



# SOCIAL HOUSING POLICIES



<b>DIVISION:</b>	Social and Community Services		
<b>POLICY SECTION:</b>	Social Housing	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	1/1/2021
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Refusal of offer by an applicant household		
<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>	2021-NP-02	<b>SUPERCEDES:</b>	Relevant section of 2003-10; 2003-15

## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 This policy is intended for use by all County of Simcoe housing providers that operate a designated housing project under the Housing Services Act (including former OCHAP/CSHP) and the Centralized Waitlist.

- Municipal & Private Non-Profit
- Co-Operatives
- Federal Non-Profit

- Rent Supplement \*  
*\*including former OCHAP/CSHP*
- CWL
- Simcoe County Housing

1.2 The intended purpose of this policy is to inform of the acceptable parameters as it relates to a refusal of offer by an applicant household.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 The County of Simcoe in its capacity as Service Manager has the authority under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* to establish local standards as it relates to prescribed matters. There has been a change within the legislation in the area of a refusal of an offer by an applicant household which allows for a local rule by the Service Manager.

## 3. REFERENCES

Housing Services Act, 2011, Sections 42 & 75

O. Reg. 367/11, sections 32.2 & 38

Definition of “financial assistance” specifically as it pertains to rent and housing and includes such references as: rent-geared-to-income (RGI) as defined and prescribed in legislation, and/or any other Service Manager and/or Ministry approved financial assistance that is equal to the definition of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) provisions.

## 4. SCOPE

- 4.1 Effective January 1, 2020, legislation under Ont. Reg. 367/11, s. 39 which allowed for a refusal of an available financially assisted unit up to three (3) times in order to continue waiting for a vacancy at a preferred location is revoked and replaced by s. 32.2 which confirms:
- a) An applicant household ceases to be eligible for financial 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,
    - I. meets the Service Manager's occupancy standards, which can be found in the Service Manager's policy in relation to occupancy standards; and
    - II. is in a housing project for which the household has expressed a preference, which can be found in the Service Manager's policy in relation to the centralized waiting list (CWL) and housing preferences; and/or
    - III. is offered a transfer within its current building/location where the household has expressed an interest to be on an internal transfer waitlist and/or is a result of being over-housed for up to a year, and is in accordance with the Service Manager's occupancy standards policy; and/or
    - IV. is offered a transfer under any other Service Manager transfer policies and/or protocols for which the household has expressed an interest to be on a transfer wait list
  - b) A refusal of an offer of a portable housing benefit shall not be considered a refusal under section 4.1 a).
  - c) Despite section 4.1 a), the Service Manager may determine that the household remains eligible if the Service Manager is satisfied that there are extenuating circumstances and/or if the applicant household doesn't meet a legislated housing program mandate.
  - d) The provincial eligibility rules described above begin to apply on,
    - I. a date chosen by the Service Manager that is no later than January 1, 2021; or
    - II. if no date is chosen, January 1, 2021, and until that date, any local eligibility rule that was made by the Service Manager under section 39, as it read immediately before it was revoked, continues to apply
- 4.2 The County of Simcoe, as Service Manager, has chosen the date of January 1, 2021 to implement this policy, the legislative changes, and the provincial eligibility rules described herein.
- 4.3 This policy has relation to other Service Manger policies which outline local occupancy standards, financial assistance, eligibility, rules of the CWL, and household preference requirements.
- 4.4 This policy has relation to the provincial requirements outlined in Ont. Reg. 367/11 s. 32.1 – Cessation of eligibility – portable housing benefit.
- 4.5 The Service Manger must make reasonable efforts to notify all CWL households of the new provincial rule on refusal of offers before the rule begins to apply.
- 4.6 An offer is defined as:

- I. the housing provider and/or CWL staff having placed the applicant household to the status of “on offer” within the CWL management software system; and
  - II. the housing provider having made a minimum of 2 attempts within 3 business days to contact the applicant household, either by phone, email, postal mail (allowing 5 days for receipt) and/or by any other method of contact provided by the CWL household; and
  - III. subsection (II) also applies to tenant households that are on the housing provider’s internal and/or over-housed waitlists, and any other approved transfer list; and
  - IV. is considered complete when the housing provider confirms within the CWL management software system that:
    - a. the offer is accepted; or
    - b. indicates a housing provider refusal as required under Policy 2019-NP-01; or
    - c. indicates a CWL household refusal as required under this policy; or
    - d. they were unable to contact the applicant after a minimum of 2 attempts within the allowable 3 business days (5 days for postal mail offers)
- 4.7 In keeping with other policies, extenuating circumstances is defined as the Service Manager:
- I. being satisfied that the household member acted in good faith and was unable to comply because of absence, accident, illness or some other reason beyond the residents control; and/or
  - II. being satisfied that the household member believes that she/he will be at risk of abuse, violence or harm in attempting to obtain and/or provide required/requested information/documentation and/or when a preferred location is considered no longer safe for their circumstances

## 5. PROCEDURES

- 5.1 Housing providers and/or County staff are required to immediately inform all tenant households that are currently on an internal transfer and/or over-housed waitlist of the requirements contained within legislation and this policy, before the rule begins to apply.
- 5.2 Housing providers that manage an internal transfer wait list are required to provide tenant households with a choice between:
  1. remaining on the internal transfer waitlist only; or
  2. remaining on the internal transfer waitlist and applying to the CWL; or
  3. removing themselves from the internal transfer waitlist and applying to the CWL only
- 5.3 Following the implementation of this policy, housing providers that manage an internal and/or over-housed wait list are required to inform the CWL of all transfer refusals to allow CWL staff to issue a cancellation notice.
- 5.4 Housing providers must be able to demonstrate that they made a minimum of 2 attempts within 3 business days to contact the applicant household, either by phone, email, postal mail (allowing 5 days for receipt) and/or by any other method of contact provided by the household.
- 5.5 Applicants are required to keep their application status and building/location preferences up to date or risk their file being cancelled due to a lack of contact.

- 5.6 CWL staff are required to provide all applicants, including those on an over-housed waitlist with the opportunity to update their building/location preferences in accordance with County policies, legislation and regulations related to making a building/location preference.
- 5.7 Housing providers must select households to occupy vacant units in accordance with County policies, legislation and regulations related to the selection system.
- 5.8 Housing providers and/or County staff are required to inform all selected households of the requirements under this policy.
- 5.9 Housing providers are required to complete the “on offer” process within the CWL management software system by either indicating a housing provider refusal, a CWL household refusal, or an acceptance.
- 5.10 Housing providers must adhere to the procedures outlined within this Policy, as it relates to a refusal of offer by an applicant household and forward all pertinent details and/or documents to the CWL for verification.
- 5.11 An applicant household has 3 business days to respond to an offer before their file is cancelled from the CWL.
- 5.12 In accordance with the policy outlining the Rules of the CWL, if the applicant household cannot be reached within the allowable timeframe their file is considered incomplete and the household is deemed ineligible and the file cancelled.
- 5.13 CWL staff manage all cancelled applicant household files. Housing providers are to direct all applicant questions/concerns related to a refusal or cancellation under this policy to the CWL.
- 5.14 CWL staff are required to provide written notice adhering with Policy 2020-NP-02 of the ineligibility/cancellation of an applicant household as a result of a decision made under this policy.
- 5.15 Contact your Program Supervisor with any questions and/or concerns as to the application of this policy.