

Oxford County Social Housing: Public Information Document

1. BACKGROUND

The County of Oxford (as a provincially designated Service Manager) assumed the responsibility for subsidizing social housing costs in 1998. In December 2000, the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000* was proclaimed making the County the sole shareholder for the public housing units. Under this same Act and associated Regulations, the County also became responsible for the funding and administrative functions of the municipal, private and co-operative non-profit social housing units effective December 1, 2001. (The funding and administrative responsibility does not include any Federal unilateral co-operative non-profits.) On January 1, 2012, the new *Housing Services Act, 2011* came into effect replacing the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*. The new *Housing Services Act, 2011* provides a new legislative framework for the delivery of housing programs in Ontario.

Subsidized housing is available in over 1,300 units situated in 10 municipalities within the County of Oxford. To allow applicants to have easier access to social housing, Oxford County has developed a centralized application system to serve those social housing providers who are required, under the Act, to participate in such a system.

2. TYPES OF HOUSING PROVIDERS

(a) Public Housing

Oxford County Housing owns and manages these developments. The County of Oxford is the sole shareholder and has appointed County Council as its Board of Directors. All Oxford County Housing units are allocated to applicants on a rent geared-to-income basis.

(i) Rent Supplement Program

Oxford County Housing also has some subsidized units under contract with private landlords. All of these units are allocated to applicants on a rent geared-to-income basis.

(b) Municipal or Private Non-Profit Housing

Municipal or Private Non-profit housing developments are owned and operated by a board of directors elected from the municipality or from a community or local group. Some have tenant representatives on the board. Target plans (number of rent-geared-to-income units, number of market rent units, number of special needs/modified units) are established by the *Housing Services Act, 2011* for these housing providers.

The following non-profit housing developments fall within this type of housing program:

1. Anchorage Homes, Services & Initiatives Inc. - Woodstock
2. Daystar Community Homes - Woodstock
3. Drumbo & District Housing Corporation (Maple Grove) - Drumbo
4. Embro & Area Seniors Housing Corporation (Cambrocourt Manor) - Embro
5. Ingamo Family Homes (Woodstock) Inc. - Woodstock
6. Town of Tillsonburg Non-Profit Housing Corporation - Tillsonburg
 - Maple Lane Seniors Residence
 - Townview Terrace Seniors Residence
7. Woodstock Non-Profit Housing Corporation - Woodstock
 - Kentwood Towers
 - Canterbury Towers

(c) Co-operative Non-Profit Housing

Co-operative non-profit housing developments are owned and operated by the members of the co-operative. The board of directors is elected from among the member households. Members of a co-operative are required to participate in the operation of the development. Participation is geared to a member's interests and expertise and could include such things as finance or social committee work or site and unit maintenance. Target plans (number of rent-geared-to-income units, number of market rent units, and number of special needs/modified units) are established by the *Housing Services Act, 2011* for these housing providers. The following non-profit housing developments fall within this type of housing program:

1. Adam Oliver Housing Co-operative Inc. - Ingersoll
2. Dereham Forge Housing Co-operative Inc. - Tillsonburg
3. Percy Heights Co-operative Inc. - Woodstock

(d) Former Federal Non-Profit Housing

This type of non-profit housing was formerly administered by the Federal government and is similar to municipal and private non-profit housing except the calculation of rent is different and these groups are not required to participate in the centralized wait list system due to previous operating agreement terms. The following non-profit housing developments fall within this type of housing program:

1. Innerkip Seniors Apts. (Thamescrest Apts.) - Innerkip
2. Princeton & District Housing Assoc. (Countryside Manor) - Princeton

(e) Emergency, Supportive and Alternative Housing

Emergency, Supportive and Alternative Housing units are owned and/or operated by boards of directors and assist persons with special needs. If you feel you require support services, emergency housing or housing with support services, please **contact one of the following agencies directly:**

- **Canadian Mental Health Association of Oxford County** (CMHA provides low support housing and a homelessness program to individuals who meet criteria for community support service)
 - 522 Peel St., Woodstock , ON N4S 1K3
 - Telephone (519) 539-8055 - Fax (519) 539-8317
 - Web-site: cmhaoxford.on.ca
 - Satellite Offices:* 40 Brock St. West., Tillsonburg N4G 2A2 Tel: (519) 842-8869
 - 29 Noxon St., Ingersoll N5C 1B8 Tel: (519) 485-1700 ext. 203

- **Community Care Access Centre** (CCAC services include care coordination, in home services such as nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, nutritional counseling, speech therapy, personal care, medical supplies and equipment, children's health services, admission to long-term care facilities or adult day care centres and geriatric assessment services)
 - 1147 Dundas St., Woodstock, ON
 - Telephone (519) 539-1284 or 1-800-561-5490 - Fax (519) 539-0065

