

Emergency Housing Charge Assistance

Purpose of the policy

- To set out members' rights and responsibilities for receiving emergency housing charge assistance, and;
- To establish a framework for:
 - managing and allocating the emergency housing charge assistance fund in a fair and consistent way and, where applicable, in compliance with the CMHC operating agreement;
 - monitoring and assessing the impact of any policy application on all member households and on the economic viability of the co-op;
 - planning for changes in emergency assistance use and housing charges in response to household changes.

Policy

The process for members and the co-op

1. The Board of Directors with the assistance of the Finance Committee and management staff will annually review and recommend an amount of money to be reserved in an Emergency Housing Charge Assistance Fund. The fund will be initially set up by a transfer of monies from the co-op's accrued interest in the Share Purchase account. Thereafter, the fund will be maintained in the same fashion as the Replacement Reserve Fund and the amount to be allocated annually will be set with the annual budget.
2. Emergency housing charge assistance will only be allocated to households already resident in the co-op.
3. Emergency housing charge assistance will not be allocated to households already in receipt of permanent housing charge assistance (federal subsidy).
4. Eligibility for emergency housing charge assistance will be restricted to those who, without assistance, would be paying more than the set percentage of gross annual household income on housing charges as determined in the annual budget.
5. Members receiving emergency housing charge assistance must meet all other eligibility requirements set out in the Housing Charge Assistance (Federal Subsidy) Policy.

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6. The co-op will not provide emergency housing charge assistance if there are no funds available in the Emergency Housing Charge Assistance Reserve Fund.
7. Management staff will follow the Housing Charge Assistance (Federal Subsidy) Policy to assess housing charges for members eligible for emergency housing charge assistance.
8. If a household on the waiting list for permanent housing charge assistance is allocated emergency housing charge assistance, that household shall retain its place on the waiting list and will be allocated permanent housing charge assistance as per the Housing Charge Assistance (Federal Subsidy) Policy. No emergency housing charge assistance will be allocated on a permanent basis.
9. Eligible households may receive emergency housing charge assistance for a period to be determined by the Board:
 - Emergency housing charge assistance will not normally be granted for a period exceeding six consecutive months in any fiscal year OR for a combined total of six months in any fiscal year;
 - Emergency housing charge assistance will not normally be granted to members who have not been resident in the co-op for at least one year.
10. Households receiving emergency housing charge assistance are required to report promptly to the co-op any increase in income. If a household ceases to be eligible for emergency housing charge assistance because of an increase in income, assistance will be withdrawn at the beginning of the month following the increase.
11. Households receiving emergency housing charge assistance have the choice of advising the co-op of any decrease in gross household income so that their housing charge may be decreased, provided that there are sufficient funds in Emergency Housing Charge Assistance Reserve Fund.
12. Members receiving emergency housing charge assistance must meet the eligibility requirements set out in the Housing Charge Assistance (Federal Subsidy) Policy including requirements to comply with the Over- and Under-Housing Policy.

Note: This policy has to comply with the co-op's operating agreement with CMHC.

Note: This policy must not be in conflict with our co-op's Rules and Occupancy Agreement.

Note: The co-op will not change anything in the policy before checking its own Rules and Occupancy Agreement and only upon approval of the membership.

Note: The Board of Directors may from time to time adopt, amend or remove the procedures needed to implement this policy.

Policy approved by general meeting dated: August 16, 2011

Replaces all Subsidy and/or Housing Charge Assistance and/or related Financial Policies and/or Procedures previously adopted by the Kinross Creek membership and/or Board of Directors.

Procedures needed to carry out this policy

1. System for collecting, using, filing, sharing and protecting personal information in compliance with PIPA and PIP policies.
2. Forms and documentation required to comply with PIPA.
3. Required proof of income (see CMHC Income Definition Handbook).
4. Co-op's income eligibility guidelines (see CMHC operating agreement, including Schedule B).
5. Grievance process for members to follow when they think their assessed housing charge has been miscalculated.
6. Information sheet on eligibility requirements for housing charge assistance.
7. Method to annualize income before decreasing or increasing housing charges.
8. Other relevant policies such as the over- and under-housing policy.
9. Method of communication with membership committee, board and management staff.
10. Subsidy status reporting format, including overall monthly and cumulative use of emergency assistance and status of the emergency assistance fund.
11. Review any policy changes with management staff and finance committee prior to approval by the membership.