

Affordable Housing Rental Program Changes

Questions and Answers

Q. What is the Affordable Housing Rental Program?

- A. The Affordable Housing Rental Program is a subsidized housing program for moderate income families and individuals. The program was developed to address the shortage of rental accommodation where there was a lack of quality, affordable housing. Rents are fixed and were to be set at a level that would be equal to or slightly less than the market rent for a comparable unit.

Q. What changes are being made to the Affordable Housing Rental Program?

- A. The Affordable Housing Rental Program is being phased out in larger communities and the units will be converted to the Social Housing Rental Program. This will ensure that housing is available for households with lower incomes that may not be able to secure safe, affordable housing in the local market.

As of March 1, 2015, all new applicants will be required to meet the income/asset and eligibility criteria for the Social Housing Rental Program and will pay rent based on 30 per cent of household income.

Q. Why is the Affordable Housing Rental Program being transitioned over to the Social Housing Rental Program?

- A. There are a number of reasons why the Affordable Housing Rental Program is transitioning over to the Social Housing Rental Program:
- Improving housing affordability and supporting individuals and families in the greatest housing need.
 - Ensuring households with low-incomes pay rents that are affordable, and are based on their household income.
 - Rents were intended to be at or slightly below market. However, over the years, rents in the Affordable Housing Rental Program have fallen significantly behind. The last rent increase for the Affordable Housing Rental Program was July, 2012. About 600 households (about 20 per cent) have sufficient income to afford housing in the market. At least fifteen households have incomes of more than \$100,000 per year.

Q. What is the impact for existing Affordable Housing Rental Program tenants?

- A. No existing tenants will have to move due to the transition of the Affordable Housing Rental Program to the Social Housing Rental Program. Tenants may remain in the Affordable Housing Rental Program if they choose.

People who remain in the Affordable Housing Rental Program will see rent increases that are gradually phased in over a number of years. Tenants will be provided with 1 year's notice before any increase is implemented.

Q. Can Affordable Housing Rental Program tenants transfer into the Social Housing Rental Program?

- A. Tenants will not be forced to transition to the Social Housing Rental Program. However, it may be of benefit for some tenants to transition to the Social Housing Rental Program where rent will be calculated based on 30 per cent of household income. This transition will reduce, or have no change, on the rent of almost 1,300 low-income households, putting more money in their pockets and ensuring that more vulnerable people have access to social housing.

Tenants who qualify to transition to the Social Housing Rental Program may do so at any time. In order to do so, tenants will be required to provide information regarding household composition and income as a condition of tenancy in the Social Housing Rental Program.

Q. What is the impact to the applicants on Affordable Housing Rental Program applicant lists?

- A. There will be minimal impact to people on the applicant lists as most applicants are currently on both the Social Housing Rental and Affordable Housing Rental Programs' applicant lists. Those not on the Social Housing Rental Program applicant list will be contacted to advise of the changes and will be requested to provide additional information if required.