- **Ingersoll Support Services Inc./Ingersoll Support Non-Profit Homes** (provides support services and subsidized, wheelchair accessible housing to developmentally disabled persons)
 - 99 Thames St. North, Ingersoll N5C 3C6
 - Telephone (519) 425-0005

- **Ingamo Family Homes (Woodstock) Inc.** (accommodates abused women and their children on referral from Women's Emergency Centre, Family Violence Counseling Program or other professional or appropriate agency - residents must be in transition from an abusive home situation and must commit to actively working on healing while a resident at Ingamo)
 - Telephone (519) 421-0383 - Fax (519) 421-0955

- **Salvation Army Emergency Housing & Advocacy Centre** (emergency and homelessness)
 - Telephone (519) 539-7235 - Fax (519) 539-0069

- **Woodmar Non-Profit Housing Corporation** (Developmentally Impaired)
 - 212 Bysham Park Dr., Woodstock, ON N4T 1R2
 - Telephone (519) 539-7447 - Fax (519) 539-7332

- **Domestic Abuse Services Oxford (Woodstock)** (offers 24-hour, 7-days a week safe, short-term residential and non-residential supports for women and their children who are victims of domestic violence - sexual assault crisis line and counseling – outreach to Tillsonburg and Ingersoll – public education to community groups)
 - 975 James St., Woodstock, ON (wheelchair accessible)
 - Telephone (519) 539-4811 or toll free 1-800-265-1938
 - Fax (519) 539-3533

3. APPLYING FOR SUBSIDIZED (RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME) HOUSING (O.Reg.367/11 s.43)

An application for subsidized accommodation (rent-geared-to-income) at any of the developments listed below may be obtained directly from the web-site <http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/Services-for-You/Human-Services/Shelter-and-Housing> or from:

(a) Oxford County

1. Department of Human Services
21 Reeve St, P. O. Box 1614, Woodstock, ON N4S 7Y3 - (519) 539-9800
or 1-800-265-1015

(b) Municipal or Private Non-Profits:

1. Anchorage Homes, Services & Initiatives Inc. - scattered units)
39 Durward Pl. 2 front Waterloo, ON N2C 4E5
2. Daystar Community Homes - townhouses
414 Ontario St. Woodstock, On - (519) 681-6403 Kare Property Management
3. Drumbo & District Housing Corporation (Maple Grove) – apts. for Adults
43 Oxford St. E., R.R. #1, Drumbo, ON N0J 1G0 - (519) 463-5822
4. Embro & Area Seniors Housing (Cambrocourt Manor) – apts. for Adults
R.R. #4, Group Box 2-1, Embro, ON N0J 1J0 - (519) 475-4533
5. Oxford County Housing – apts/semis/townhouses
21 Reeve St, P. O. Box 1614 Woodstock, ON N4S 7Y3 (519) 539-9800 or 1-800-265-1015
6. Town of Tillsonburg Non-Profit Housing Corporation – apts. for seniors
31 Maple Lane N4G 5J5 and 53 Queen St. N4G 3G8 (Townsvie Terrace)
P. O. Box 203, Tillsonburg, ON N4G 4H5 - (519) 842-4890
7. Woodstock Non-Profit Housing Corporation – apts. for seniors
83 Kent St. (Kentwood Towers) & 675 Canterbury St. (Canterbury Towers)
Woodstock, ON c/o Benchmark Management Services (519) 746-3033

(c) Co-operative Non-Profits:

8. Adam Oliver Housing Co-operative Inc. (Ingersoll)
220 Ingersoll St. North, Unit #110, Ingersoll, ON N5C 4B3 (519) 485-3545
9. Dereham Forge Housing Co-operative Inc. (Tillsonburg)
390 Quarterline Rd., Unit #41, Tillsonburg, ON N4G 5J7 (519) 688-7393

10. Percy Heights Co-operative Inc. (Woodstock)
360 Springbank Ave. N., Unit #5, Woodstock, ON N4T1M4 (519) 421-0715

The Department of Human Services will process all applications for the above developments and, if the household is eligible, they will be placed on the centralized waiting list for the location(s) requested. An application may also be obtained from, and submitted to, the individual housing providers who will subsequently forward it to Oxford County Department of Human Services.

(i) Note: Changes to Information on Application (O.Reg. 367/11 s.29)

If, before the household begins to receive rent-geared-to-income assistance, there is a change in a document or information that the household has provided to the Department of Human Services with respect to its application, the household shall provide such updated documentation and information to the Department of Human Services within 30 business days from the date that the content of the document or the information ceases to be accurate, or within such longer period as the Department of Human Services may allow. Failure to provide information as required by the Department of Human Services may result in the application being cancelled.

