

Ministry of Housing

Ministère du Logement

Minister Responsible for the
Poverty Reduction StrategyMinistre responsable de la Stratégie
de réduction de la pauvreté

Office of the Minister

Bureau du ministre

777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto ON M5G 2E5
Tel.: 416 585-6500
Fax: 416 585-4035777, rue Bay, 17^e étage
Toronto ON M5G 2E5
Tél. : 416 585-6500
Téléc. : 416 585-4035

17-75456

Dear partners and stakeholders:

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to provide you with more information on key housing initiatives that were announced on November 28, 2017, to improve housing access and options for survivors of domestic violence and survivors of human trafficking.

As part of Ontario's updated Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS Update) released in March 2016, the ministry committed to improve housing options for survivors of domestic violence by implementing a portable housing benefit program for survivors of domestic violence (referred to as the SDV-PHB Pilot) who qualify for the Special Priority Policy (SPP) and making policy enhancements to this policy.

In September 2016, the province launched the SDV-PHB Pilot program across 22 Service Manager areas. The Pilot has been exceptionally effective in providing over 770 survivors and their families more choice as to where to live, helping them find housing more quickly, and providing greater housing stability.

Following up on the strong results of the first year of the Pilot program, the 2017 provincial budget announced an investment of \$30 million over the next three years to eventually support up to 3,000 survivor households and, starting in 2020, funding will be increased to \$15 million per year, subject to annual provincial budget approvals.

Beginning in April 2018, the program will be expanded provincially to allow eligible survivor households province-wide to apply for the program through their local Service Manager.

In addition to expanding the SDV-PHB program, the government is making amendments to SPP – a policy regulated under Ontario Regulation 367/11 of the *Housing Services Act, 2011* which provides survivor households fleeing an abusive situation with priority access to rent-geared-to-income (RGI) social housing above all other chronological applicants.

Regulatory amendments to SPP are based on the recommendations brought forward by a cross-sector Working Group comprised of organizations from the Violence Against Women (VAW), housing and Indigenous sectors and reflect multi-sector consultations the ministry has undertaken with key stakeholders.

In general, these amendments expand the policy to include survivors of human trafficking, improve the application process for all survivor households and ensure the policy is culturally inclusive, relevant and reflective of the pattern of abuse experienced by some survivor households.

To align with the province-wide launch of the expanded SDV-PHB Program, all Service Managers would be required to comply with regulatory amendments on April 1, 2018. Service Managers that are in a position to implement regulatory changes sooner would be able to do so starting on January 1, 2018.

A copy of the amendments to SPP is available on e-laws:
www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110367?search=housing+services+act.

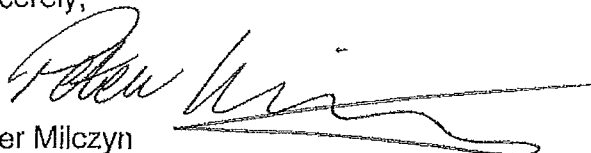
To support the implementation of regulatory amendments to SPP and the expanded SDV-PHB program, the ministry will develop program and policy guidelines for Service Managers in the coming months.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about regulatory amendments to the SPP, I encourage you to contact Rhona Duncan, Manager of the Housing and Homelessness Policy Unit. Rhona can be reached by telephone, 416-585-7228, and by email: rhona.duncan@ontario.ca.

Inquires about the expanded SDV-PHB program can be directed to Ravi Bhusia, Manager of the Program Development and Analysis Unit. Ravi can be reached by telephone, 416-585-6526, and by email: ravi.bhusia@ontario.ca.

Thank you for continued partnership as we work together to support better housing outcomes for survivors of domestic violence and survivors of human trafficking.

Sincerely,


Peter Milczyn
Minister