
Housing Charge Subsidy

Purpose of the policy

- To set out members' rights and responsibilities for receiving housing charge assistance.
- To establish a framework for:
 - Managing and allocating the subsidy pool and subsidy surplus fund in a fair and consistent way in compliance with the CMHC operating agreement under Section 95 (56.1).
 - Monitoring and assessing the impact of any policy application on all member households and on the economic viability of the co-op, and
 - Planning for changes in subsidy and housing charges in response to household changes.

Policy

The process for members and the co-op

1. The co-op will verify household income and assess housing charges (income testing) once per year and when needed as households report changes in income or make new applications for assistance.
2. Households applying for annual assistance must complete the co-op's subsidy assistance application form and provide the required proof of household income. For example a form of proof of income is your Annual Notice of Assessment from Revenue Canada.
3. Households that do not submit an application form will be assessed the maximum housing charge for the unit.
4. The co-op may ask for further proof of income as required.



5. Management staff will:
 - verify that applicants qualify for assistance
 - calculate the amount required for each applicant
 - notify the applicant of the assessed housing charge, and
 - administer the subsidy waiting list.
6. After the annual income testing, the co-op will give 30 days' notice of the assessed housing charge.
7. The co-op may stop providing housing charge assistance to a household for any or all of the following reasons:
 - an increase in income disqualifies the household
 - failure to report increases in household income at the annual income testing
 - wilful falsification of the housing charge assistance application form or proof of income, and
 - failure to abide by the housing charge assistance policy.
8. Any member denied assistance or disputing the amount of assistance granted may first appeal the decision to the Finance Committee, and if not satisfied with the decision appeal to the Board. The decision of the board is final.

Planning and managing housing charge assistance

9. The co-op will use the annual income testing and an estimate of members' changing needs and demographics to develop annual and longer-term plans for:
 - use of housing charge assistance
 - ability to fill vacant units with members requiring assistance, and
 - possible ways to create more funds for the subsidy pool.
10. The co-op will monitor the subsidy status reports monthly. The finance committee will make recommendations to the board about the amount of funds available in the subsidy pool and subsidy surplus fund to be considered sufficient.



11. If there is not sufficient subsidy available, the co-op will consider changes to the housing charge assistance policy to limit use of the subsidy and/or to create more funds for the subsidy pool in accordance with the co-op rules and with 60 days notice.

Assessing housing charges

12. The co-op will use 30% of gross annual household income to calculate assessed housing charges. If there is not sufficient subsidy, this percentage may be changed with the approval at a general meeting.
13. Member households receiving social assistance or family benefits shall pay the shelter component of the assistance or family benefit with adjustments for utilities (refer to Schedule B of the CMHC operating agreement).

Changes in Income

14. Members must advise the co-op of any change in source of income or any increase in gross household income within **30** days of the increase. Members who fail to notify the co-op of an increase in gross household income will be responsible for repaying the co-op for extra subsidy received.
15. Members have the choice of advising the co-op of any decrease in gross household income so that their housing charge may be decreased, provided that there are sufficient funds in the subsidy pool.
16. The co-op will provide notice of any change in housing charge resulting from a change in income.

For an increase in housing charge: 30 days' notice, the time being calculated from the last day of the month in which the income increase occurred. For example, if a household's increase in income was in mid-September, the housing charge increase would take effect on November 1st.

For a decrease in housing charge: the decrease will take place on the first day of the month after the change is reported.

17. When households apply for assistance, the co-op will allocate assistance:



- Only if sufficient funds are available in the subsidy pool or subsidy surplus fund.
- On a first-come, first-served basis.

Subsidy waiting list

18. When there are not sufficient funds in the subsidy pool and households paying full housing charge apply for assistance, the co-op will establish a subsidy waiting list of members who are eligible for assistance.
19. Households on the subsidy waiting list will receive assistance when it comes available. Assistance will be given in the following order of priority:
 1. Households that comply with the over- and under-housing policy
 2. On a first-come, first-served basis.

Policy approved at Board meeting: June 24, 2008

