



CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST PROCEDURES MANUAL

St. Thomas and Elgin County



Procedures for the processing of rent-geared-to-income applications

(per Housing Services Act 2011 and Regulation 367/11 Part VI)

Updated June 2012

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Where can households apply for RGI assistance?

Through a delegation agreement with the City of St. Thomas, Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation manages the Centralized Waiting List system at:

Elgin-St. Thomas Housing Applications Centre
c/o Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation
9 Princess Ave., Unit 5
St. Thomas, ON
N5R 3V3
Telephone: (519) 631-4580 or toll-free 1-800-324-4474
Fax: (519) 633-8035

Management of the waiting list system includes receiving applications for rent-geared-to-income assistance, determining eligibility for assistance, notifying applicants as required, ranking applicants on the waiting lists, ensuring that waiting lists are accurate and up-to-date, and interacting with housing providers using the waiting lists. Duties and responsibilities of the Housing Applications Centre are outlined in the Centralized Waiting List Agreement between the City of St. Thomas and Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation.

Which Housing Providers are required to participate in the Centralized Waiting List system? –

HSA section 39, Reg. 367/11 sec. 18

The following prescribed Housing Providers are required to participate in the Centralized Waiting List system:

1. Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation
2. EFBC Non-Profit Housing Corporation
3. Meadowdale Community Housing Co-operative
4. Pinafore Station Co-operative Homes
5. Elmview Estates Housing Co-operative
6. Troy Village Co-operative Housing
7. Kiwanis Non-Profit Homes of Rodney
8. Dutton & District Lions Non-Profit Housing
9. Menno Lodge of Aylmer
10. Port Burwell Family Residences
11. Port Burwell Non-Profit Housing Corporation

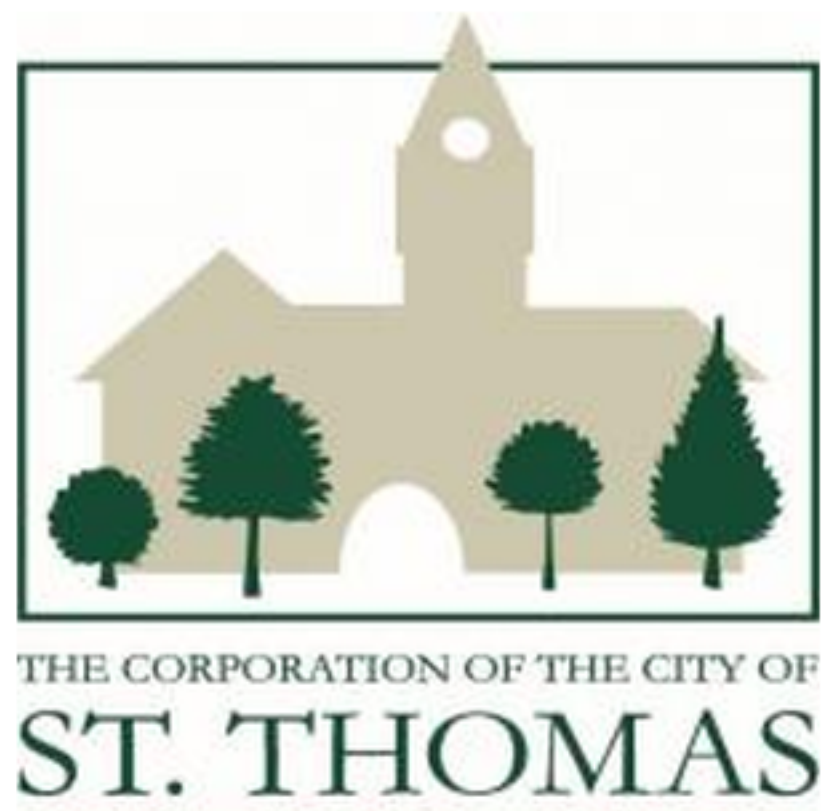
Other Housing Providers operating former federal projects or municipal non-profit programs may choose to participate, however participation is not mandatory.

Where can households obtain application forms?

Application forms are available either directly from the Housing Applications Centre, from Housing Providers, at the Ontario Works office, at various public offices throughout the City and County, and on the City of St. Thomas website under “social housing”.

