



Niagara Regional Housing

# Notice

No: 20-02

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

DATE:	February 28, 2020
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mandatory
<input type="checkbox"/>	For Information

**SUBJECT: Cease to Qualify for Rent Geared to Income (RGI) Assistance and Grace Period for Reinstatement of RGI Assistance (Repeal of Previous Notice No: 16-04)**

**Effective: March 1, 2020**

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this notice is to amend the current practice regarding RGI reinstatement prior to permanent removal of tenant/member subsidy for RGI households which may have ceased to qualify.

## OVERVIEW

Niagara Regional Housing has been working with tenants to find a suitable resolution to loss of Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI). RGI is granted to tenants who meet the requirements to qualify for RGI in accordance with the Housing Services Act (HSA). Tenants may lose their subsidy indefinitely under the following circumstances:

- No longer meet eligibility criteria
- Fail to obtain income
- Fail to provide required information
- Fail to sell residential property
- Fail to report household changes within 30 days
- Are absent from their unit for more than 60 consecutive days or 90 non consecutive days (excluding medical absences), and/or
- Are over housed and do not accept a valid offer to relocate to a suitably sized unit
- Misrepresent their income

Currently at NRH, tenants who lose RGI are required to reapply to the waitlist or attend an appeal in order to have their RGI reinstated. However, NRH is moving forward with a grace period in an effort to preserve tenancies. In addition, it is estimated that making this amendment to practice will significantly reduce the number of appeals related to loss of subsidy.

In an effort to provide better service and sustainable housing to our tenants, and in recognition that tenants may have vulnerabilities that contribute to their ability to comply, moving forward, Niagara Regional Housing will apply the following procedure, except in the case of misrepresentation of income<sup>1</sup>:

- Tenants who fail to take remedial actions (ex. provide the required documentation) related to the cause of loss of RGI will lose their RGI but will be given two additional months at market rent to comply with the remedial actions.
- Tenants who complete the remedial actions within the two month grace period will have their RGI reinstated but will still be responsible for the market rent accrued during the grace period. This may be one or two months at market rent depending on the speed at which the remediation occurs.
- Tenants who fail to complete the remedial actions at the conclusion of the grace period will lose their RGI status and will pay market. Tenants who are paying market rent due to a loss of RGI subsidy are required to re-apply to the centralized waitlist to request a return to RGI status and will be awarded RGI in chronological order if they are still eligible.
- Tenants who have accrued market rent arrears during their grace period will be allowed to pay the arrears in increments, applied to their monthly rent until such a time that the arrears have been paid to zero.
- Tenants will be granted only one grace period for reinstatement for the duration of their tenancy, except in unique circumstances. Unique circumstances would be defined as time limited, unpredictable and beyond the control of the tenant. An exceptional circumstance would be unlikely to occur more than once.

## **Housing Providers Role**

Housing Providers must ensure that RGI households are routinely advised that they must submit information and documentation requested when asked. Any sort of correspondence or communication (letters, annual renewal packages, leases/occupancy agreements, newsletters, bulletins, etc.) with the RGI household should reinforce the message that failure to provide information and documentation when requested could result in the termination of RGI assistance.

When a housing provider requests information or documentation from an RGI household, it must give a clear deadline for submission of the information. Housing Providers must also ensure that RGI households are offered the opportunity to request a review of decisions as

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required under the Housing Services Act. Housing Providers must allow for a two month grace period prior to a permanent removal of RGI assistance.

Housing Providers are to ensure this policy is fully implemented immediately. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your Housing Administrator.

**Service Manager's Role**

NRH will monitor compliance with this Notice through Operational Reviews.

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

(Original signed by Donna Woiceshyn)

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Donna Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer