



## INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	November 19, 2020
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Access to Housing (ATH) Offers and Refusals Policy Change (HSC20058) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Edward John Director, Housing Services Healthy and Safe Communities
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

### COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not Applicable

### INFORMATION

This Information Report is to provide an overview of the Provincial regulatory amendment to O.Reg 367/11 under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* including a new provincial eligibility rule on refusal of offers. The change will be implemented in Hamilton on January 1, 2021.

#### Provincial Rule on Refusal of Offers

Effective January 1, 2021 a household will no longer be eligible for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance if the household refuses an offer from a Service Manager for assistance in a unit where the unit meets the Service Manager's occupancy standards and is in a housing project for which the household has expressed a preference.

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OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Section 32.2 provides that:

- The offer must be for assistance in a unit that meets the Service Manager's occupancy standards and is in a housing project for which the household has expressed a preference.
- If a household refuses an offer for a portable housing benefit it would not be considered as a refusal under this rule.
- Service Managers may determine that a household remains eligible if the Service Manager is satisfied that there are extenuating circumstances.

#### Single Offer of RGI Assistance

Effective January 1, 2021 households and applicants on the Access to Housing (ATH) Centralized Waiting List will cease to be eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance if the household refuses an offer of a housing unit. Households must now accept the first offer of housing provided or be removed from the ATH centralized waiting list (including Special Priority Applicants). However, the Service Manager may determine that a household remains eligible if the Service Manager is satisfied that there are extenuating circumstances.

Housing Services staff are informing existing applicants through the direct mailing of information. Information is also being shared with community agencies and Hamilton Legal Clinic to ensure that applicants are aware of the change and information has been posted on the City's website.

#### What Do Applicants Need to Do?

It is important that applicants are satisfied with their building selections. If they wish to make a change on their building selection [form](#), they may complete the form and return it to the Housing Services office. Applicants may also call Access to Housing at 905-546-2424 x 3708 or e-mail [ath@hamilton.ca](mailto:ath@hamilton.ca) with questions or to update their selections.

Additional information is provided in the Offers and Refusals Policy Change Questions and Answers, attached as Appendix "A" to Report HSC20058.

#### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix "A" to Report HSC20058: Offers and Refusals Policy Change Questions and Answers