Durham Community Housing Directives
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Subject:	**Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) Wait List Rules**
Directive Number:	**CWL 02-02**
Date:	**October 2026**

Purpose

Sets out the rules for the system for the selection of households from the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) wait list for rent-geared-to-income (RGI), modified housing, affordable housing and portable housing benefits.

Background

Under the Housing Services Act, the Region of Durham must have a system for selecting households waiting for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or modified units with community housing providers in Durham. This system must comply with provincial requirements and include:

- rules for determining when a vacant unit should be offered to an RGI applicant
- priority rules
- rules governing the selection of households for RGI units.

Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) is responsible for the administration of the wait list for RGI and modified units. DASH operates out of the Housing Services Division.

General Rules

Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) administers the wait list for RGI and modified units. The DASH wait list is comprised of:

- Applicants for RGI units
- Applicants for modified units
- Current RGI tenants and co-op members requesting transfer to a different housing provider

- Current tenants and co-op members in modified units or RGI units requesting transfer to a modified unit with a different housing provider

- Current tenants or co-op members in RGI or modified units who want to transfer to a different unit with their current housing provider, but who are ineligible to be placed on the provider's internal transfer list.

All applicants must complete either the Application for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) or Modified Housing form or the Transfer Application form. These forms are available in the Resources for Community Housing Providers section on the Region of Durham's website.

Only applicants who have been determined eligible for RGI and/or a modified unit are placed on the wait list. Applicants will be removed from the DASH wait list if they:

- become ineligible for RGI and/or a modified unit

- refuse one offer of housing (not including an offer of a portable housing benefit or affordable housing)

- accept an offer of RGI or a modified unit from a housing provider in Durham

- accept an offer of a portable housing benefit within or outside of Durham

- request to be removed from the DASH wait list.

DASH may consider additional offers in extenuating circumstances.

RGI applicants will not be removed from the DASH wait list if they accept an offer of emergency shelter or temporary housing provided while receiving treatment or counselling, even if RGI assistance is provided for these types of housing.

Priority on the DASH Wait List

Most applicants are placed on the DASH wait list according to the date that they applied for an RGI or modified unit or requested a transfer to a different unit. Applicants with earlier application dates have higher priority on the DASH wait list.

Additionally, there are two categories of applicants on the DASH wait list who have higher priority than applicants outside these categories. The two categories, in order of priority, are:

- Overhoused – RGI tenants and co-op members who have been placed on the DASH wait list to move to a smaller unit. These applicants are placed in the Overhoused category according to the date they were first overhoused.

- Special Priority (SPP) – victims of human trafficking or domestic violence. These applicants are placed in the SPP category according to the date they applied for SPP.

Overhoused transfer applicants and transfer applicants approved for expedited transfer may be offered RGI before all other applicants on the DASH wait list only if there are no SPP applicants at their current property requesting transfer to another provider.

Eligibility Reviews and Verification

DASH reviews, but does not normally verify, the eligibility of applicants for RGI and/or modified units at the time of application and every 24 months thereafter.

- DASH does not normally verify eligibility for RGI but may request verification documentation as required.
- DASH will verify eligibility for modified units at the time of application only, or if the applicant declares a change in circumstances.
- DASH verifies arrears and repayment agreements on the local and provincial arrears databases at the time of application and every 24 months thereafter.
- DASH will monitor and verify changes to status in Canada of refugees and applicants for permanent residence status.

Housing providers are responsible for verifying eligibility for RGI and/or a modified unit at the time of offer, using the Eligibility Verification – RGI and Modified Housing and Regional Consent forms, which are available on in the Resources for Community Housing Providers section on the Region of Durham's website.

Arrears and Repayment Agreements

DASH verifies arrears and repayment agreements on the local and provincial arrears databases at the time of application and every 24 months thereafter.

Arrears may include money owed to a community housing provider for unpaid rent or housing charges, overpaid RGI assistance, or damage caused by a member of the household. Arrears owed to a community housing provider for unpaid market rent are included in this directive.

Applicants who owe arrears to a community housing provider are not eligible to be added to, or remain on, the DASH wait list unless they have entered into a repayment agreement or have made reasonable efforts to enter into a repayment agreement. DASH may consider extenuating circumstances.

Housing providers must promptly notify DASH when:

- a former tenant or co-op member moves out owing arrears
- the amount of arrears changes
- a repayment agreement is entered into
- a repayment agreement is in default
- the arrears are paid in full, waived or otherwise resolved.