Applicants may:

1. forward fully-completed and signed application forms, with copies of required documentation, directly to the Housing Applications Centre, or
2. complete the form with the assistance of a local Housing Provider and forward application package to the Housing Applications Centre, or
3. visit the Housing Applications Centre in person to apply for RGI housing, or



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4. complete the form with the assistance of staff at the Ontario Works office and forward application package to the Housing Applications Centre.

What happens when applications are received?

The Housing Applications Centre will

- ✓ date-stamp the front page of the application on the day it is received
- ✓ review the application for completeness, signatures, and submission of required documentation
- ✓ assess basic eligibility of applicant
- ✓ verify applicant eligibility for mandated housing projects
- ✓ obtain information and documentation from third parties, where necessary (for example, from the provincial arrears database)
- ✓ determine appropriate category of applicant (i.e. Special Priority or Special Needs Housing)
- ✓ rank households as per priority rules
- ✓ determine or verify applicant's choice of acceptable unit size and type for household
- ✓ estimate RGI rent using quick method (30% of gross household income)
- ✓ enter information into Yardi

Note: The Housing Applications Centre will not conduct landlord reference checks. It is a Housing Provider's responsibility to perform this step to determine if there are any grounds for refusing to offer accommodation to an applicant, for example a poor record of paying rent. (See "Housing Providers' Rights of Refusal" section in the *"Applicant Selection Procedures Manual"*.)

What happens if an applicant does not specify a preferred unit size?

A household may indicate a preference either for,

- ✓ all sizes of units permissible under local RGI Occupancy Standards, or
- ✓ the largest of the units permissible under local RGI Occupancy Standards.

If a household does not indicate any preference for a size of housing unit, it shall be deemed to have indicated a preference for the largest unit permissible under local RGI Occupancy Standards.

What happens if an applicant does not specify a preferred housing project?

A household may indicate a preference for all the housing projects in a geographic area by indicating a preference for that geographic area.

If a household does not indicate any preference for a housing project, it shall be deemed to have indicated a preference for all the housing projects in the service area.

What are "mandated" housing projects?

In the St. Thomas/Elgin area, two housing projects are mandated to provide housing for specific client groups. The projects are:

1. Caledonia Gardens, c/o Dutton and District Lions Non-Profit Housing Corporation
2. Kiwanis Seniors Apartments, c/o Kiwanis Non-Profit Homes of Rodney



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Both projects have “seniors’ mandates”, which means the housing providers may restrict tenancy to applicants who are aged 65 or older.

What happens if an applicant’s income is too high for RGI assistance?

If 30% of the applicant household’s gross income is equal to or greater than the market rent for the applicant’s preferred housing project, the applicant will be referred to that provider for inclusion on the provider’s market waiting list. Only RGI applicants will be included on the Centralized Waiting List. See Appendix 3 “RGI ineligibility letter”.

What is “Special Needs Housing”?

Special Needs Housing refers to units that have:

1. Accessibility modifications, or
2. In house provincially-funded support services provided by an outside agency to permit tenants or members to live independently in the community.

For most housing providers, Special Needs units may be filled by either rent-geared-to-income households or market households.

RGI applicants on a Housing Provider’s Special Needs Waiting Lists must be processed through the Housing Applications Centre to assess RGI eligibility. The Special Needs Housing Administrator must refer Special Needs applications to the Housing Applications Centre for RGI eligibility determination. Special Needs applicants will be placed on the Centralized Waiting List and identified as requiring a modified or supported unit, however the selection of Special Needs households for vacant units will be determined by the Special Needs Administrator.

For more information, refer to *“Special Needs Housing - Policy & Procedures”*.

What written notice should be sent to eligible RGI applicants?

The Housing Applications Centre will provide written notice (see appendix 1) to eligible applicants within fourteen calendar days after receiving the application, stating that the applicant has been approved for subsidized housing and has been added to the waiting list(s) for the project(s) listed. The letter must include information on the applicant’s right to request a review of the approved unit size or priority category.

What happens when an applicant wishes to appeal the unit size or priority category?