(d) Former Federal Non-Profit - Applications for Market or Rent-Geared-To-Income

Applications for market rent or rent-geared-to-income for the following developments should be obtained from, and ***submitted directly to:***

1. Innerkip Seniors Apts. (Thamescrest Apts.)
30 Balsam St., Innerkip, ON
Telephone: (519) 469-3460
2. Princeton & District Housing Assoc. (Countryside Manor)
Cowan St. North, Princeton, ON
Telephone: (519) 458-4994

Rent-geared-to-income (RGI) applications submitted to the Department of Human Services

(e) Emergency and Supportive Applications

Applications for emergency and supportive housing should be made directly with the organization concerned.

4. HOUSING MANDATES (*HSA, 2011 s.76 (1)*)

Housing Providers participate in the centralized waitlist system through the County of Oxford – Department of Human Services. They accept applications from singles, couples, families and seniors (depending on the number of bedrooms required by the applicant and what types of units are available in the Housing Provider's development). The following projects are, however, designed for seniors:

1. Woodstock Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation
2. The Town of Tillsonburg Non-Profit Housing Corporation

5. GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS (*O.Reg. 367/11 s.11*)

For the centralized wait list purposes (excludes formerly federally administered and emergency and supportive housing), Oxford County has been divided into the following geographic service areas:

- Drumbo
- Embro
- Ingersoll
- Norwich
- Tavistock
- Thamesford
- Tillsonburg
- Woodstock

6. TYPES OF RENT

(a) Market Value (Maximum) Rent:

Some market rent units are available in private and co-operative non-profit housing developments. These units are rented for amounts similar to private sector units. Applications for market rent units must be made *directly* with the applicable housing provider.

(b) Rent Geared-To-Income (*O.Reg. 367/11 s.43-44*)

Rent is calculated based on 30% of the gross household income to a maximum of the established "market rent" for the unit in the development in which you will reside (or to a maximum of the designated **Household Income Limit**, whichever is lower). Rent for those persons in receipt of social assistance from (Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support) is in accordance with a scale established in the *Housing Services Act, 2011, Ontario Regulation 379/11* and may be changed periodically. The minimum rent for a unit is \$85.00 plus any applicable utility charges.

(i) Gross Adjusted Household Income (*O.Reg. 379/11 s. 50*)

Gross household income is the total of the household income from *all* sources, including:

Employment (full-time work, part-time work, irregular work, casual work, seasonal work, odd jobs, seasonal or vacation pay, yearly bonuses, cost of living bonuses, long term income protection plans, shift bonuses, disability pay, sickness pay, tips or gratuities, commissions, overtime pay) and Self Employment (such as tutoring, child care, driving a taxi, teaching music).

Pensions/Allowances and Other Income (such as Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Plan, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Quebec Pension Plan, Widow Pension, Alimony/Support Payments, War Veteran's Allowance, Employment Insurance, Training Allowances, Payments under Compensation for Victims of Crime Act, Company Pensions, Private Pensions, Civilian War Pensions, Public Service Pensions, Workers Compensation Payments, Military of Militia or Civil Defence Allowance, Immigration allowances, Canada Manpower Retraining Allowance, Payments from Children's Aid Society, Payments from Catholic Children's Aid Society, on time lump payments such as inheritances, court and out of court settlements, mortgage income and student grants).

Income Producing Assets (such as farm property from which you make money, real estate such as business, farmland, cottage or mobile home which you rent to someone, a licence such as a taxi licence which gives you income, a business which gives you income, investments, and savings accounts such as bank, trust company, credit union, annuities, GIC's, stocks or shares, bonds, debentures, mortgages, loans, notes or term deposits).

Non-Income Producing Assets (such as life insurance with a cash surrender value, Registered Retirement Savings (if not locked-in) and Education Plans, house, condominium, summer cottage, farmland, commercial or vacant land, collections or investments in other valuable assets, and a business which does not give you income). Income from these types of sources are calculated using an imputed rate of return, based on the current Canada Savings Bond rate.

(ii) Household Income Limits

(HSA, 2011, O.Reg. 370/111 schedule # 1 & 2

Currently, depending on the number of bedrooms your household requires, to be eligible to receive assistance, your total household income may not exceed the following:

Bachelor Unit	-	\$22,500 per annum
One Bedroom Unit	-	\$27,000 per annum
Two Bedroom Unit	-	\$33,000 per annum
Three Bedroom Unit	-	\$36,500 per annum
Four + Bedrooms	-	\$46,000 per annum

IMPORTANT NOTE: *If your income results in a rent (calculated at 30% of gross income) that is equal to or exceeds the amount of market rent for a development, you will not be*

eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance. You will then be advised to apply to a non-profit development directly for a market rent unit. Oxford County Housing and Anchorage Homes are targeted for 100% rent-geared-to-income.

