



Affordable Rental Housing - Eligibility and Income Verification Guide 2020

1.0 Introduction

To increase the supply of affordable rental housing, the City of Toronto enacted *By-law No. 1756-2019 to enact a new Municipal Housing Facility By-law* to establish a framework to assist affordable rental housing developers/operators. Under the terms of a municipal housing project facility agreement (the "Contribution Agreement") these housing providers receive financial contributions from the City including, capital funding and fees relief, that improve the financial viability of the affordable rental housing units.

The key aim of the City's affordable housing programs is to ensure that affordable units are allocated for the benefit of lower-income households. Under the terms of the By-law and the Contribution Agreement, the housing provider must confirm that each applicant's income is at or below an *initial income limit*, at the time of first occupancy. This means the applicant's household income must be at or below four times the annualized *monthly occupancy cost* for the housing unit. This *Affordable Rental Housing Eligibility and Income Verification Guide 2020* will assist housing providers to document and determine a household's eligibility and income (see Appendix 2 for a sample application form).

Housing providers must assess the income and eligibility of each new applicant household before the household moves into the building (at initial move-in and turnover). Income and eligibility must also be reviewed for tenants under the following conditions:

- Where transfers are permitted, the household is requesting transferring to a different unit
- The household is applying for rent with a different level of affordability (for example, rents are set at different rates including 100%, 80% and/or 60% of Average Market Rent) and this option is part of the housing provider's Access Plan

The housing provider must refuse to offer a unit to an applicant if the applicant's household income is greater than the initial income limit. The written refusal must be sent to the applicant, and the housing provider must keep a written record for seven years.

Some projects under affordable housing programs have units with a mandate, dedicated supportive housing, or accessible units for the disabled. This must be part of the approved Access Plan and include a separate verification process for determining eligibility for the mandate and/or supports. After completing this step, the requirements of this guide must be met.

2.0 Basic Eligibility Rules for Every Household

a. Verifying Status in Canada

The City's Contribution Agreement requires that all households applying for affordable housing must be eligible to be on the City centralized wait list.

The housing provider must confirm that every member of the household is either:

- A Canadian citizen
- A permanent resident of Canada or has applied for permanent resident status, or
- A refugee claimant or Convention refugee.

A household member is not eligible if a removal order has become enforceable against them.

See Appendix 4 for details on appropriate status in Canada documentation.

b. Occupancy Standards

When allocating units to households, the following occupancy standards must be met:

- A minimum of one and a maximum of two persons per bedroom; and
- A maximum of one bedroom for spouses

c. Other requirements

Applicants must:

- Not have arrears with a social housing provider or do have arrears with an active payment plan in good standing;
- Not own a home suitable for year-round occupation.

3.0 Determining a Household's Income

Housing providers must verify the income of applicants to ensure that their household income is below the initial income limit. To do this, each household must complete and sign a *Household Eligibility and Income Review Form - Appendix 2*.

Appendix 1 is available in Word format so that housing providers can customize the cover letter and Consent and Declaration form for their use.

Total household income is the total net income determined by the household members' net income amounts in their Notices of Assessment for the relevant taxation year. The net income amount of a household member will be reflected on line 236 of the member's notice of assessment. Income for a household member enrolled in full-time studies attendance at a recognized educational institution, is exempt from the total income calculation provided that proof of enrollment in full time studies is provided.

A housing provider may waive the obligation for a household member to provide a Notice of Assessment in extenuating circumstances (for example, serious and prolonged illness). An applicant request for an exemption must include appropriate documentation (such as a doctor's letter) that is placed in the applicant's file. Appendix 3 is provided to a household only after a request for an exemption has been made and approved.

4.0 Collecting and Keeping Information

Housing providers are responsible for the Personal Information they collect.

Housing providers must retain the financial and project records for each fiscal year for at least seven years.

Housing providers must keep files for households reviewed for this program. You must keep these files for at least seven years after the household moves out.

