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Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit?

The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit is a benefit paid directly to you to help you pay your rent. You can use the benefit to help you pay your rent anywhere in Ontario. Unless you are receiving Ontario Works or ODSP, it is not based on the amount of rent that you pay. You will receive the same amount even if you move to a place with lower rent.

How much is the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit?

If you are not receiving social assistance – the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit pays you the difference between 30 per cent of your income and 80 per cent of the average market rent in the area where you live. It does not matter how much you pay for rent. You will continue to get the same benefit. The amount of your benefit will be reviewed every year.

If you are receiving Ontario Works or ODSP – the total amount of your Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit and your shelter allowance from Ontario Works or ODSP cannot be more than you pay for rent and utilities. Your Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit will not be more than the difference between 30 per cent of your income and 80 per cent of the average market rent in the area where you live. The amount of your benefit will be reviewed every year, as well as when you move and if your Ontario Works or ODSP ends.

Who is eligible for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit?

All applicants on the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) wait list are eligible to apply for the benefit. Priority for the benefit will be given to applicants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, people with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking, Indigenous people and seniors.

Tenants and co-op members in community housing who need assistance to pay their market rent or housing charge, and people who are receiving temporary subsidies that are ending, may also be eligible for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.

Homeowners and people who are already receiving rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or another form of housing assistance or subsidy (except for Ontario Works or ODSP shelter amounts) are not eligible for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.

How does the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit compare to rent-geared-to-income (RGI)?

Rent-geared-to-income (RGI) means that you pay a lower rent that is equal to about 30 per cent of your income. RGI is only offered at certain community housing properties, so you cannot get it where you live now. The wait times for an RGI unit are very long. Most applicants wait many years, and some have been on the wait list for decades.

Unlike RGI, the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit is a direct payment to you to help you pay your rent. You can use it to live anywhere in Ontario – including where you live now. If you are eligible to receive the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, you can start receiving it as early as the month following your application.

Do I have to move to get the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit?

No. You do not have to move to receive the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit. You can use it to live anywhere in Ontario, including where you live now.

Can I get first and last months' rent if I want to move?

Yes. If you are granted the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit and you want to move, you can apply to the Region of Durham for help with first and last month's rent.

How do I apply for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit?

You must be on the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) wait list to apply for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.

If you are on the DASH wait list, you can express interest in receiving the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit when you see it posted to the DASH Vacancies Site. DASH will contact you after you express interest to complete an application for the benefit and tell you what else you need to provide. Once you start to receive the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, you will be removed from the DASH wait list.

If you are not on the DASH wait list, you can find out more information about placement on the DASH wait list on the [Region of Durham's website](#).