




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

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| TO: | Mayor and Members City Council |
| DATE: | June 19, 2024 |
| SUBJECT: | Update Regarding the 2024 Housing Emergency Fund Implementation (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Al Fletcher, Alr.Fletcher@Hamilton.ca Acting Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department |
| SIGNATURE: |  |

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On November 15, 2023, Council approved General Issues Committee Report HSC23067, which directed that staff implement the transformation of the Housing Stability Benefit and Rent Ready programs into the Housing Emergency Fund to better support low-income individuals and families to maintain housing stability.

On February 15, 2024, Council approved budget enhancements for the proposed Housing Emergency Fund.

INFORMATION

This Communication Update provides information on the implementation of the Council approved Housing Emergency Fund.

The Housing Emergency Fund launch date is planned for July 1, 2024 with the existing Rent Ready and Housing Stability Benefit Programs ending on June 30, 2024. As a reminder, key changes for the new Housing Emergency Fund program will include:

1. Funding categories:
 - a. ODSP and OW recipients can receive help with last month's rent, rent arrears, and utility arrears.
 - b. People with low income (based on the Statistics Canada Low-Income Measure) can receive help with utility and rent arrears.

2. Changes to eligibility criteria:

Housing Emergency Fund eligibility criteria:

- Higher maximum benefit amounts: Based on household size for social assistance and determination for eligibility, approved applicants are eligible for a maximum amount of money in a 24-month period, as outlined in the below table:

| Benefit Unit/Household Size | Maximum Payment |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Single | \$3,000 |
| Couple | \$4,000 |
| Family (3 people) | \$5,000 |
| Family (4 people) | \$6,000 |
| Family (5+ people) | \$7,000 |

- Accommodation costs do not exceed 95% of income.
- Funds are to be used for establishing or remaining in housing within the City of Hamilton.
- Circumstances meet a situation outlined in the application (i.e., being evicted, have a disconnection notice for utilities, moving to new or more affordable housing).

As with the previous Housing Stability Benefit and Rent Ready programs, Ontario Works recipients can apply for the Housing Emergency Fund through the Housing Services Division or through their Ontario Works Case Manager, Low-Income and Ontario Disability Support Program clients can apply through Housing Help Centre Hamilton, and Indigenous clients can apply through either of the above options or directly to the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, based on their preference.

Details on the Housing Emergency Fund can be found on the City of Hamilton's website at the following page: www.hamilton.ca/HousingEmergencyFund (NOTE: This webpage is scheduled to come live on July 2, 2024).

For more information, please contact Rob Mastroianni, Manager Homelessness & Housing Support, at Rob.Mastroianni@hamilton.ca or 905-546-2424 ext.8035.