



Durham Social Housing Directives

Housing Services Division | Financial Housing Services
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Subject:	Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) Wait List Rules
Directive Number:	CWL 2017-01
Date:	February 21, 2017

Purpose

Sets out the rules for the system for the selection of households from the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) wait list for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) and modified housing units.

Background

Under the *Housing Services Act*, the Region of Durham is required to have a system for selecting households waiting for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance or modified units with social housing providers in Durham. This system must comply with provincial requirements and include:

- rules for determining whether a vacant unit should be offered to an RGI applicant
- priority rules
- rules governing the selection of households for RGI units.

Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) is responsible for the administration of the wait list for RGI assistance and for modified units. DASH operates out of the Housing Services Division.

General Rules

Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) administers the wait list for RGI and modified units. The DASH wait list is comprised of:

- Applicants for RGI assistance
- Applicants for a modified unit
- Current RGI tenants and co-op members requesting transfer to a different housing provider.

- Current tenants and co-op members in modified units or RGI units requesting transfer to a modified unit with a different housing provider.

All applicants must complete either the Application for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) or Modified Housing form or the Application for Transfer form, as well as the Regional Consent to Disclosure of Information and Documents form. Only applicants who have been determined eligible for RGI and/or a modified unit are placed on the wait list.

Applicants will be removed from the DASH wait list if they:

- become ineligible for RGI assistance and/or a modified unit
- accept an offer of RGI or a modified unit from a housing provider in Durham
- request to be removed from the DASH wait list.

RGI applicants will not be removed from the DASH wait list if they accept an offer of emergency shelter or temporary housing provided while receiving treatment or counselling, even if RGI assistance is provided for these types of housing.

Eligibility Reviews

DASH reviews, but does not verify, the eligibility of applicants for RGI and/or modified units at the time of application and every 12 months thereafter.

- DASH does not normally verify eligibility for RGI, but may request verification documentation as required.
- DASH will verify eligibility for modified units at the time of application only, or if the applicant declares a change in circumstances.
- DASH verifies arrears and repayment agreements on the local and provincial arrears databases at the time of application and every 12 months thereafter.

Housing providers are responsible for verifying eligibility for RGI and/or a modified unit at the time of offer.

Priority on the DASH Wait List

Eligible applicants are placed on the DASH wait list according to the date that they applied for, or requested transfer to, an RGI or modified unit. Applicants with earlier application dates have higher priority on the DASH wait list.

Additionally, there are three priority categories on the DASH wait list. Applicants in these categories have higher priority on the DASH wait list than applicants

outside these categories. Applicants are ranked within each category according to the date of their application for RGI or request for transfer. The three priority categories, in order of priority on the DASH wait list, are:

- Overhoused – RGI tenants and co-op members who have been placed on the DASH wait list to move to a smaller unit
- Special Priority (SPP) – victims of domestic violence
- Critical priority applicants – applicants with extraordinary and unusual expenses that make the payment of market rent unreasonable.

RGI Vacancies

When a housing provider has a vacancy (other than a vacancy for a modified unit), the housing provider must determine whether the vacancy should be offered to an RGI applicant or to a market rent/housing charge applicant.

The housing provider will compare the number of RGI units in its project, not including the vacant unit, to its RGI target.

- If the number of RGI units is below the target, the vacant unit is offered to an RGI applicant or RGI transfer applicant.
- If the number of RGI units is at or above the target, the vacant unit is offered to a market rent/housing charge paying applicant or tenant/co-member requesting transfer.

Modified Unit Vacancies

Vacancies for modified units are offered to eligible applicants or transfer applicants who are eligible for the modification regardless of their eligibility for RGI or the housing provider's RGI target.

If the modified unit applicant is also eligible for RGI, the applicant is charged RGI upon moving into the modified unit regardless of the housing provider's RGI target.

DASH Vacancies Site

The DASH Vacancy Site is part of the [Region of Durham's website](http://www.durham.ca/dash) at www.durham.ca/dash. Applicants on the DASH wait list for an RGI or modified unit are able to log in to the site to view and express interest in vacancies with social housing providers and private landlords who offer rent supplement under agreement with the Region of Durham.

Applicants are restricted from seeing vacant units for which they are not eligible. Specifically:

- Applicants can only view vacancies within the allowable range of occupancy standards for their household size
- Only senior applicants can view vacancies mandated for seniors
- Only eligible modified unit applicants can view modified unit vacancies.