Refer to the *“Review Panel – Policy & Procedures”*.

What written notice should be sent to households when applications are incomplete?

If the application is not complete, the Housing Applications Centre is not required to make any decisions about an application until all the required information/documentation is received.

An Incomplete Letter (see appendix 2) will be mailed to the applicant within fourteen calendar days after receiving the application.

An applicant is allowed thirty calendar days from the date of the letter to submit the missing information. If information is not received by the deadline, the application will be filed as “incomplete”. An “ineligibility letter” (Appendix 3) is sent to the applicant.



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A six-month window is allowed for the submission of missing information using the original application date. After six months, the application is cancelled and the applicant must complete a new application form with a new application date.

Due to the large number of applicants from the Mennonite community who are unable to understand or read English, applicants who are low-German-speaking will be referred to the Aylmer Resource Centre and/or Menno Lodge of Aylmer for assistance with completing the application form. Notices of missing information should be copied to the Administrator of Menno Lodge. Menno Lodge staff may fax the missing information to the Housing Applications Centre on behalf of the applicant.

What written notification should be sent to ineligible RGI applicants?

Applicants found to be ineligible for subsidized housing will be sent an Ineligibility Letter (see appendix 3) within fourteen calendar days of receipt of the application. Reasons for ineligibility must be indicated in the letter. The letter must include information about the applicant's right to appeal the decision of ineligibility.

What happens when an applicant requests a review of a decision by the Housing Applications Centre?

Applicants deemed ineligible have the right to appeal the decision to the RGI Review Panel by completing the form on the back of the Ineligibility Letter and submitting it within 10 business days of receiving the letter.

If a request for a review (for decisions other than refusals to offer housing) is received in writing by the Housing Applications Centre, the request should be immediately forwarded to the Housing Services Administrator.

Refer to the "[Review Panel – Policy & Procedures](#)".

When are applicants removed from the waiting lists?

A household shall be removed from the Central Waiting List if

- it requests to be removed, or
- it ceases to be eligible for RGI assistance, or
- the household has accepted an offer of rent-geared-to-income assistance in St. Thomas or Elgin.

Can an applicant ask to be temporarily removed from the waiting list?

An applicant may request in writing to be recorded as "pending" for up to twelve months, in which case the applicant will be removed from the waiting list(s) and will not be offered housing.

"Pending" status may be requested by the applicant at any time, even if the applicant has already refused one or two offers of housing.

The household shall be reinstated on the waiting list, ranked by the date the household first applied, if

- ✓ The period of time referred to above has expired, or
- ✓ The household requests to be reinstated.

How are applicants ranked on the waiting lists?

Applicants will be ranked on the Centralized Waiting List as follows:



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1. Special Priority applicants are ranked by date of application
2. Local *in-situ* priority applicants are ranked by move-in date to their current address
3. Overhoused applicants are ranked by the original move-in date to their current address
4. All other RGI applicants ranked by date of application, including households transferring from one Housing Provider to another.

Eligible applicants will be added to the waiting lists for the housing projects selected. Applicants will be ranked chronologically by date of application. The date the application is first received is used for ranking purposes for chronological (non-priority) applicants.

If a household that is currently receiving RGI assistance wishes to transfer to a housing project operated by a different Housing Provider within the St. Thomas – Elgin area, the household must submit a new application to the Housing Applications Centre. There is no backdating of the application.

Under the local “in-situ” priority, market households who are currently housed by a social Housing Provider and who are applying and eligible for subsidized housing may contact their housing provider to apply for the in-situ local priority. (See the *In-situ Policy*.) In-situ applications are back-dated to the original date of move-in as verified by the housing provider on the in-situ form.

Overhoused households must be added to the Centralized Waiting List for appropriate housing, with the application backdated to the move-in date at their current address. An overhoused household may select the Housing Providers’ waiting lists to which it wishes to be added. At least three other housing projects must be selected by overhoused transfers. (For more information, refer to the “*Overhoused Households – Policy & Procedures*”.)

What happens when an applicant changes its preferences later?

The ranking date for a household that was added to the Centralized Waiting List is the date the household applied for RGI assistance even if the household subsequently changes its preferences or selects additional housing projects.