(iii) Asset Limits (O Reg. 367/11 s. 35)

There are currently no limits on the amount of assets can hold and still be eligible for rent-geared-to-income. Income from assets is, however, considered in total household income for rent calculation purposes. A percentage based on the most recent series of Canada Savings Bonds is utilized to calculate an income amount for non-income producing assets and transferred assets.

(iv) Adjustments to and Exclusions from Income (O.Reg.367/11 s. 50(1)(b) and 50(2)-(14)

Various adjustments to, and numerous exclusions from, gross income are made in accordance with the Housing Services Act, 2011. Details are found in O. Reg. 367/11.

(v) Amenity Charges/Allowances (O.Reg. 298/01 s.51)

The geared-to-income rent calculation assumes that the following utilities/appliances are included: Heat, Hot Water, Water, Fridge and Stove. Depending on the accommodation you are allocated, this may not be the case. If your accommodation does *not* include these utilities or appliances, an allowance is provided. If your accommodation provides *more* than these utilities, a charge is added to your rent. These allowances and/or charges are based on a utility scale prescribed by the *Housing Services Act, 2011, Ontario Regulation 298/01* and may be changed periodically.

7. ELIGIBILITY RULES (O.Reg. 298/01 s. 7)

(a) Basic Rules - Rent Geared-To-Income

Age:

At least one member of a household must be 16 years old or older.

Citizenship/Residency:

Each member of a household must be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident of Canada, or a refugee claimant.

Deportation Orders:

No deportation order has been made or has become effective for any members of the household.

Rent Arrears:

No member of a household may owe arrears of rent or owe money as a result of damage caused by a member of the household with respect to a social housing.

Misrepresentation of Income:

No member of a household has had a conviction for misrepresentation of income related to social housing.

Independent Living

You must be able to live independently, with or without support services.

(b) Other Eligibility Rules and Local Standards

i) Change of Income, Household Composition or Other Information (O.Reg. 367/11 s.(28))

Tenants are required to inform the Housing Provider of any changes to income, family composition, document or any other information previously provided to the Department of Human Services or Housing Provider within thirty (30) business days of the change occurring, or, in the case of a document, within the period of time specified by the Housing Provider.

Failure to provide the information or document as required by the Housing Provider may result in the household ceasing to be eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance.

(ii) Reapplication

If a member of the household has been convicted by a court of law or found by the Landlord Tenant Board to have misrepresented income for rent-geared-to-income purposes, the household may not reapply for rent-geared-to-income accommodation for two years following the conviction or finding.

(iii) Absence from Unit (O.Reg. 367/11 s. 37)

A household receiving rent geared-to-income assistance ceases to be eligible for such assistance if all of the members of the household have been absent from the unit for sixty (60) consecutive days.

If the household has only one member and that member is absent from the unit because of medical reasons, the household member shall not be considered absent from the unit. If a household has two or more members, and one member is absent for medical reasons, and the others are absent because they need to be accommodated elsewhere because of the first member's absence, all of the household members shall not be considered absent from the unit for the purpose of this rule.

(iv) Guest/Visitor Policy (O. Reg. 339/01 s 21 (3))

Tenants have the right to have overnight guests, to entertain out-of-town visitors, and to maintain relationships with people of their choice. The County of Oxford – Department of Human Services, must ensure that subsidies are based on true household income, that “queue jumping” (where someone joins an existing tenant's household and becomes a tenant themselves, and then the

original tenant leaves) is prevented and that ineligible persons are prevented from moving in.

Visitors may come to a unit as frequently as the tenant invites them. Very frequent visitors may be asked to demonstrate they have a principle address outside the non-profit/Oxford County Housing.

Guests shall not be permitted to remain in the unit longer than thirty (30) days without the prior written consent of the Landlord. In the event that Tenants wish to have a guest reside in the Unit for a period longer than thirty (30) days, they must first obtain the written approval of the Landlord. The property manager may agree to the stay and will confirm in writing the length of the stay permitted. The property manager may refuse the request if it appears the guest does not intend, or has no prospects of, moving at the end of the agreed-to Guest term, or if staff or tenants have complained about the guest's behaviour, and those complaints have been found to be valid.

At the end of the Guest term, the property manager may check to ensure the Guest has left. Guests who wish to stay beyond the normal Guest term may apply to become Tenants immediately (see additions to the household). If a Guest continues to stay in the unit without the landlord's permission, the landlord may **cut off the household's rent subsidy with 90 days written notice**. The Tenant has the right to ask for a review of this decision. Tenants are responsible for the behaviour of their Guests at all times. Should the Tenant move out of the unit, the Guest must also move out. Any guests staying in the unit after the lease-holding Tenant moves out will be considered trespassers and removed by the police under the *Trespass to Property Act 1990*, or failing that will be considered unauthorized occupants in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act*, and are responsible for paying compensation so long as they occupy the Unit.