Housing providers report RGI and modified unit vacancies to DASH who then post these vacancies to the DASH Vacancies Site for seven days. At the completion of seven days, DASH selects the highest ranked applicant who expressed interest in the posted vacancy, and refers this applicant to the housing provider for offer.

Notice of Vacancy

Housing providers must notify DASH if they have a vacant RGI unit or modified unit that will be offered to an applicant on the DASH wait list. If the vacancy will be offered to a tenant/co-op member on the housing provider's internal transfer list, DASH does not need to be notified (see Internal Transfers below).

Housing providers should only notify DASH about a vacancy if they intend to contact the applicant at the completion of the seven day posting to view the unit (or a similar unit). If the unit (or a similar unit) is not ready to be viewed, or the housing provider is not otherwise prepared to engage with a prospective tenant/co-op member, the housing provider should wait to notify DASH of the vacancy.

For example:

1. A housing provider obtains vacant possession of a unit and finds that the previous tenant/co-op member has caused extensive damage that will require at least a month to repair. The housing provider is not prepared to show the unit until repairs have been completed.

The housing provider will not notify DASH about the vacancy until about seven days before the repairs are expected to be completed.

2. A housing provider has a vacancy and wants to paint the unit before the new tenant/co-op member moves in. This will probably take two weeks. The housing provider is prepared to show the unit to a prospective tenant/co-op before the painting is completed.

The housing provider should immediately notify DASH of the vacancy.

3. A tenant/co-op member gives the housing provider 60 day notice of move-out. The housing provider has informed the current tenant/co-op member

that they will be showing the unit to new prospective tenants/co-op members.

The housing provider should immediately notify DASH of the vacancy.

Housing providers should use the DASH Communication Tool (see Appendix A) to notify DASH of vacancies. Vacancies are recorded in the RGI and/or Modified Unit Vacancy section of the form. Housing providers should include sufficient information for DASH to accurately post the vacancy to the DASH Vacancies Site.

Housing providers are encouraged to include additional detailed information about the vacancy to help applicants make an informed choice about whether or not to express interest in the vacancy. For example, the housing provider may want to include information about:

- Parking availability and/or costs
- Balconies, patios, garages, basements
- Stairs or number of floors in the unit
- Type of flooring in the unit (e.g. carpeting) or new paint in the unit
- Sector support charges (co-op providers)
- Storage available at the housing property
- Location of the unit within the property (e.g. on first floor, end townhouse unit, facing street, etc.)
- Details about accessibility features in units that are not fully modified (e.g. grab bars, lowered cupboards).

If the vacancy is for a fully modified unit, the housing provider must provide details about the modifications in the unit. This will help applicants to determine if the modifications meet their needs before expressing interest in a vacancy, and allow DASH to refer the most suitable applicant for the vacancy.

Referrals and Outcomes

All RGI and modified unit vacancies reported to DASH are posted to the DASH site for seven days. After seven days, DASH selects the highest ranked applicant who expressed interest in the posted vacancy, and refers this applicant to the housing provider.

When DASH makes a referral, they will send the housing provider the Housing Provider Summary. The housing provider will contact the applicant directly, or

alternate contact if provided, to make an offer, and notify DASH of the outcome of the referral – normally within 72 hours. Outcomes may be:

- applicant accepted offer and will be moving into the unit
- applicant refuses or turns down the offer
- applicant is deemed to have refused the offer because they did not respond to reasonable requests to contact the housing provider
- housing provider denied the offer/refused to offer the unit to the applicant.

If the first applicant referred does not accept the offer, DASH will select the next highest ranked applicant who expressed interest in the posted vacancy, and refer this applicant to the housing provider. The provider must notify DASH of the outcome of this referral – normally within 72 hours.

Housing providers should use the DASH Communication Tool (see Appendix A) to notify DASH of the outcome of referrals. This information is recorded in the Referrals and Offers section of the form.

Denials/Refusals of Offers

Housing providers may deny/refuse to offer a unit to an applicant referred by DASH for the following reasons:

- the vacancy is for a seniors' unit and no one in the applicant's household is over the age of 60
- based on rental history, the housing provider reasonably believes that the applicant may not pay rent/housing charge on time or in full
- the applicant has been denied membership in the co-operative housing provider with the vacancy
- the vacancy is for shared accommodation and the housing provider believes that it is unreasonable for the applicant to reside in shared accommodation

When a housing provider denies/refuses to offer a unit to an applicant for any of the above reasons, it must:

- notify the applicant of the denial and the reasons for refusal
- provide the applicant with an opportunity to have the denial reviewed by the housing provider
- notify DASH of the denial and the reasons for the denial.