Housing providers must provide enough information for DASH to update the local and provincial arrears databases, including the names and dates of birth of the household members who owe arrears, the amount owing, and the move-out date.

Housing providers are responsible for maintaining records to support arrears reported to DASH. DASH may request documentation before relying on arrears information to determine eligibility or wait list status.

A current tenant or co-op member who owes arrears to their current housing provider may apply to the DASH wait list for a transfer to another housing provider. However, a unit will not normally be offered unless the tenant or co-op member has entered into, or is making reasonable efforts to enter into, a repayment agreement.

Housing providers that are not required to select applicants from the DASH wait list must complete and submit the PWAD Arrears Online Check Form for each applicant and wait for the results before finalizing an offer. A signed consent must be completed and forwarded to DASH prior to the online check being completed.

RGI Vacancies

When a housing provider has a vacancy (other than a vacancy for a modified unit), the housing provider must determine whether the vacancy should be offered to an RGI applicant or to a market rent/housing charge applicant.

The housing provider will compare the number of RGI units in its project, not including the vacant unit, to its RGI target.

- If the number of RGI units is at or above the target, the vacant unit is offered to a market rent/housing charge paying applicant, tenant or co-op member requesting transfer.
- If the number of RGI units is below the target, the vacant unit is offered to an RGI applicant or RGI transfer applicant.

Housing providers will first determine if an RGI vacancy can be offered to a tenant or co-op member on the internal transfer list or eligible for immediate in-situ RGI before reporting the vacancy to DASH.

Modified Unit Vacancies

Vacancies for modified units are offered to applicants or transfer applicants who are eligible for the modification regardless of their eligibility for RGI or the housing provider's RGI target.

If the modified unit applicant is also eligible for RGI, the applicant is charged RGI upon moving into the modified unit regardless of the housing provider's RGI target.

Housing providers will first determine if a vacant modified unit can be offered to a tenant or co-op member on the internal transfer list before reporting the vacancy to DASH.

DASH Vacancies Site

The DASH Vacancy Site is part of the Region of Durham's website at www.durham.ca/dash. Applicants on the DASH wait list for an RGI or modified unit can log in to the site to view and express interest in vacancies with community housing providers and private landlords who offer rent supplements under agreement with the Region of Durham.

Applicants are restricted from seeing vacant units for which they are not eligible. Specifically:

- Applicants can only view vacancies within the allowable range of occupancy standards for their household size
- Only senior applicants can view vacancies mandated for seniors
- Only eligible modified unit applicants can view modified unit vacancies.

Housing providers report RGI and modified unit vacancies to DASH who then post these vacancies to the DASH Vacancies Site for 7 days. At the completion of 7 days, DASH selects the highest ranked applicant who expressed interest in the posted vacancy and refers this applicant to the housing provider for offer.

Portable Housing Benefits

A portable housing benefit (PHB) is a monthly benefit paid directly to eligible low-income households to bridge the gap between affordable rent and some or all of average market rent.

The Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB) and the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) may also be posted to the DASH Vacancies Site.

- Applicants are selected for the Durham PHB in accordance with the Durham PHB Guidelines.

- Applicants are selected for the COHB in accordance with the provincial rules and guidelines, targeting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, people with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking, Indigenous people and seniors.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing units offer rents at 80 per cent of average market rent. Affordable housing units may also be posted to the DASH Vacancies Site. Applicants are selected for these vacancies in accordance with provincial guidelines and locally identified priorities.

Posting a Vacancy to DASH

Housing providers must notify DASH if they have a vacant RGI unit or modified unit that will be offered to an applicant on the DASH wait list. DASH will then post the vacancy to the DASH Vacancies Site for 7 days for applicants to view and express interest.

- If the vacancy will be offered to a tenant or co-op member on the housing provider's internal transfer list, the vacancy is not posted to DASH (see Internal Transfers below).

- If the vacancy will permit the housing provider to offer immediate RGI to an in-situ applicant, the vacancy is not posted to DASH (see In-situ Applicants below).

Once DASH is notified and the vacancy has been posted, the housing provider must not offer the unit to anyone except the applicant referred to them by DASH.

Housing providers should only notify DASH to post a vacancy if the provider intends to contact the applicant at the completion of the 7 day posting to view the unit (or a similar unit). If the unit (or a similar unit) is not ready to be viewed, or the housing provider is not otherwise prepared to engage with a prospective tenant or co-op member, the housing provider should wait to notify DASH of the vacancy.