You must keep a written *record* of the decision to refuse to offer a unit to an applicant for seven years. The record must include:

- The decision;
- A copy of the notice given to the household, and;
- The facts used to make the decision.

For each household, housing providers must retain a file containing:

- The initial application form;
- the lease;
- A completed and signed Eligibility and Household Income Review Form - Appendix 1;
- Complete documents related to the verification of income; and
- Documents verifying the status in Canada of each household member.

5. Protecting Personal Information

Housing providers collect *Personal Information* to determine if a household is eligible for this program. They must follow the guidelines in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

When you ask for Personal Information, you must give the person a written notice that tells them why you need the information. You must also tell them that you may share it with the City of Toronto.

This notice must be in writing and include the name, title, business address, and phone number of a person that will respond to any questions or complaints about the collecting and keeping of Personal Information. You can only use Personal Information for the purpose stated in the notice.

Personal Information may be disclosed only if:

- The person the information is about consents to the release of the information, and ;
- An officer, employee, agent of the housing provider, such as a lawyer or auditor, needs the information to perform their duties.

People have the right to see the Personal Information about themselves unless;

- The information reveals something personal about another person;
- The information reveals something private about an organization, or;
- Giving out the information will put another person at risk.

If a person disagrees with the Personal Information in their file, they can ask the housing provider to correct it. Or they can add a written statement explaining why they disagree with the information.

Housing providers should control access to all Personal Information. Keep files in a cabinet that can be locked. Use passwords to protect Personal Information on computer systems. Do not send Personal Information by fax. Records should only be viewed by persons who need to see them to make decisions.

Housing provider should dispose of Personal Information by:

- Shredding or destroying the information, or

- Sending the records to a company that specializes in getting rid of confidential information.

Housing providers must make sure that directors, officers, employees, and agents are aware of their responsibilities for keeping Personal Information confidential. They must also assign an individual to make sure that confidential records are dealt with properly.

Appendix 1 Definitions

Access Plan

Access Plan means a policy established by the Housing Provider and approved by the City of Toronto's Director, Housing Stability Services, which specifies how tenants are to be selected and how information about such process is disseminated to the public.

Family Unit

A unit designated for a single parent or guardian or couple with at least one dependent child in the same household. A "dependent child" is a child:

- Under 22 years of age and not a spouse or common-law partner of a household member
- 22 years of age or older, have depended substantially on the financial support of the parent since before the age of 22 and be unable to support themselves financially due to a physical or mental condition

Household Income

Household income refers to the gross income of all persons living in a housing unit aged 16 or over.

Initial Income Limit

Household income (as indicated on Notice of Assessments) at move-in must be at or below four (4) times the annualized monthly occupancy costs for the housing unit.

Mandate

A mandate is a commitment on the part of a housing provider to house a particular client group. All mandates must be included in the project's Access Plan and comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990 (the Code). Examples of recognized mandates include:

- seniors
- survivors of domestic violence
- homeless or hard to house people (alternative housing)
- Indigenous people
- artists in live/work spaces and performing artists

Monthly Occupancy Costs

The monthly rent payable to the landlord of a housing unit, and the monthly charges for hydro, heat, water, and hot water that apply to that unit.

It does not include charges for parking, cable, telephone, or any other like charges.

Monthly Occupancy Costs must be set in accordance with the terms of the Contribution Agreement and the By-law:

- All Contribution Agreements will require that Monthly Occupancy Costs for each unit not exceed the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Average Market Rent (AMR) as published on the City's [web site](#).
- Each Contribution Agreement will also require that the average of all rents not exceed a percentage of the CMHC AMR. This percentage is typically 80% or 100%.

Personal information

Recorded information that identifies an individual and gives information such as:

- Their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or marital or family status,
- Their education, medical, criminal, or employment history,
- Their financial transactions,
- Any identifying number or symbol assigned to them,
- Their address, telephone number, fingerprints, or blood type,
- Confidential correspondence sent by the individual to an institution and any response to such correspondence, or
- The views or opinions of another individual about them.

This applies to any record of information however recorded whether in print, on film, or by electronic means.

