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## **Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB) – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

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### **What is the Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB)?**

The Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB) is a monthly benefit paid directly to you to help you pay your rent. Unlike rent-geared-to-income (RGI), you do not have to live in social housing to receive the benefit. You can use the benefit to help you pay your rent anywhere in Durham Region. There are a limited number of Durham PHBs available.

### **How much is the benefit and how does it compare to RGI?**

The Durham PHB is based on the difference between 30 per cent of your income (as determined from your most recent income tax return) and average market rent in Durham. You can use the benefit to live anywhere in Durham Region, including where you live now (unless you are already living in an RGI unit). You are not limited to a social housing unit.

RGI is based on 30 per cent of your income. You must move to get RGI because it is only available at certain properties. If you want to move to a different RGI unit, it could take several more years.

The best way to understand if the Durham PHB or RGI is better for you is to look at the amount of money you will have left after you pay your rent. For example:

If your income is \$1,500 per month and the average market rent is \$1,000, you will receive a PHB benefit of \$550.

- If your rent is \$800, you will have \$1,250 left after you pay your rent.
- If your rent is \$1,000, you will have \$1,050 left after you pay your rent.
- If your rent is \$1,200, you will have \$850 left after you pay your rent.
- If you choose to wait for RGI instead of the Durham PHB, you will pay RGI of \$450, which means you will have \$1,050 left after you pay your rent.

If you are receiving Ontario Works or ODSP, the total amount of your PHB and your shelter allowance from Ontario Works or ODSP cannot be more than your rent and utilities. The PHB will be reduced to adjust for this.

### **Will the Durham PHB affect my social assistance?**

If you are not already receiving the full shelter allowance from Ontario Works or ODSP, your social assistance will increase.

The combination of your shelter allowance and Durham PHB cannot be more than the cost of your rent and utilities. You may be asked to repay some of the social assistance if you do not tell us about changes to your shelter costs.

### **Do I have to file my income tax to get the benefit?**

Yes. You must file their income tax return by July 1 of each year to continue to be eligible for the benefit.

### **Do I have to move?**

You do not normally have to move to receive the PHB. You can use it to pay rent where you are living now as long as you reside in Durham Region.

If you do not live in Durham, you can apply for the Durham PHB but you will need to move to Durham Region to start receiving it. You will have 30 days to find an address in Durham.

If you live in an RGI unit, you will need to move out of the RGI unit before you can start receiving the Durham PHB. You will have 60 days to move out of the RGI unit.

### **Can I stay on the DASH wait list?**

No. You will be removed from the DASH wait list when you start to receive a Durham PHB.

### **How do I apply for the PHB?**

The Durham PHB will be posted to the DASH Vacancies Site as an option to RGI. Applicants on the wait list may express interest in receiving the benefit.

If you are selected for the benefit you will be contacted to complete a Durham PHB Application Form.