n/a	Feb 2012
Review of RGI eligibility	n/a	n/a	Feb 2012
Information to Public	n/a	n/a	Feb 2012
Operational Review	n/a	n/a	Feb 2012
Penalties – AIR	n/a	n/a	Feb 2012
Subsidy Estimates	n/a	n/a	March 2012
Application Form	n/a	n/a	March 2012
C. New/Revised Local Policy: NRH Board Review			
Notification of Changes	n/a	March 2012	April 2012
Certain Convictions	n/a	March 2012	April 2012
HILs	n/a	March 2012	April 2012
Removal from Waitlist	n/a	April 2012	May 2012
Temporary Removal from Waitlist	n/a	April 2012	May 2012
Former Arrears	n/a	April 2012	May 2012
2% Write Down Program	n/a	Aug 2012	Sept 2012
D. Areas of Flexibility: PAG/NRH Board Review			
Asset Limits	March 2012	May 2012	June 2012
Offers	March 2012	May 2012	June 2012
Absence from Unit	March 2012	May 2012	June 2012
Overhoused	March 2012	June 2012	July 2012
Occupancy Standards	March 2012	June 2012	July 2012
Pursuit of Income	March 2012	June 2012	July 2012
Conflict of Interest Rules	May 2012	July 2012	Aug 2012
Property Management Mandatory Requirements	May 2012	July 2012	Aug 2012
Training & Succession Plans for Providers – Mandatory Requirements	May 2012	July 2012	Aug 2012
Leases	May 2012	Aug 2012	Sept 2012
Multi Year Financial Plans – Mandatory Requirements	May 2012	Aug 2012	Sept 2012
Internal Transfers	May 2012	Aug 2012	Sept 2012
Refusal to Offer	May 2012	Sept 2012	Oct 2012
Minimum Number of Board Meetings	May 2012	Sept 2012	Oct 2012
Remuneration of Directors	May 2012	Sept 2012	Oct 2012
Special Needs Housing	Aug 2012	Sept 2012	Oct 2012
Review Body	Sept 2012	Oct 2012	Nov 2012
Internal Reviews Procedural Rules	Sept 2012	Oct 2012	Nov 2012
Special Needs Internal Reviews	Sept 2012	Oct 2012	Nov 2012
Selection System	Sept 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012
Transfer Applications	Sept 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012
Local Priority	Sept 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012