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February 14, 2020

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk  
Niagara Region  
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way  
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their February 14, 2020 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors received the following information as attached in the report NRH 4-2020:

***That Regulation Changes – Communications Plan and Flyer that will be used as the initial communications tool to summarize the new rules be FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee for information.***

Also included is a draft letter that will be sent to all applicants on the waiting list.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Walter Sendzik", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Walter Sendzik  
Chair

**Niagara Regional Housing**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** March 10, 2020

**To:** Niagara Region Public Health and Social Services Committee

**From:** Donna Woiceshyn, CEO, Niagara Regional Housing

**Subject:** Regulation Changes – Housing Services Act

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Councillors should be aware of changes that will be affecting applicants and tenants due to changes in regulations under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. Through these legislative changes, the Province is seeking to “improve waiting lists, create safer communities and simplify Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) rules”.<sup>1</sup>

The following is an overview of the new regulations:

1. Rent Calculations – Rent calculations will become annual based on 30% of net household income. Currently, rent is recalculated whenever there is a change in income and is based on gross household income. Other changes include the exemption of full-time students from rent calculations. **NRH will implement this change effective July 1, 2021.**
2. Refusal of Offers –Households will have to accept the first unit they are offered. Currently, applicants can refuse two offers from their own choices from the building selection list. The amendment allows Service Managers to determine that a household remain eligible if there are extenuating circumstances. **This change will be effective July 1, 2020.**
3. Previous Convictions – Housing providers are now able to refuse to re-house households if there has been a previous eviction due to illegal activity and they have reasonable grounds to believe the household would pose a risk to others in the community. Currently, housing providers can only refuse to re-house if there is the offence was related to their Rent-Geared-to-Income subsidy. **The Province made this change effective immediately on September 23, 2019.**
4. Transfers – Service Managers now have the ability to determine how to manage transfers. Currently, transfers are not permitted between housing providers. **NRH has decided to maintain this practice.**

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<sup>1</sup> MMAH Briefing, Oct. 16, 2019

In order to ensure applicants and tenants are aware of and understand these changes, NRH is mailing all applicants the attached letter and will include relevant information in future communications. The full Communications Plan for the regulation changes is included in the NRH Board Report 20-187-3.5

Date

Applicant Name

Address

Address

**Important Changes to Your Application for Housing  
- Please read the information below carefully -**

As of July 1, 2020, there will be new rules under the Housing Services Act, 2011 that will affect your application on the Centralized Waiting List for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing.

**New Rules**

Starting July 1, 2020, you will receive one (1) RGI housing offer. If you refuse the one(1) offer, your application will be cancelled and your file will be closed. Since this is a new rule, any housing offers you refused before July 1, 2020 will not count towards your one (1) offer.

When you choose the locations where you want to live, you must select units that have the appropriate number of bedrooms for your household. If you do not make the selections yourself, NRH will add **all** housing communities with appropriate size units to your application.

**Keep Your Application Up to Date**

Please remember that you must keep the information on your application up to date. This includes:

- Your contact information (address, telephone number, email address)
- An alternate contact if you are unable to be contacted directly
- Your housing choices (the locations where you want to live)
- Any special requirements
- Your email address, if you have one (housing offers can be made through email)

When you receive a housing offer, you will have two (2) business days to respond to the offer. If you cannot be reached at your own phone number, please provide another number where we can reach you.

**Review Current Housing Choices on Your Application**

Since you will receive only one housing offer after July 1, 2020, it is important to review the housing choices you made on your application. If you do not make any changes to your housing application, the current communities that you selected will be used.

If you have any questions or need help with your application for housing, please call your Eligibility Assessment Representative at 905-682-9201.

Sincerely,

Housing Access Centre  
Niagara Regional Housing

**Please call 905-682-9201 if you need this information in a different format  
or translated into another language.**

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** February 14, 2020

**To:** Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors

**From:** Wendy Thompson, Manager Community Resource Unit

**Subject:** Regulation Changes – Communications Plan and flyer for initial communications

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Further to *Memo 19-185-2.7* regarding amendments to regulations under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, please see the attached (1) Communications Plan and (2) flyer that will be used as the initial communications tool to summarize the new rules.

**Flyer Audience:**

- NRH staff
- NRH Board of Directors
- Applicants
- Tenants
- Housing Providers
- Partners

**Flyer Distribution:**

- NRH will do a mass mail out to tenants and also include the flyer when the Housing Herald newsletters and Income Declaration packages are delivered
- The NRH Translation Document will be sent to tenants with the flyer to ensure those who do not speak English know it is important information that they need to have translated
- The flyer will also be posted on the NRH website and in the front reception area
- Partners and housing providers will receive the flyer by email

As we proceed, staff will continue to update the Communications Plan and bring relevant information with respect to communications and policy changes to the Board as necessary.