(v) Additions to Households

Tenants must report any new persons in the unit (non-guests) within 30 business days of their moving into the unit. This is a requirement of the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. Guests wishing to become a tenant must make a written request to the property manager before their term of stay is over.

Persons wishing to join a household receiving rent-gear-to-income assistance must apply to the Department of Human Services and submit proof of their income, birth certificate and tax return, etc. Once all eligibility has been determined according to the *Housing Services Act, 2011* and associated Regulations, the Housing Provider is notified, who can then notify the potential newcomer.

If the newcomer is not eligible for a subsidy, the Department of Human Services will notify the newcomer and the Housing Provider.

The Housing Provider may also choose to allow the occupant to become a tenant but remove the household's subsidy with 90-days written notice.

If the newcomer is eligible, the Housing Provider may allow him or her to become a tenant/member. The household, including the newcomer, will be required to sign a new lease/occupancy agreement. The lease/occupancy agreement must be executed by every individual whose income is taken into consideration in determining the amount of rent payable by the household.

8. INCOME SOURCES

To be considered eligible for a rent subsidy, applicants must have pursued all sources of income available to them. This includes basic financial assistance under the *Ontario Works Act, 1997*, support under the *Divorce Act (Canada)*, the *Family Law Act* or the *Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Orders Act*, benefits under the *Employment Insurance Act (Canada)*, Government of Canada or Government of Ontario pensions for persons aged 65 or older, except the Canada Pension Plan CPP and support or maintenance due under the *Immigration Act (Canada)*.

9. DIVESTMENT OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY (O.Reg. 367/11 s. 32)

If a household is receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance, each member of the household who has a legal or beneficial interest in a freehold or leasehold estate in residential property located in or outside of Ontario that is suitable for year-round occupancy shall divest himself or herself of this property within 180 days of first receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance or within 180 days after receiving the property if the property is acquired after the household member first receives assistance. Verification of divestment must be provided to the Housing Provider. The Housing Provider may extend the time for divestment in special circumstances.

10. UNIT SIZES/LOCAL OCCUPANCY STANDARDS (HSA, 2011 s. 42)

You can indicate what size of unit you want to live in. However, your choice must fall within a range of unit sizes that is determined by the occupancy standards that apply to your household size. The standards are:

- there can be no less than one person per bedroom
- applicants can choose to have two children of the same sex share a bedroom
- couples (married, common-law, same-sex partners) are allocated one bedroom only
- single adults are each allocated one bedroom
- a single adult may choose a bachelor-style (no bedrooms) unit if there are no other household members

- if there is a documented medical need, a baby/child is expected, or there documented child custody requirements, an extra bedroom may be provided

If you do not indicate any size preference for a unit, we will assume you will only accept the largest sized unit for which you qualify.

Example: *The smallest size unit for which a household consisting of two parents with three children is eligible is a three-bedroom unit. The largest size unit this household would be eligible for is a four-bedroom unit.*

Example: *The smallest size unit for which a household consisting of one mother, one dependent child and one grandmother is a three bedroom unit. The largest size unit this household would be eligible for is a three-bedroom unit.*

Example: *The smallest size unit for which a household consisting of one person is a bachelor-style unit. The largest size unit this household is eligible for is a one-bedroom unit.*

11. HOW SUBSIDIZED UNITS ARE ALLOCATED (O.Reg.367/11 s. 47)

(a) Oxford County Department of Human Services Application Procedures

When your application is finalized and you have been advised that you are eligible for subsidized housing, your application is added to the centralized waiting list. You may apply for as many developments (that have the appropriately sized units and mandates) as you wish. Applicants are offered units in accordance with their application date, e.g. households rank higher than another household with a later application date - **except as noted below:**

- Victims of family violence receive **special priority** and are ranked higher than a non-special priority household.

The Wait List is chronological based on Rent Geared to Income Housing application date.

(i) Special Priority Requirements (Victims of Family Violence)

Any member of a household, who is 16 years of age or older, applying for rent-geared-to-income assistance may submit a written request that the household be included in the special priority category on the centralized waiting list. The member must sign the request (or another individual authorized to make the request on the member's behalf such as a parent/guardian or attorney). The request will be subsequently accepted by the centralized waiting list, and receive a higher ranking than a non-special priority household, if the record of abuse is verified, either in writing or verbally, by a doctor, registered nurse or a registered practical nurse, lawyer, law enforcement officer, a minister of religion authorized

under provincial law to perform marriages, teacher, guidance counsellor, individual in a managerial or administrative position with a housing provider, an individual employed by an agency or organization to provide social support services in the community, including a community health care worker, social worker, social service worker, victim services worker, settlement services worker or a shelter worker (as defined by **O. Reg. 367/11, s.58 s.(5)**). The record of abuse referred to above is any of the following:

