

**Hastings County Community and Human Services
Housing Services
Administrative Policies and Procedures**

SUBJECT : Urgent Housing Crisis Policy		
APPROVED BY : Hastings County Council		
POLICY #: H.P. / L.H.C. 15		
ORIGINAL ISSUED	SUPERCEDES	CURRENT VERSION
November 2001	December 2013	November 2016

PURPOSE

To establish local priorities for households requesting rent geared-to-income housing.

SCOPE

This policy applies to *Housing Services Act, 2011*, Part VII Prescribed Housing Programs and the Hastings Local Housing Corporation.

REQUIREMENT

The province has established a “special priority” category for people who are victims of domestic violence. Being categorized as a “special priority” allows the household to be placed at the top of the waiting list for the next available rent geared-to-income unit. Service Managers may establish additional local priority rules. However, the provincial priority rules prevail over local priority rules. Local priorities may be set for groups that are disadvantaged by chronological waiting lists.

RESPONSIBILITY

In addition to the provincial “special priority” for victims of domestic violence, a local priority for those in an “Urgent Housing Crisis” has been established. Circumstances that may qualify a household for “Urgent Housing Crisis Status” are as follows:

- Acute, documented medical conditions making it physically impossible for a household to reside in their current housing due to a serious and immediate health risk. (Applicants must exhaust all options that might make it possible to safely remain housed in current accommodation)
- Homeless household where homeless is defined as not having anywhere to stay (living on the street or in a vehicle, for example), living in a shelter, or a situation where it is imminent that a household will become homeless or enter a shelter (the household has a Sheriff’s order to vacate their current accommodation, for example)
- Households where children have been removed from families solely due to their housing situation, or the removal of children for this purpose is imminent

- Market rent tenants currently residing with a social housing provider who have experienced a catastrophic life event that results in qualification for rent geared-to-income housing (death of a spouse which results in loss of income, for example)

Households requesting Urgent Housing Crisis Status may have to have their circumstances verified in writing by a third party. An acute medical condition requires verification by a medical doctor. Other circumstances resulting in an Urgent Housing Crisis may be verified by one of the following:

- A social worker
- A social service worker
- A shelter worker
- A law enforcement officer
- A fire prevention officer
- A doctor
- A lawyer
- A community health care worker
- A member of the clergy
- An individual in a managerial or administrative position with a housing provider

Households qualifying for Urgent Housing Crisis Status will be housed before households on the chronological waiting list but after households with “special priority” status.

Households qualifying for Urgent Housing Crisis Status will receive one offer of the first available suitable unit in the geographic area requested and deemed eligible for. If the offer is turned down, urgent status will be removed and the household will remain on the chronological waiting list, for which they would be eligible for two further offers.

Each case will be assessed on an individual basis.

REFERENCES

Housing Services Act, 2011
Ontario Regulation 367/11 s. 47, 52