Recognized educational institution means,

- (a) a school, as defined in the *Education Act*,
- (b) a university,
- (c) a college of applied arts and technology established under the *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002*,
- (d) a private career college, as defined in the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*, or
- (e) a private school, as defined in the *Education Act*, for which a notice of intention to operate has been submitted to the Ministry of Education in accordance with that Act;

Record

A record is information created or received by a housing provider related to a housing project, including, but not limited to, information related to an applicant, current and former households of the housing project. This information may be maintained or stored in printed, electronic, or other machine-readable format.

Senior Dedicated Unit(s)

To be eligible for a unit with a seniors mandate, a household must include at least one person who is 59 years of age or older.

Unit type

The number of bedrooms is the unit type.

Supportive Housing

Housing that includes services for people who need special help (for example, personal care, assistance with medication, case management) to live independently in the community.

Survivor of Domestic Violence Housing

Housing that includes units designated for survivors of domestic violence. This may include a partnership with a Violence Against Women (VAW) shelter or other VAW agencies.

Appendix 2 Eligibility and Household Income Review Form Template

[Print on letterhead]

Eligibility and Household Income Review

This is your income review package. You **must** fill it out and return it to *[who and where]* by *[date]*.

Here is what to do:

1. Have one person fill out this form for all members of your household.
2. Ensure **Status in Canada** documents are attached for all household members.
3. All members of the household 16 years of age or older **must**:
 - Report their income by submitting the most recent Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment (annual tax return);
 - Sign the *Consent and Declaration* form on the final page of this document.

This form will allow your housing provider to collect and share the personal information that they will need to verify your income.

Please ensure that you have:

- listed all members of the household
 - provided the correct documents
3. Return this form and all the documents to *[who and where, same as above]* by *[date, same as above]*.

If you have any questions or need help filling out this form,
please call *[name]* at *[phone number]*.

Household Information

A. Applicant Information (this will be the main contact for the household)

Applicant

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth (YYYY, MM, DD): _____

Telephone No.: _____ Alternative Telephone No.: _____

Current address

Unit/apt/suite: _____ Street Number and Name: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Unit Type applied for: Bachelor 1 bdrm 2 bdrm 3 bdrm 4 bdrm

Barrier-free needed Yes No If yes, Medical Verification form must be provided

List all members of your household – Include everyone who would live in your unit. Start with yourself.

	Last Name	First Name	Relationship to you (Spouse, child, etc.)	Date of Birth: Day/Mo/Year	Status in Canada: Canadian Citizen Permanent Resident Convention Refugee or Refugee Claimant
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

B. Program Requirements

You may be eligible for the affordable housing program if you meet the following requirements:

- Have legal status in Canada;
- Do not have arrears with a social housing provider or do have arrears with an active payment plan in good standing;
- Do not own a home suitable for year round occupation; and
- Have a household income that is below the Household Income Limits (combined income not more than 4 times that annualized rent (4 x monthly rent x 12 months))

Do you meet ALL these requirements? Yes No

C. Verification from Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment – Line 236

Each member of the household 16 years of age or older **must** provide their *Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment* (CRA NOA) from the prior calendar year.

- If this document is provided, no other income verification documents are required.

	Last Name	First Name	CRA Tax Year	Line 236
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Consent and Declaration

Please have all household members who are 16 years and older sign this form.

I confirm that all the information given about me in this form is true and complete.

I agree to allow **[fill in housing provider name]** to make inquiries to verify the information given about me in this Household Income Review. I permit any person, corporation, or social agency to release any required information to **[housing provider name]**.

I understand that the housing provider does not have to notify me before giving information on this form, or in any attached documents, to the City of Toronto or to any government or organization with whom the City of Toronto has an agreement.

I understand that any information on this form or in any attached documents will only be given in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and associated regulations.

Signature of household member 1

Date

Signature of household member 2

Date

Signature of household member 3

Date

If you have any questions or concerns about the collecting and sharing of this information, please call **[name and title]** at **[phone number]**.