For example:

1. A housing provider obtains vacant possession of a unit and finds that the previous tenant or co-op member has caused extensive damage that will

require at least a month to repair. The housing provider is not prepared to show the unit until repairs have been completed.

The housing provider will not notify DASH about the vacancy until about 7 days before the repairs are expected to be completed.

2. A housing provider has a vacancy and wants to paint the unit before the new tenant or co-op member moves in. This will probably take two weeks. The housing provider is prepared to show the unit to a prospective tenant or co-op member before the painting is completed.

   The housing provider should immediately notify DASH of the vacancy.

3. A tenant or co-op member gives the housing provider 60 day notice of move-out. The housing provider has informed the current tenant or co-op member that they will be showing the unit to new prospective tenants or co-op members.

   The housing provider should immediately notify DASH of the vacancy.

Housing providers should notify DASH of vacancies using the online Notice to DASH – Post Vacancy in the Resources for Community Housing Providers section on the Region of Durham's website. Housing providers should include sufficient information for DASH to accurately post the vacancy to the DASH Vacancies Site.

Housing providers are encouraged to include additional detailed information about the vacancy to help applicants make an informed choice about whether or not to express interest in the vacancy. For example, the housing provider may want to include information about:

- Parking availability and/or costs
- Balconies, patios, garages, basements
- Stairs or number of floors in the unit
- Type of flooring in the unit (e.g. carpeting) or new paint in the unit
- Sector support charges (co-op providers)
- Storage available at the housing property
- Location of the unit within the property (e.g. on first floor, end townhouse unit, facing street, etc.)
- Details about accessibility features in units that are not fully modified (e.g. grab bars, lowered cupboards).

If the vacancy is for a fully modified unit, the housing provider must provide details about the modifications in the unit. This will help applicants to determine if the modifications meet their needs before expressing interest in a vacancy, and allow DASH to refer the most suitable applicant for the vacancy.

Referrals, Offers and Outcomes

All RGI and modified unit vacancies reported to DASH are posted to the DASH site for 7 days. After 7 days, DASH selects the highest ranked applicant who expressed interest in the posted vacancy and refers this applicant to the housing provider.

When DASH makes a referral, they will send the housing provider the Housing Provider Summary, as well as any current verification on the DASH file (e.g. verification of the need for a modified unit).

The housing provider will contact the applicant directly, or alternate contact if provided, to make an offer. The provider must notify DASH of the outcome of this offer – normally within 72 hours. If the offer will take longer than 72 hours, providers must keep DASH regularly updated about the progress of the offer.

Outcomes of offers may be:

- applicant accepted offer and will be moving into the unit
- applicant refuses or turns down the offer
- applicant is deemed to have refused the offer because they did not respond to reasonable requests to contact the housing provider
- housing provider denied/refused to offer the unit to the applicant.

Housing providers should notify DASH of the outcome of an offer using the online Notice to DASH – Outcome of Offer in the Resources for Community Housing Providers section on the Region of Durham's website.

If the first applicant referred does not accept the offer, DASH will select the next highest ranked applicant who expressed interest in the posted vacancy and refer this applicant to the housing provider for consideration.

Denials/Refusals to Offer

Housing providers may deny/refuse to offer a unit to an applicant referred by DASH for the following reasons:

- the vacancy is for a seniors' unit and no one in the applicant's household is over the age of 60
- based on rental payment history, the housing provider reasonably believes that the applicant may not pay the rent/housing charge on time or in full
- the applicant has been denied membership in the co-operative housing provider with the vacancy
- the vacancy is for shared accommodation and the housing provider believes that it is unreasonable for the applicant to reside in shared accommodation
- in the previous 5 years, the applicant was evicted from community housing under an order of the Landlord and Tenant Board for a serious illegal act, and the housing provider reasonably believes that they pose a risk to the health or safety of someone living at the property with the vacancy. Serious illegal acts include:
    - Production, trafficking, or possession for the purpose of trafficking an illegal drug
    - Illegal production, distribution or sale of cannabis
    - Physical violence or attempted physical violence against another person
    - Physical harm, attempted physical harm, or a risk of physical harm to another person
    - Human trafficking
    - Use of threats to, intimidation of, and harassment of another person.

When a housing provider denies/refuses to offer a unit to an applicant for any of the above reasons, it must:

- notify the applicant of the denial, the reasons for refusal, and their right to appeal the decision
- notify DASH of the denial and the reasons for the denial.