**Attached:** Communication Plan for Changes to HSA regulations  
Flyer - *Regulation Changes IMPORTANT!*

## HSA Regulation Changes - NRH Communications Plan

**Notes:**

- website to be updated on an ongoing basis

- ALL Audiences to receive "IMPORTANT!" flyer right away via mail or email (\*include transfer info for staff/providers)

Area of Change	Regulation Change(s)	NRH Effective Date	Audience	Communications	Communication Dates
Community Safety (previous convictions)	Amendment to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the Housing Services Act, 2011 that allows housing providers to refuse to offer a unit to a household based on a previous eviction for serious illegal activity.	23-Sep-19	Tenants	Income Declaration packages	Mailed on 25th of each month
				Housing Herald	Spring/summer version
			Staff	NRH Today	February 2020
			Providers	Send Notice after policy updates	TBD
			Board	Memos w/ updates	As necessary
				Final approval of policies (local rules)	TBD
			PAC/TAC	Put on meeting agendas	*waiting for 2020 meeting dates
			Partners	Email	
Transfers <i>NOTE: NRH is not changing how transfers are handled</i>	Amendment to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the Housing Services Act, 2011 related to tenant transfers between different housing providers in the same Service Manager service area.	01-Jan-20	Staff	NRH Today	February 2020
			Providers	Send Notice after policy update	TBD
			Board	Memos w/ updates	As necessary
				Final approval of policies (local rules)	TBD
Refusal of Offers, Selections and Overhoused	Amendments to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the Housing Services Act, 2011 including a new provincial eligibility rule on refusal of offers, rules on household preferences for a housing project and changes to a Service Manager’s authority to make a local rule where a household ceases to meet occupancy standards.	01-Jul-20	Applicants	Letter to all applicants	February 2020
				Posters in front reception/OW offices/211	May 2020
			Tenants	Income Declaration packages	Mailed on 25th of each month
				Housing Herald	Spring/summer version
			Staff	NRH Today	February 2020
			Providers	Send Notice after policy update	TBD
			Board	Memos w/ updates	As necessary
				Final approval of policies (local rules)	TBD
			PAC/TAC	Put on meeting agendas	*waiting for 2020 meeting dates
	Partners	Email			

COM-C 6-2020  
**HSA Regulation Changes - NRH Communications Plan**

NRH 4-2020  
 20-187-3.5.ATT1  
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Area of Change	Regulation Change(s)	NRH Effective Date	Audience	Communications	Communication Dates
RGI calculations	Ontario Regulation 298/01 replaced with new Ontario Regulation 316/19 “Determination of Geared-to-Income Rent under Section 50 of the Act” under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA) to simplify the calculation of Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance. Amendments to Ontario Regulation 367/11 “General” under the HSA to support RGI simplification.	01-Jul-21	Tenants	Income Declaration packages	Mailed on 25th of each month
				Housing Herald	Spring/summer version
			Staff	NRH Today	February 2020
			Providers	Send Notice after policy update	TBD
			Board	Memos w/ updates	As necessary
				Final approval of policies (local rules)	TBD
			PAC/TAC	Put on meeting agendas	*waiting for 2020 meeting dates
			Partners	Email	



# IMPORTANT!



## Rules are changing...

Subject	NEW Rule	When?	Who does this affect and how?
<b>Rent Calculations</b>	Rent calculations will be annual based on 30% of net household income, determined by your Notice of Assessment.	July 1, 2021	<b>Applies to tenants</b>
			Every year with your Annual Income Declaration package, you must provide NRH with your Notice of Assessment (from your completed taxes).  If your income decreases, you may request one in-year review. Your rent will only change if your income has decreased 20% or more.
<b>Community Safety</b>	A household may be denied a unit if a member of the household was previously evicted for illegal activity (within the last five years).	September 23, 2019	<b>Applies to tenants &amp; applicants</b>
			You will not be affected if you have not been evicted for illegal activity.
<b>Refusal of Offer</b>	Applicants on the Centralized Waiting List will only receive one (1) offer of Rent-Geared-to-Income housing.	July 1, 2020	<b>Applies to applicants</b>
			Beginning July 1, 2020, you must accept the one (1) offer of Rent-Geared-to-Income housing you receive or your application on the waiting list will be cancelled and your file will be closed.  <b>**please review the housing preferences you chose on your application.</b>



If you have questions, please call 905-682-9201 or check [nrh.ca](http://nrh.ca)