What are “housing provider subsidiary waiting lists”?

Housing Provider Subsidiary Waiting Lists include all households on the Centralized Waiting List who have indicated a preference for a particular housing project, ranked as required under the *Housing Services Act*, regulations, and local policies. The list will also include:

- ✓ Names of all members of the household
- ✓ Contact addresses and phone numbers
- ✓ Special Priority applicants and other priority categories established under local priority rules
- ✓ The size and type of unit for which the household is eligible.
- ✓ Memos.

All Housing Providers have been given on-line access to their own Subsidiary Waiting Lists through Yardi.

Who is permitted to make changes made in Yardi?

Staff at the Housing Applications Centre have sole authority to input data into the Yardi system.

Housing Providers have view-only access and are not permitted to input data. Any changes, for example new applicants, applicants on offer, housed applicants, refusals, etc. are entered into the system by Applications Centre staff.



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It is the responsibility of the Housing Provider to notify Housing Applications Centre staff of all changes in writing by fax using the “Notice of Vacancy/Request for Applications” form (see Appendix 4) or via an email message. Housing Applications Centre staff will contact Housing Providers for updates on applicants who have been “on offer” for longer than 30 days.

All Housing Providers must immediately advise the Housing Applications Centre, in writing, of vacancies, persons housed, and any new information regarding applicants, in order to keep the Master Waiting List up-to-date and accurate.

What happens when a vacancy occurs?

When a vacancy occurs, refer to the “*Applicant Selection Procedures Manual*”.

Note: Co-ops are encouraged to pre-screen and obtain Board approval for applicants at the top of each bedroom waiting in advance, to promote efficiency and avoid vacancy losses when units become available.

How often is the eligibility of applicants on the waiting list reviewed?

The Housing Applications Centre staff will review the eligibility of all applicants on the Centralized Waiting List at least once every twelve months.

**Elgin – St. Thomas
Housing Applications Centre
c/o Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation
9 Princess Ave., Unit 5
St. Thomas, ON N5R 3V3**

(Date)

(Title)(First Name)(Last Name)

(Address)

(City)(Province)

(Postal Code)

Dear *(Title)(Last Name)*

RE: Inclusion on Centralized Waiting List for subsidized housing

Thank you for submitting your application for subsidized housing. Your application was found to be complete. A review of your eligibility indicates you are entitled to rent-geared-to-income assistance.

If this is a Special Priority applicant, add:

“You have been granted Special Priority on the wait list”

or

“Your application for Special Priority status has been denied because (describe reasons for refusal and cite appropriate section of the Housing Services Act or regulation).”

Your name has been placed on the **(bedroom size)** waiting list with an approval date of **(date application received)** for the following housing project(s) you have selected:

Name(s) of Project(s) or Housing Provider(s)

Actual geared-to-income rent will be calculated by the housing provider when you are offered housing, based on your actual gross household income at that time.

If you disagree with the size of the unit or the priority category granted, please call the Housing Applications Centre first for clarification. After that, if you wish to appeal the size of the unit or the priority category, please complete the form on the back and send this letter to the Housing Services Administrator within ten business days of the date on this letter.

It is your responsibility to notify the Housing Applications Centre in writing of any changes in your circumstances (for example, new phone number, new address, new additions to the household) within thirty days or you may lose your eligibility for subsidized housing.

If we are unable to contact you at the address or phone number(s) listed on your application, your application may be cancelled.

If you have any questions, please call the Housing Applications Centre at 519-631-4580 or toll-free at 1-800-324-4474 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Sincerely

(Staff name and title)

Request for Review

I would like to request a review of the following decision(s):

Reason(s) for requesting a review:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mail, fax, or take this letter and form to the:

Housing Services Administrator
c/o St. Thomas – Elgin Ontario Works
423 Talbot St.
St. Thomas, ON
N5P 1C1
Fax: 519-631-6718

**Elgin – St. Thomas
Housing Applications Centre
c/o Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation
9 Princess Ave., Unit 5
St. Thomas, ON N5R 3V3**

(Date)

(Title)(First Name)(Last Name)

(Address)

(City)(Province)

(Postal Code)