Housing providers may use the Notice of Denial/Refusal to Offer Unit template letter in the Resources for Community Housing Providers section on the Region of Durham's website.

If the housing provider has previously denied/refused to offer to the same applicant for any of the above reasons, it only needs to notify DASH.

If the applicant appeals the denial, the housing provider is responsible for conducting the review. Housing providers must have procedures for conducting reviews. Housing providers are encouraged to have short timelines for such reviews as they cannot offer the vacant unit to the next applicant on the DASH wait list until either:

- the time to request the appeal has expired
- the review has been completed.

Denials due to RGI or modified unit ineligibility

The housing provider may also deny/refuse to offer a unit to an applicant for reasons of eligibility if:

- the size of the applicant's household does not fall within the allowable occupancy standards for the unit
- the vacancy is for an RGI unit, and the applicant is ineligible for RGI
- based on their income, the applicant would be paying the full market rent/housing charge for the unit
- the vacancy is for a modified unit, and the applicant does not require the modifications available in the unit.

In these circumstances, the housing provider only needs to notify DASH of the reasons for the denial. DASH will notify the applicant and provide information about the right to request a Regional Review, as applicable.

Internal Transfers

Housing providers are permitted to offer a vacant RGI and/or modified unit to a current RGI and/or modified unit tenant or co-op member without recourse to the DASH wait list. This is called an internal transfer.

Housing providers are responsible for managing their own internal transfer wait lists. Housing providers do not need to notify DASH when they transfer an RGI and/or modified unit tenant or co-op member, unless they are also on the DASH wait list or the housing provider is unsure if they are on the DASH wait list.

Housing providers are encouraged to have a policy, guideline or bylaw related to internal transfers. This will ensure transparency in their process. Housing providers must ensure that their internal transfer policies and procedures include that RGI and/or modified unit tenants or co-op members who are eligible for SPP status have higher priority on the internal transfer wait list than other internal transfer requests.

- If a tenant or co-op member requests SPP status for an internal transfer, and the housing provider intends to offer the next available unit to the tenant or co-op member regardless of their status, no SPP assessment is required.

- If the provider cannot determine if the tenant or co-op member should receive immediate priority on their internal transfer list, they must have SPP assessed by DASH. DASH will notify the tenant or co-op member and the housing provider of the outcome of the SPP application.

In-situ Applicants

Market paying tenants and co-op members of housing providers can apply for RGI in their current unit directly with their housing provider. This is called an in-situ application.

Housing providers may offer RGI to an in-situ applicant, without recourse to the DASH wait list if all of the following apply:

- The tenant or co-op member is eligible for RGI

- The housing provider is below target for RGI units

- The tenant lives in a unit within the allowable range of occupancy standards

- The tenant or co-op member has lived with the current housing provider for at least 12 months

- The tenant or co-op member's monthly shelter costs are more than 50 per cent of gross household income

- The tenant or co-op member has had a recent, significant and unexpected change in circumstances that has led to the application for RGI.

If a housing provider has more than one in-situ applicant, the housing provider must ensure that eligible in-situ applicants with SPP status are offered RGI before other in-situ applicants, and in-situ applicants are otherwise offered RGI chronologically according to the date of their application.

Housing providers will ensure that the tenant or co-op member completes the Eligibility Verification – RGI and Modified Housing and Regional Consent forms forms prior to determining eligibility for immediate in-situ RGI. This form is available on in the Resources for Community Housing Providers section on the Region of Durham's website.

Communication with DASH

Housing providers must promptly advise DASH when they know of changes related to their tenants or co-op members who are also on the DASH wait list.

This will ensure that all housing providers have accurate information at the time of offer.

Housing providers are required to promptly notify DASH of the following:

- offers of housing and their outcomes
- denials or refusals to offer housing
- move outs
- RGI ineligibility
- changes in transfer status
- money owed for arrears, damages or misrepresentation by former tenants or co-op members
- evictions for serious illegal acts as ordered by the Landlord and Tenant Board
- changes to telephone numbers or other contact information.

Housing providers should communicate with DASH using the online Notice to DASH – Tenant and Co-op Members Changes in the Resources for Community Housing Providers section on the Region of Durham's website.

Effective Date

This directive comes into effect on the date it is issued.

Repealed Rules

This directive replaces Durham Social Housing Directive CWL 2019-01 Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) Wait List Rules.

Legislative Authority

Housing Services Act, s.47-49, and s. 62-64
Ontario Regulation 367/11, s. 45-58.1, and s. 74-79