- record of intervention by the police indicating that the member was abused by the abusing individual;
- record of physical injury caused to the member by the abusing individual;
- record of application of force by the abusing individual against the member to force the member to engage in sexual activity against his or her will;
- record of one or more attempts to kill the member or another member of the household;
- record of the use of a weapon against the member or another member of the household;
- a record of words, actions or gestures by the abusing individual that threaten the member or his or her property including, but not limited to:
 1. threatening to kill the member or another member of the household
 2. threatening to use a weapon against a member or another member of the household
 3. threatening to physically harm the member or another member of the household;
 2. Destroying or injuring or threatening to destroy or injure the member's property;
 3. intentionally killing or injuring pets or threatening to kill or injure pets;
 4. threatening to harm or remove the member's children from the household;
 5. threatening to prevent the member from having access to his or her children;
 6. forcing the member to perform degrading or humiliating acts;
 7. terrorizing the member;
 8. Enforcing social isolation upon the member;
 9. Failing to provide or withholding the necessities of life;
 10. threatening to withdraw from sponsoring the member as an immigrant;
 11. threatening to take action that might lead to the member being deported;
 12. other words, actions or gestures that threaten the member or lead the member to fear for his or her safety.

(ii) Refusals by Applicant of Offers from Housing Provider (O. Reg. 367/11 s. 50)

A household that is on the common waiting list for rent-geared-to-income units, other than a household that has been determined to be eligible for special needs

housing, ceases to be eligible for rent-gear-to-income assistance if the household refuses three offers of a rent-gear-to-income unit if:

- the size of the unit that is offered is a size for which the household indicated a preference and for which the household would be eligible as determined by the occupancy standards; and
- the unit that is offered is in a housing project for which the household has indicated a preference on the application.

(iii) Refusal to Offer Unit to Applicant by Housing Provider (O.Reg. 367/11 s.50)

A housing provider may choose not to offer a unit to an applicant if:

- a) selection of the household would be contrary to its client mandate;
- b) the housing provider has reasonable grounds to believe, based on the household's rental history that the household may fail to fulfil the obligations to pay rent for the unit in the amount and at the times it is due;
- c) the household does not agree to accept its responsibilities as a member of the housing provider if the housing provider is a non-profit co-operative, or the housing provider has reasonable grounds to believe that the household will not accept or will be unable to accept those responsibilities;
- d) in the case of a unit which individuals will reside in a shared living situation, the housing provider has reasonable grounds to believe that it is unreasonable for the household to reside in the shared accommodation;

A housing provider who refuses to offer a unit to a household shall notify the household of the refusal in writing not more than ten (10) days after the housing provider offers the unit to another household. The notice must contain the reasons for refusal and must set out the facts on which the housing provider made its decision. The notice must also advise the household on how the household may appeal the decision of the housing provider.

(iv) - Internal Review/Appeal of Refusal (O.Reg. 367/11 s.138)

Each housing provider will follow the following procedures if a household appeals the housing provider's decision to not offer a unit to the household.

- a) Household being refused must provide the housing provider with a written request for a review within ten (10) business days after the housing provider gives notice of refusal to the household.
- b) The household may withdraw the request for internal review by giving written notice of the withdrawal to the housing provider before the review is completed.

- c) An individual who participated in making the decision to refuse to offer the unit shall not participate in an internal review of that decision;
- d) The internal review must be completed within ten (10) business days after the housing provider receives the request for the review.
- e) The housing provider shall give written notice of the result of the internal review to the household within five (5) business days after the review is completed.

(b) Special Needs Housing Application Procedure

“Special needs housing” means housing intended for use by a household with one or more members who require accessibility modifications or provincially funded support services in order to live independently in the community (Section 38, HSA).

(i) - Modified Special Needs Units

Currently, each individual housing provider is responsible for accepting and processing applications for modified units (accessible for wheel chairs). Accordingly, applicants may apply directly to each non-profit housing provider with these types of units. However, to facilitate the application process for disabled applicants, the Department of Human Services will also accept and process applications for modified units and will work with each housing provider to ensure equal access to all applicants on a chronological (date of application) basis.

(ii) - Supportive Special Needs Units (O. Reg. 339/01 s. 13)

Some social housing providers in the County of Oxford have referral agreements with supportive agencies for persons with special needs. These organizations provide the support an applicant may require to live independently in the community. These agencies have their own selection and placement criteria (outlined below) for Oxford County social housing units, but applicants must also meet Oxford County Housing’s basic eligibility criteria. HSA requirements apply to these selection criteria, where applicable.

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) (persons requiring rent-geared-to-income housing with mental health support services).

