

**HOUSING SERVICES ACT - LOCAL AREAS OF FLEXIBILITY
HOUSING PROVIDER SURVEY RESULTS - November 2011**

Question #1: Notification of Change (s. 28)

HSA: Households are required to notify the Service Manager (SM) of changes in their household situation within 30 days, or longer.

QUESTION: Should the time frame for reporting changes be longer than 30 days for tenants/members and applicants?

YES	NO
5%	95%

Comments:

- a) timeframe should be 60 days - often a child may leave home and return within that time frame, or family breakups with reconciliation occurring maybe a month and a half after.
- b) We recognize that sometimes, move-outs or move-ins are not clear cut, and persons may come and go before it gets really defined. So a flexible approach is good. However, the 30 day rule is good; any longer and it will get forgotten.

Question #2: Pursuit of Income (s. 31)

HSA: The SM may require a household to pursue all income they are entitled to; SM may determine that household remains eligible for subsidy if extenuating circumstances exist.

QUESTION: Should a local rule include extenuating circumstances where a household would not be required to pursue all income sources?

YES	NO
38%	62%

Comments:

The following extenuating circumstances should apply:

- a) **child support** - pursuing can be very difficult; what household "should get" and what they actually get are sometimes different;
- b) **serious illness** (i.e., cancer)
- c) **sponsor support** - should not have to pursue sponsor support as it places a strain on family and not always possible to get sponsor to co-sign a loan; sponsors never work out;
- d) **victims of violence** - should not have to pursue child support if it means letting abuser know their location; if they do not pursue child support, they cannot pursue OW and it becomes a vicious circle;

Question #3: Maximum Household Assets (s. 35)

HSA: The SM may establish maximum household asset limits. The minimum must be at least \$20,000.

QUESTION: If household asset limits are established, what should be the maximum?

\$20,000	20%
\$30,000	25%
\$40,000	20%
\$50,000	25%
\$50,000+	10%

Question #4: Maximum Absence from Unit (s. 38)

HSA: The SM may establish a local rule for consecutive days absent (minimum must be 60 days), and a maximum number of days per year that household members are permitted to be absent (minimum must be 90 days).

QUESTION: Should a maximum number of days absent per year be included in a local rule?

YES	NO
43%	57%

Comments:

- a) Tenant could be away 60 days consecutive, came back for several months, and then be away again for 60 days within the same year.
- b) Having no maximum in not feasible
- c) Recommended maximum days absent per year: 120, 95, 90, 91 unless for hospitalization,
- d) The number of days should be no longer than 60 consecutive days and no more that 90 days total per year. We have found that people with family in the states were gone more than half the year. There are many people that need a house on a full time basis not a part time basis

Question #5: Ineligibility due to Refusals of Offers (s. 39)

HSA: The SM must establish the number of offers a household can refuse while on the centralized waiting list. The minimum number of refusals must be 3.

QUESTION: Should the maximum number of refusals be more than 3?

YES	NO
9%	91%

Comments:

a) number should be 6 - with housing being more and more difficult to obtain people are putting their names down on every list they can even if inappropriate for their needs; people who get housing find it not in right location and then move again - having a bigger maximum allows people a better chance of getting something appropriate in an appropriate location.

b) number should be 5 - especially in the case of SPP - An SPP household is in a panic to relocate....3 offers which could come fairly quickly may force the household into accepting a unit that is not the right fit simply out of fear that they will lose out altogether.

Question #6: Selection of Already Accommodated Households (s. 48)

HSA: The SM system for selecting households must include rules that allow a housing provider to select a household that is already occupying a unit in their housing project as a household to receive RGI assistance

QUESTION: Should the current Market-to-RGI policy be changed?

YES	NO
47%	53%

Other Considerations in Local Rule:

Require 1 year residency	10%
Current residents should have first priority	60%
Immediate subsidy for seasonal/significant income changes	30%

Question #7: Local Rules - Conflict of Interest

HSA: SM may set local rule.

QUESTION: What situations should be considered prohibitive and what situations should be acceptable in a conflict of interest policy?

Current Policy OK	Change - Allow Relatives
87%	13%

Comments:

The majority of comments indicated that no individual (administrator, property manager, maintenance worker and/or board member) should have an association where a personal or financial gain may be realized; monetary conflicts should be strictly prohibitive;

Of those who responded, 13% indicate that family to the board should be considered if the person is a good worker and accomplishes what is needed to be done and is qualified to do the work, and that there may be other acceptable situations;

Question #8: Local Rules - Board of Directors Remuneration

HSA: SM may set local rule.

SURVEY RESULTS:

1. Should board members receive remuneration?

YES	NO
43%	57%

2. Should remuneration be tied to provider performance?

YES	NO
56%	44%

Comments:

- a) Who monitors/oversees?
- b) As long as board approves
- c) should not be allowed for co-operatives - contrary to Co-operatives Corporation Act
- d) Should allow bonus/gift cards for board members
- e) Should be tied to attendance records
- f) Remuneration should not be allowed but allow for travel reimbursement

Question #9: Local Rules - Property Management Procurement

HSA: SM may set local rule.

Question: What should be included in local policy?

SURVEY RESULTS:

- 1. Mandatory tendering
- 2. 3 bid minimum
- 3. Maximum contract period

YES	NO
57%	43%
62%	38%
80%	20%

Comments:

- a) Extend contract term to 4 or 5 years;
- b) Include optional tendering at 3 years, and mandatory tendering at 5 years;
- c) Difficult to obtain minimum of 3 bids - providers should not be required to re-tender if minimum bids not received;
- d) Current property management company should not undertake the tendering process (conflict);
- e) Include mandatory performance reviews, termination clauses and cost of living increases in PM contracts;

Question #10: Local Rules - Multi-Year Financial Plans

HSA: SM may set local rule.

QUESTION: What should be included as mandatory components of this local rule?

SURVEY RESULTS:

Operating Plan	50%
Capital Plan	84%
Capital Plan 1-5 years	88%
Capital Plan 5-10 years	33%
Capital Plan 10+ years	0%
Plan to be approved by Board	95%

Additional Comments:

- a) Plans should incorporate a provision for revisiting, accounting for unforeseens, even staff changes; good to have a longer-range vision of your project; board approvals are important, though Board understanding, comprehension of costs/funds available, long-term vision can vary a lot.
- B) Membership approval is required in co-operatives.