If the housing provider has previously denied/refused to offer to the same applicant for any of the above reasons, it only needs to notify DASH.

The housing provider may also deny/refuse to offer a unit to an applicant if:

- the size of the applicant's household does not fall within the allowable occupancy standards for the unit
- the vacancy is for an RGI unit, and the applicant is ineligible for RGI
- the vacancy is for a modified unit, and the applicant does not require the modifications available in the unit.

In these circumstances, the housing provider only needs to notify DASH of the reasons for the denial. DASH will notify the applicant and provide information about the right to request a Regional Review, as applicable.

Internal Transfers

Housing providers are permitted to offer a vacant RGI and/or modified unit to a current RGI and/or modified unit tenant or co-op member without recourse to the DASH wait list. This is called an internal transfer.

Housing providers are responsible for managing their own internal transfer wait lists. Housing providers do not need to notify DASH when they transfer an RGI and/or modified unit tenant or co-op member, unless they are also on the DASH waiting list or the housing provider is unsure if they are on the DASH wait list.

Housing providers are encouraged to have a policy, guideline or bylaw related to internal transfers. This will ensure transparency in their process. Housing providers must ensure that their internal transfer policies and procedures include that RGI and/or modified unit tenants or co-op members who are:

- overhoused have higher priority on the internal transfer wait list than other internal transfer requests
- eligible for SPP status have higher priority on the internal transfer wait list than other internal transfer requests, except those who are overhoused.

SPP status is determined by DASH. If a tenant or co-op member requests SPP status for an internal transfer, the file must be referred to DASH for assessment. The housing provider must advise DASH that the tenant is already residing in an RGI or modified unit and has requested an internal transfer only. DASH will notify the tenant/co-op member and the housing provider of the outcome of the SPP application.

In-situ Applicants

Market paying tenants and co-op members of housing providers can apply for RGI in their current unit directly with their housing provider. This is called an in-situ application.

Housing providers may offer RGI to an in-situ applicant, without recourse to the DASH wait list in approved circumstances as set out in Directive RGI 2017-01.

If a housing provider has more than one in-situ applicant, the housing provider must ensure that eligible in-situ applicants with SPP status are offered RGI before other in-situ applicants, and in-situ applicants are otherwise offered RGI chronologically according to the date of their application.

Communication with DASH

Housing providers must promptly advise DASH when they know of changes related to their tenants or co-op members who are also on the DASH wait list. This will ensure that all housing providers have as accurate information as possible at the time of offer.

Housing providers are required to promptly notify DASH of the following:

- offers of housing
- refusals to offer housing
- money owed for arrears, damages or misrepresentation
- court findings of misrepresentation or fraud in relation to the receipt of RGI
- changes to contact information, household composition or other information that may be required by other housing providers at the time of offer.

Housing providers are encouraged to use the DASH Communication Tool (see Appendix A) to communicate with DASH. The Tool is divided into four sections:

- RGI and or Modified Unit Vacancy section – to notify DASH of vacancies that will be posted to the DASH Vacancies site
- Referrals and Offers section – to notify DASH of the outcome of an offer to an applicant on the DASH wait list
- Transfer Applicant Changes section – to notify DASH of changes regarding a current RGI and/or modified unit tenant or co-op member who is on the DASH wait list for transfer
- Arrears section – to notify DASH of new or updated arrears incurred by former tenants or co-op members.

The DASH Communication Tool is available on the Region's website at www.durham.ca. Housing providers may send the completed Tool to DASH by email to housingservices@durham.ca, with subject line "DASH Vacancy."

Housing providers may also communicate with DASH via:

- telephone at 905-666-7711 or 1-800-372-1102
- email to housingservices@durham.ca, subject line "DASH Vacancy"
- mail to Housing Services, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby L1N 6A3, Attention: DASH
- Regional courier (where applicable) to Housing Services (DASH), 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Attention: DASH.

Effective Date

This Directive comes into effect on February 15, 2017.

Repealed Rules

This directive replaces:

- Directive 2011-01 Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) – Applicant Referrals for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) Vacancies
- Directive 2007-02 Communication with Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH)
- Directive 2006-02 Offers of RGI Units
- Directive 2004-02 Selection of RGI Households.

Legislative Authority

Housing Services Act, s.47-49, and s. 62-64
Ontario Regulation 367/11, s. 45-58, and s. 74-79

Appendix A – DASH Communication Tool

[DASH Communication Tool](#)