Some Oxford County Housing units are allocated by referral from, and agreement with, the CMHA. For these allocations, the CMHA assigns priority, as follows:

- a) individuals with no fixed address that are admitted in a hospital setting with a higher priority to Regional Mental Health Care London, Schedule I facility such as Woodstock General Hospital and last being given to a general hospital setting such as Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital;
- b) Individuals who have a threat of being homeless due to financial and/or situational reasons;

- c) Availability and choice of individual of location in which they would like to live;
- d) If two individuals have similar circumstances, i.e. both are homeless and are in Regional Mental Health Care London and both want to live in Woodstock and only one unit is available, then placement would be discussed at Community Disposition group (comprised of CMHA, Oxford Assertive Community Treatment Team, Woodstock General Hospital and Regional Mental Health Care London representatives). Considerations include need and stability of client.
- e) HSA requirements and priorities are also considered in selection criteria, where applicable.

Community Care Access Centre CCAC-Oxford

In determining eligibility for supportive housing, the CCAC Case Manager does a comprehensive assessment to determine persons' functional status, and to identify needs and support with respect to the applicants medical, physical and psychosocial status. The CCAC Case Manager gives consideration to need and to whether or not that person can be supported via an alternative method until a housing unit where support services can be provided is available. HSA requirements and priorities are also considered in selection criteria, where applicable.

Ingersoll Support Services Inc. (*developmentally impaired*)

Oxford County Housing has rent supplement units allocated to clients of Ingersoll Support Service.

Cheshire Homes (*for physically impaired persons requiring attendant care services for personal care, mobility assistance and housekeeping services*).

Oxford County Housing has units reserved for clients referred by Cheshire Homes. Priority on the waiting list for these units is determined by Cheshire in accordance with an established criteria based on need for attendant care services. HSA requirements and priorities are also considered in selection criteria, where applicable.

12. Lease/Occupancy Agreement Requirements (*O.Reg. 367/11 s. 96, 100*)

The term of any lease or occupancy agreement cannot exceed one year and must include the amount of the rent payable for one month if the unit was a market unit and the amount of the geared-to-income rent for one month plus all other applicable charges.

The lease or occupancy agreement restricts the occupancy of the unit to the members of the household at the time the lease or agreement was entered into and requires the

household to advise the housing provider of any persons who cease to occupy the unit after the lease or agreement is executed.

The lease or agreement may not be assigned and the unit may not be rented or sublet to anyone else.

The lease or occupancy agreement is to be signed by every individual whose income is taken into consideration in determining the amount of the rent. Failure to do so will render your household ineligible for rent-gear-to-income assistance.

13. TRANSFER CRITERIA

(a) External Transfers – Tenant Requested - One Housing Provider to Another

Tenant households wishing to transfer to another housing provider's project must complete an application form, signed by all leaseholders and have it submitted to the Department of Human Services. If the household continues to be eligible, the household's application will be placed on the common waiting list and will be ranked in accordance with the date of application for transfer and location preference.

(b) Internal Transfers - Tenant Requested (O. Reg. 367/11 s. 48)

Any member of a tenant household, that are leaseholders may request a special priority internal transfer. The request must be in writing (signed by the member, parent or guardian of the member, attorney under a power of attorney for the member, or otherwise authorized to make the request on behalf of the member) stating that:

1. a member of the household has been subject to abuse from another individual;
2. the abusing individual is or was living with the member or is sponsoring the member as an immigrant; and
3. the abused member intends to live permanently apart from the abusing individual.

Special Priority households rank higher in priority on the waiting list for internal transfers than any other household on the waiting list for an internal transfer. Special priority households who, in the opinion of the housing provider is at greater risk, receives higher priority than other special priority household on the waiting list for internal transfer.

A special priority applicant can only be removed from the internal transfer list if:

- The applicant(s) ask to be removed. In this case, the applicant(s) remains eligible for RGI assistance if removed from the internal list.
- The applicant(s) accept the offer of a unit.

Special priority applicants do not cease to be eligible for RGI assistance unless and until the applicants have been placed on the waiting list *and* have refused three offers at locations of their choice that have appropriately sized units.

The length of tenancy and transfer criteria will not be applied to “special priority” households.

d) Internal/External Transfers – Overhoused Tenants (Mandatory for Continued Subsidy) – O. Reg. 367/11 s.38

If a household receiving rent geared-to-income has become “overhoused”, e.g. family composition has changed resulting in too many bedrooms for the household size; they must advise the housing provider of the date of household composition change. At the end of one (1) year if the household remains overhoused, the housing provider upon request will add household to their internal wait list. If the housing provider does not have the appropriately sized unit, the household’s name will be added to the centralized waiting list for subsequent placement with another housing provider who has an available appropriately sized unit and mandate in the geographic area. The date of the household’s original application for subsidized housing will be utilized for this purpose.

