



City of Stratford Social Services Department

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Notification of Changes Outside Annual Reviews

Directive Number: 2020-04

Date Approved: July 13, 2020

Date Effective: July 1, 2021

Replaces: 2013-39 Change in Rent Upon New Information Outside a Review

Legislative Authority:

Housing Services Act, 2011, S.O. 2011, c. 6, Sched. 1

HSA O. Reg. 367/11 s. 28

HSA O. Reg. 317/19 s. 2

HSA O. Reg. 316/19 s. 11

This Directive applies to the following community housing programs:

- Public Housing
- Provincial Reformed (Provincial, Federal/Provincial Non-Profit)
- Provincial Reformed (Provincial Co-operative)
- Federal Non-Profit
- Federal (Municipal Non-Profit)
- Rent Supplement

1. Purpose

- To communicate the amendment to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA) that requires households to provide notification of changes outside the annual review process.
- To define the changes households are required to report outside the annual review process.
- To outline the consequences (i.e. cessation of eligibility) to the household for not notifying the Service Manager of these changes.
- To explain the process that must be following to operationalize this directive.

2. Background

In 2019, the Ontario Government introduced amendments to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the *Housing Services Act* designed to simplify the process of determining rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) assistance by focusing on information provided once a year through an annual review process. However, in order to ensure that RGI assistance is calculated accurately and based on current information, the amendments also highlighted the instances in which households must notify the Service Manager and/or housing provider of changes outside of the annual review process. Failure to notify of these changes could result in the loss of RGI assistance.

As Service Manager, the City of Stratford may set timelines for the notification of these changes in-year and determine the parameters in which extenuating circumstances may allow households to continue to receive RGI assistance even though they did not provide the required notification.

These amendments come into force on July 1, 2020 and will be implemented in this Service Manager area on July 1, 2021.

3. Directive

- 3.1.** Households in receipt of RGI assistance must notify the housing provider and provide appropriate documentation/verification of the following changes within 30 calendar days of the change occurring:
- There is a permanent change in household composition since last annual review (e.g. individuals are added or removed from the household);
 - A member of the household has begun full-time attendance at a recognized educational institution since the last annual review;
 - A member whose income was excluded because they were a full-time student, ceases to be a full-time student;
 - A member of the household begins or stops receiving basic financial assistance through Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);
 - There is a permanent change in income of a benefit unit (for OW and ODSP) above the allowed non-benefit income limits;
 - The taxes of a member of the household whose income tax information was used in the calculation of RGI rent were reassessed or additionally assessed; and
 - There is a permanent decrease of 20% or more in household income; decreases reported after the 30-day timeframe will not be backdated.

- 3.2. Once notified of changes from a household, housing providers are responsible for reviewing the changes, determining continued eligibility, recalculating RGI rent if applicable, and notifying households in writing of the outcome.
- 3.3. Households that do not notify the housing provider of the changes outlined in 3.1. may cease to be eligible for RGI assistance.
- 3.4. The housing provider may continue or reinstate RGI eligibility if it is satisfied that the change was not reported due to extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances are unforeseen circumstances which were out of the control of the household, are unlikely to occur again, and resulted in the household not being able to meet a requirement in order to remain eligible for RGI.
- 3.5. Rent increases for amounts less than \$10.00 as a result of reviewing interim household changes **will not** be implemented.

4. Procedure

Procedures for Notifying Households of Outcome of Review

- 4.1. Housing providers will notify households in writing of the outcome of the review upon its completion.
- 4.2. If a household is deemed **eligible for continued RGI assistance**, the notice should include:
 - Confirmation that the household continues to be eligible for RGI assistance
 - Notification of any changes (increases or decreases) to the RGI rent payable
 - Date of when the change in assistance will commence
 - Information on the household's right to request a review of the decision should they disagree with the outcome, including the process and timelines for making a request to the housing provider first and then, if applicable, to the Service Manager.
- 4.3. If a household is deemed **ineligible for continued RGI assistance**, the notice should include:
 - Reason(s) why the household is no longer eligible for RGI assistance
 - Date of when the eligibility will cease (i.e. 90 days from date of notification)
 - Actions (if any) that the household can take to maintain their RGI eligibility
 - Information on the household's right to request a review of the decision should they disagree with the outcome, including the process and timelines for making a request to the housing provider first and then, if applicable, the Service Manager.

Procedures for Determining Continued Eligibility due to Extenuating Circumstances

- 4.4.** Prior to determining whether a household continues to be eligible for RGI assistance despite not providing the required information and documentation, the housing provider should gather the following information from the household:
- The circumstance(s) that prevented the household from providing information within the timeframe allotted;
 - The date when the circumstance(s) became relevant; and
 - All supporting documentation.
- 4.5.** Once determined, the housing provider should notify the household of its decision as per 4.1. – 4.3. of this directive.
- 4.6.** All information related to continued eligibility should be thoroughly documented in the household's file.