Appendix 3 Income Documentation – Extenuating circumstances

If you have requested and have been approved for an exemption to providing a Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment for yourself or a household member, you must report all income, benefits, and gains of every kind and from every source, including foreign sources. The following list identifies most sources of income and assets as well as the documents that you will need for proof. However, this is not a complete list. Attach the applicable documentation to the Eligibility and Household Income Review Form.

Income	Proof required
<p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal • Overtime, shift premiums and vacation pay • Commissions, tips, bonuses • Illness and disability pay • Employment Insurance (EI) payments • Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) short-term payments • Strike pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter from employer or agency indicating gross income or average earnings and length of employment. This letter must be signed and on letterhead. It must include the name and phone number of a person to contact for verification, <li style="text-align: center;">or • Pay stubs or a copy of pay cheques for at least 2 months. They must include the employer’s name and address and show which pay periods are covered.
<p>Self-employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring • Babysitting / child care • Taxi • Business • Other 	<p>Business licence holders should report whether or not they have received business income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If self-employed less than one year, a financial statement every 3 months. This statement does not have to be audited. • If self-employed <i>over one year</i>, financial statements prepared by a public accountant, or an income tax return and notice of assessment from the previous year
<p>Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank, trust or credit union accounts investments (stocks, bonds, shares, securities) • Guaranteed Income Certificates (GICs) • RRIFs and annuities • Savings Plan • Real estate (house, land, cottage) • Cash surrender value of life insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of bank passbooks for the last 2 months • T5 and T3s or investment statements or cheque stubs • A copy of a real estate appraisal • A copy of the policy or a letter from insurer stating cash surrender value

<p>Pensions or Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Age Security (OAS) • Canada Pension Plan (CPP) or Québec Pension Plan (QPP) • Guaranteed Income Support (GIS) or Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) • Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) long-term disability • Pensions: retirement pensions, other country • Spousal support, child support, separation payments received • War Veteran’s Allowance, war reparations • Sponsorship agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheque stubs or copy of cheque, or • Copy of pass book entries for previous 3 months or monthly bank statements if direct bank deposit, or • Letter from government agency issuing payment • Statement from Citizenship and Immigration Canada • Statement from government agency issuing payment
<p>Social Assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Works (OW) • Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Assistance

Appendix 4 Acceptable Proof of Legal Status in Canada

Any one of the following documents may be used as proof of status in Canada when applying for affordable housing. Canadian Status documentation must be provided for all members of the household included in the application.

- Canadian Birth Certificate or documentation from Office of the Registrar General regarding application for replacement of a Canadian Birth Certificate
- Canadian Notice of Birth Registration Card
- A Statement of Live Birth for children age four (4) or under
- A certified copy of Statement of Live Birth
- Quebec and Newfoundland Baptismal Certificate
- Registered Indian Band Status (Native)
- Canadian Passport
- Canadian Citizenship Card or documentation from Citizenship and Immigration Canada regarding application for replacement of a Citizenship Card, or acknowledging application for Canadian Citizenship
- Canadian National Defence Card
- Permanent Resident Card
- Canadian Citizenship Certificate
- Permanent Resident Document or documentation from Citizenship and Immigration Canada acknowledging application for permanent status in Canada, i.e., on-line application confirming application accepted and being processed
- Landed Immigrant Status documents including date of landing
- Immigration documents indicating Convention Refugee, Protected Person Status or Refugee Claimants such as acknowledgement of Convention Refugee Claim, Eligibility Certificate, Notice to Appear, or Notice of Decision

A completed and signed form from a representative of a registered ID clinic confirming that the client applied for proof or replacement of the following:

- Record of Landing
- Birth Certificate
- Statement of Live Birth for children under the age of 4

A support letter from a representative of an agency or legal clinic confirming that the client applied for permanent status in Canada must be accompanied by:

- copy of cheque or money order payable to Immigration Canada with proof of receipt by Immigration Canada (such as cancelled cheque)
- copy of an online application with Immigration Canada (must include confirmation of receipt)