Households who are overhoused do not have to re-locate to another unit if they do not wish to receive a rent subsidy. These households will be charged in accordance with the market rent established for the unit in which they currently reside.

(e) Internal Transfers – Underhoused Tenants

Households who are underhoused (family composition has changed resulting in too few bedrooms for the household size) *may* be given priority over other transfer requests, but not over “special priority” or “overhoused” household transfer requirements, at the discretion of the Housing Provider. The Housing Provider may exercise this discretion if it is determined that the needs of other transfer requests are not in an “urgent” category (serious medical or personal safety issues).

All transfer decisions will be communicated to the household and documented by the Housing Provider.

(f) Transfer Fees (*per Tenant Protection Act*)

A fee of up to \$250.00 may apply for transfer within the same building or project if the transfer is not for any serious medical/health need, social need or personal safety issues as described above. The fee will also not be applied to “special priority” transfer or “overhoused” households who are required to relocate to an appropriately sized unit.

14. PROCEDURAL PROVISIONS – DECISIONS, INTERNAL REVIEWS, NOTICES

(a) Notices of Decisions (O. Reg. 367/11 s. 138 & 139)

Notices must be issued for decisions made by the Service Manager or Housing Provider, as appropriate, relating to:

1. eligibility for rent geared-to-income assistance
2. eligibility for size and type of unit
3. whether a household qualifies for priority

4. the amount of geared-to-income rent
5. if the individual/family no longer qualify for RGI
6. eligibility for special needs housing
7. whether a special needs household qualifies for priority
8. if the individual/family no longer qualify for special needs housing

Note: Notices issued for items 1 through 8 above, if they are adverse to a household, are subject to Internal Review at the request of the household (see Internal Review procedures)

(i) - Form of Notices (O. Reg. 367/11 s.61)

These decisions must be issued, in writing, to the applicant and the notice must include:

1. A statement of the date the decision was made;
2. If household provided opportunity to comment, the notice must include statement of the date the notice was given, date by which comments must have been received and statement of which member of the household provided comments; and
3. If a member of the household may request an internal review of the decision, notice must include statement of reasons for the decision, statement that the member of household is entitled to request a review and information on how to request a review, and what the deadline is for doing so;
4. If no member of the household may request a review of the decision, a statement that the decision is final and that an internal review may be not be requested.

A notice must be given within seven (7) business days after the decision was made.

(b) Internal Reviews (HSA, 2011 s. 155 & 156)

A member of a household may request an internal review of any of the following decisions if they are adverse to the household:

1. that a household is ineligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance
2. the type of accommodation in which the household may be accommodated as determined by the occupancy standards
3. the category of housing in which the household has been placed on within the waiting list
4. that a household is ineligible for special needs (modified unit) housing
5. the amount of geared-to-income rent payable by the household

(i) - Opportunity to Comment (HSA, 2011 s. 53 and O. Reg. 367/11 s. 61)

Before the Oxford County Service Manager at the Human Services Department or Housing Provider makes a decision that is adverse to a household, AND for which a review may be requested, they shall advise the household that any member of the household is entitled to request a review and

shall include information on how to make such a request and the deadline for doing so. A notice advising the household of the opportunity to comment provision must contain the following information:

1. A summary of the information.
2. A description of the proposed decision.
3. A statement that any member of the household may comment on the information.
4. A date that, unless the member of the household waived their right to comment earlier, will be the last date that the comment may be received which is 30 days after the notice is given.

Comments from household members must be in writing and must be signed by the individual or individuals providing the comments.

(iii) - Internal Review Request Procedure (O. Reg. 367/11 s. 138)

If a household or member of a household wishes to have a decision made by the Oxford County Service Manager or Housing Provider, they must put the request in writing and the request must be received by the applicable decision-maker within (10) business days after the day of the notice of the decisions received by the member of the household. (The decision-maker may extend the time for giving a request for a review if the decision maker is satisfied that the member of the household acted in good faith and was unable to comply due to absence, accident, illness or some other reason beyond the member's control.)

A request to review a decision with respect to a request for inclusion in the special priority household category and/or rent-geared-to-income assistance for related to the special priority application may be given only by the individual who made the request for inclusion.

An individual may withdraw their request to review a decision by giving written notice of withdrawal to the decision-maker but such a withdrawal is not effective if it is received after the review is completed.

(iv) - Conduct of Internal Reviews (O. Reg. 367/11 s.138)

- No individual who participated in the making of the decision being reviewed shall participate in the review of that decision.
- The review shall be completed within ten (10) business days – five (5) business days if in respect to inclusion in the special priority category and/or RGI assistance for special priority applicants.
- The individual or individuals conducting the review may substitute their decision of the decision being reviewed.
- The decision-maker shall give written notice of the result of the review to the individuals who requested it within five (5) business days after the review is completed.