



Notice No: 20-06

APPLICABLE TO:

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

DATE: May 22, 2020 **Mandatory** **For Information**

SUBJECT: Number of Offers for RGI Assistance - Amendment to Provincial Rule

BACKGROUND

Effective January 1, 2020 amendments were made to *Ontario Regulation 367/11* under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* including a new provincial eligibility rule on refusal of offers, rules on household preferences for a housing project and changes to a Service Manager's authority to make a local rule where a household ceases to meet occupancy standards.

Section 39 of the regulation is revoked and any local rule made under this section may only continue to apply as described below. The regulation allowed Service Managers to make a local rule that a household would no longer be eligible for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance if the household refused a minimum of three offers of RGI assistance.

This regulation has been amended to set out the new provincial rule in Section 32.2. The regulation states a household will no longer be eligible for RGI assistance, if a household refuses **an** offer for RGI assistance, in a unit where the unit meets the Service Manager's occupancy standards and is in a housing project for which the household has chosen as a preference.

Section 32.2 specifies that:

Cessation of eligibility – refusal of offer

32.2 (1) A household ceases to be eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance if the household refuses an offer by the service manager for such assistance in a unit in the service manager's service area that,

(a) meets the service manager's occupancy standards; and

(b) is in a housing project for which the household has expressed a preference.

O. Reg. 318/19, s.2.

(2) A household's refusal of an offer of a portable housing benefit shall not be considered a refusal under subsection (1). O. Reg. 318/19, s.2.

(3) Despite subsection (1), a service manager may determine that the household remains eligible if the service manager is satisfied that there are extenuating circumstances. O. Reg.. 318/19, s. 2.

Policy Change

Effective Date: July 1, 2020

Service Managers were given flexibility on the implementation date of this new rule, the earliest being January 1, 2020 and if no date chosen, January 1, 2021. Niagara Regional Housing has chosen the effective date for the implementation of this rule change as July 1, 2020. Up until the implementation date as indicated by Niagara Regional Housing comes into effect, the current rule continues to apply.

The provincial rule on the number of refusals of offers, applies to **all** applicants on the centralized waiting list, including special priority applicants and overhoused households. Service Managers have the discretion to consider extenuating circumstances and may determine that a household remains eligible if satisfied there are extenuating circumstances.

Refer to Appendix "A" for the definition of a valid offer and offer guidelines. Housing Providers are required to ensure they follow the process outlined in the appendix for an offer to be considered valid.

Housing Provider's Role

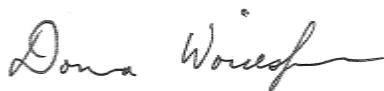
Housing Providers are directed to:

1. Review and implement the local rule as of the effective date.
2. Provide a copy of the local rule to the housing provider board of directors and ensure they review and implement.
3. Ensure that all staff responsible for the administration and management of the social housing program to which this Notice applies, is familiar with this local rule as established.

Service Manager's Role

NRH will monitor compliance with this Notice through the Operational Reviews.

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



Donna Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer

APPENDIX “A”
Definition of a Valid Offer

For the purpose of offering Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance to a household, an offer is considered valid when it is:

- an appropriate size unit
- an appropriate mandate
- a property that the household chose as a preference on their Centralized Waitlist (CWL) application, or if the household did not indicate any preferences, then any property in the Service Manager area
- an offer that is made after July 1, 2020
- an offer made following the guidelines set out in this notice

Offer Guidelines:

1. Telephone #1 – phone the household at the telephone number and/or numbers listed on the household’s CWL application to advise of a possible offer. Leave a voice message when required; the voicemail should include details of the offer such as location, unit details, available move-in date. etc. The voicemail must include the timeframe of two (2) business days (give actual date and time) in which the applicant must contact the housing provider. The voicemail must also advise that the outcome of not responding or refusing this offer of housing will result in their application being cancelled;
2. Email- immediately following telephone #1 send an email to the email address or addresses listed on the household’s CWL application to advise of a possible offer. The email should include details of the offer such as location, unit details, available move-in date. etc. The email must include the timeframe of two (2) business days (give actual date and time) in which the applicant must contact the housing provider. The email must also advise that the outcome of not responding or refusing this offer of housing will result in their application being cancelled;
3. Telephone #2 – phone the household again at least one business day after the first telephone call if the household has not been in contact with the housing provider. Ensure that all contact numbers listed on the household’s CWL application have been called. Leave a voice message as required; advise that this is the final attempt that will be made to contact the household. Confirm the date and time they must respond by and again advise that the outcome of not responding or refusing this offer of housing will result in their application being cancelled;
4. Unit Viewing – inform the household that within one business day (24 hours) of viewing the offered unit the household is required to advise the housing provider if they will be accepting the unit or not. If the household is not accepting the unit explain the outcome of refusing the unit;
5. Inform Housing Access, by way of the “Add Comment” throughout the process of the offer of housing and the result of the offer of housing.

*All methods of communication indicated on the household's application are required to be contacted receiving the same information. An offer made following guidelines one, two and three, where **no** response has been received from the household by the indicated deadline, will count as a refusal.*

The following shall **not** be considered a refusal:

- Inability to contact at the email and/or telephone number listed as the primary or alternate contact information on their CWL application i.e. - email comes back undeliverable, the phone numbers listed are not in service or wrong number;
- Special requirements that were not previously disclosed and documented in the file;
- Other reasons as determined by the Service Manager.