



Program Instructions

This Program Instruction applies to the following:

- ✓ Tony Wong Place, Mount Albert United Church Senior Citizen Foundation, Hesperus Fellowship Village, Reena, Larry Tod Place
- ✓ **Housing York**
 - ✓ Mackenzie Green, Lakeside Residence, Woodbridge Lane

ADMINISTERING REGIONAL RENT ASSISTANCE DURING THE 2021 PROVINCIAL RENT FREEZE

Effective Date: Immediately

Summary

This Program Instruction provides direction for housing providers with Rent Assistance agreements on administering the program during the 2021 rent freeze. The Government of Ontario has frozen most residential rents for the period of January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021, including rents and housing charges paid by households receiving rent-geared-to-income. For consistency, York Region is also implementing the rent freeze for tenants receiving a rent benefit through the Regional Rent Assistance Program.

Background

On October 1, 2020, the Government of Ontario enacted the *Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act, 2020*, amending sections of the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006* (RTA) to freeze rents at 2020 levels for most residential tenancies, prohibiting landlords from increasing rents between January 1 and December 31, 2021. The 2021 rent increase guideline has been set to 0%, freezing rents, despite the guideline amount previously published in *The Ontario Gazette*. On December 2, 2020, the province amended regulations under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* to clarify application of the rent freeze to rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance.

Community and Health Services

Housing Services

1-877-464-9675

TTY 1-866-512-6228

york.ca

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white star with a trail above the text "York Region" in a white serif font, all set against a green and teal background.

Although the amended regulations do not apply to the Regional Rent Assistance program as it is not governed by the *Housing Services Act*, 2011, York Region will implement the rent freeze for this program to maintain equity and consistency for community housing residents. Housing providers with Rent Assistance agreements should also refer to Program Instruction 2020-08: Implementing the 2021 Provincial Rent Freeze for Current Market Rent Tenants in AHP/IAH-Funded Communities for further information on how the provincial rent freeze will impact market rents for their buildings in 2021.

Action Required

No tenant receiving a rent benefit under the Regional Rent Assistance program will experience an increase in their Tenant Contribution as a result of an increase in their income in the 2021 calendar year. Any calculated rent increase that results from an annual or in-year review that would otherwise take effect in 2021 will be effective January 1, 2022.

Rent Assistance providers continue to be required to follow all the other requirements of their Rent Assistance Agreements, including completing annual reviews and, where required under specific circumstances, in-year reviews as outlined below.

ANNUAL REVIEWS

Complete annual reviews for Rent Assistance recipients following the standard processes and timeframe set out in the [Regional Rent Assistance Guide](#), section 6.

1. If the results of the review indicate that the household's Tenant Contribution will increase as a result of a change in household income or composition, the household will begin to pay the higher amount on January 1, 2022.
2. If the results of the review indicate that the household's income has decreased and their Tenant Contribution should be reduced as a result, the reduced contribution will take effect October 1, 2021.

IN-YEAR REVIEWS

Under the Rent Assistance Program rules, households are only required to report in-year changes if an adult joins the household. They may also request that their rent benefit be re-calculated as a result of a significant decrease in total household income (20% or more) or if an adult permanently leaves the household (other than an adult child in full-time school).

If a household reports an in-year change as a result of an adult joining the household or a decrease in income, complete an in-year review following the standard process and timeframes set out in the [Regional Rent Assistance Guide](#), section 6.8.

1. If there is an increase in the Tenant Contribution that would otherwise take effect in the 2021 calendar year, the household will begin to pay the higher amount on January 1, 2022.
2. If the Tenant Contribution will decrease, the household will begin to pay the lower amount on the first day of the month after the review is completed, e.g. if the review is completed in January, the household will begin to pay the lower amount on February 1.

INELIGIBILITY RESULTING FROM ANNUAL OR IN-YEAR REVIEWS

During the annual review, housing providers may determine a household is ineligible for a rent benefit under the Regional Rent Assistance Program if they meet any of the conditions outlined in the [Regional Rent Assistance Guide](#), Section 5.5. The housing provider must provide the with written notice that they are no longer eligible for a rent benefit and will be required to pay the Market Rent:

1. If the household is required to enter into a new lease: their rent can increase to the Market Rent in 2021 after a 60-day notice period.
2. If there is no change to the existing lease agreement as a result of ineligibility for Rent Assistance: the tenant will begin to pay the Market Rent for the unit as of January 1, 2022.

TRANSFERS

Households that transfer to another unit are not subject to the rent freeze and can have their rent increased. For example, a household determined to be overhoused transferring from a two-bedroom unit to a one-bedroom unit should be required to sign a new lease and are therefore not subject to the rent freeze.

Authority: Rent Assistance Agreement

Please contact your Program Coordinator with any questions.

This notice will be available in an accessible format or with communication supports upon request from 1-877-464-9675 or 905-830-4444 ext. 72119.

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