Dear *(Title)(Last Name)*

RE: Incomplete Application for subsidized housing

Thank you for submitting your application for subsidized housing. In order to process your application and add your name to the Waiting List, the following missing information is required (circled items):

1. Photocopies of birth certificate, Canadian citizenship documents, permanent residency or refugee claim documents for all members of the household
2. Verification of current income
3. _____
Most recent Canada Revenue Agency income tax Notice of Assessment
4. Landlord references
5. General information: _____
6. Valuation of real estate
7. Signatures, witnesses, or dates on the Declaration and Consent page
8. Other:

Please submit the missing information no later than **(dated 30 days after initial receipt of application)** or your application will be cancelled.

If you have any questions, please call Elgin – St. Thomas Housing Applications Centre at 519-631-4580 or toll-free 1-800-324-4474 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Sincerely

(Staff Name and Title)

**Elgin – St. Thomas
Housing Applications Centre
c/o Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation
9 Princess Ave., Unit 5
St. Thomas, ON N5R 3V3**

(Date)
(Title)(First Name)(Last Name)
(Address)
(City)(Province) (Postal Code)

Dear *(Title)(Last Name)*

RE: Ineligibility for subsidized housing

Your application for subsidized housing has been review by our staff. It has been determined that you are not eligible or have become ineligible for subsidized housing for the following reasons:

1. One or more members of your household are not Canadian citizens, landed immigrants or applicants, or refugee claimants
2. There is a deportation order or exclusion order against one or more members of your household
3. No-one in your household is over the age of 16 and able to live independently
4. You owe rent or damage arrears to another social housing provider
5. You have been convicted of past misrepresentation of income for rent-geared-to-income purposes
6. You have failed to notify our office within 30 days of a change in your circumstances
7. You did not provide additional information with your application, as requested, within the timeframes allowed.
8. You have refused three offers of housing
9. Information on your application form was found to be false
10. An assessment of your current financial situation indicates that you qualify for a market rental unit at the housing provider(s) you have selected. Please contact the following housing providers directly to apply for their Market Waiting Lists.

You are entitled to request an internal review of the decision to deny your application. To request a review, please complete the form on the back and send it and a copy of this letter to the Housing Services Administrator within ten business days of the date of this letter.

If you have any questions, please call the Housing Applications Centre at 519-631-9350 or toll-free 1-800-324-4474 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Sincerely
(Staff Name and Title)

Request for Review

I would like to request a review of the following decision(s):

Reason(s) for requesting a review:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mail, fax, or take this form to the:

Housing Services Administrator
c/o St. Thomas – Elgin Ontario Works
423 Talbot St.
St. Thomas, ON
N5P 1C1
Fax: 519-631-6718

St. Thomas – Elgin Housing Applications Centre
NOTICE OF VACANCY / REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
FAX TO 519-633-8035

Appendix 4

Provider/Unit Information

Name of Provider: _____

Vacancy Address: _____

Unit Number: _____

Vacating tenant

Name: _____

Notice Date: _____

Move out Date: _____

Reason for move out: _____

Applicant #1

Name: _____

Date placed On Offer: _____ *(Fax this information to the Applications Centre.)*

Applicant Accepted Offer: YES NO If no, why? _____

If Yes, Move in Date: _____ *(Fax this information to Applications Centre)*

Note: if you, as the housing provider are refusing to offer the applicant housing, fax a copy of your letter to the Applications Centre.

Applicant #2

Name: _____

Date placed On Offer: _____ *(Fax this information to the Applications Centre.)*

Applicant Accepted Offer: YES NO If no, why? _____

If Yes, Move in Date: _____ *(Fax this information to the Applications Centre.)*

Note: If you, as the housing provider are refusing to offer the applicant housing, fax a copy of your letter to the Applications Centre.

Applicant #3

Name: _____

Date placed On Offer: _____ *(Fax this information to the Applications Centre.)*

Accepted for Housing: YES NO If no, why? _____

If Yes, Move in Date: _____ *(Fax this information to the Applications Centre.)*

Note: If you, as the housing provider are refusing to offer the applicant housing, fax a copy of your letter to the Applications Centre.