

Program Instructions



N° 2007-07

Please note if your program is not checked, this Program Instruction is not applicable to your project(s)

- Public Housing
- Provincial Reform Housing Programs
- Municipal Non-Profit Housing Programs
- Federal Unilateral Housing Programs
- Rent Supplement - Commercial
- Rent Supplement - OCHAP & CSHP
- Rent Supplement Homelessness

Subject	Reporting Former Tenant /Member Arrears
Effective Date	Immediately
Authority	O. Reg. 298/01, Section 7
What's New?	<p>A Province-wide Arrears Database has been established to allow Access Centres across the province to verify applicant eligibility by checking for former tenant/member arrears. It will also help housing providers to collect arrears from households who re-apply for RGI assistance.</p> <p>To ensure that records are accurate, housing providers will need to report tenant/member arrears as soon as the household has vacated the unit. It is also necessary for housing providers to report when former tenants/members enter into repayment agreements and if/when they cease honouring the agreements. A Former Tenant/Member Arrears Form is attached for your use.</p>
Background	<p>One of the procedures for determining eligibility for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance is screening for former tenant/member arrears. The legislation states that a household is not eligible for RGI assistance if any member of the household owes money to a former social housing landlord for rental arrears or damages, or owes money to a service manager as a result of an overpaid subsidy. Despite the arrears or money owing, a household can be added to the waiting list, if the service manager is satisfied that extenuating circumstances exist or that the household has entered into a repayment agreement with the housing provider and the service manager is satisfied that the household is making or intends to make reasonable efforts to repay the money owed.</p> <p>In the past, the Housing Access Unit (HAU) checked for former tenant/member arrears by sending requests for tenancy reports to housing providers only if the applicants disclosed the fact that they previously lived in social housing. In order to overcome the issue of having to rely on the household's co-operation to provide the names of former housing landlords, a province-wide database has been created. Each service manager will upload arrears stored in their local systems (York Region uses YARDI Voyager) to the province-wide database. The arrears information is obtained from housing providers.</p>

What You Need To Do

1. When a household moves out owing any arrears (including damages and overpaid subsidies), notify the Housing Access Unit (HAU) using the *Former Tenant/Member Arrears Form. This form should be submitted within 30 days of the move-out. If you discover after the 30 day period that the arrears amount needs to be adjusted (e.g. damages were higher than reported), report the change right away.
2. When you enter into a repayment agreement with a former tenant/member, advise the HAU. There is a section in the Former Tenant/Member Arrears Form that addresses repayment agreements.
3. If a household ceases to honour their repayment agreement or pays the debt in full, notify the HAU.
4. Before offering a unit to an RGI applicant, check the YARDI memo notes to determine if the household is in arrears or to check the status of any repayment schedule. You can also contact the HAU if you have any questions.

* You can get the form from the York Region Website: www.york.ca, in the Information for Housing Providers Section, under Forms. You can complete it in Word format and e-mail to yvonne-farrell-stinson@york.ca or download and fax to the HAU at 905-830-5023.

What the HAU Will Do

- Check the province-wide database for each RGI applicant household at the time of application and at the time of annual updates to determine if there are arrears owing.
- Inform the household that they are not eligible for the waiting list if they owe arrears and that they must contact the housing provider to pay the debt in full or to enter into a repayment agreement with the housing provider.
- Add the household to the waiting list if they provide proof that the arrears have been paid or if they submit a copy of the repayment agreement signed by themselves and the housing provider.
- Advise a household that fails to honour their repayment agreement that they are no longer eligible to be on the waiting list and advise them of their right to an Internal Review of the decision.
- Enter the arrears data received from housing providers into YARDI and upload the information monthly to the province-wide database.

Please contact your Program Co-ordinator if you have any questions.

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