

Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board

450 Scott Street Fort
Frances, ON
P9A 1H2
Phone: (807) 274-5349
Fax: (807) 274-0678
Toll Free: (800) 265-5349

Raw Road Centre
P.O. Box 1300
Atikokan, ON
P0T 1C0
Phone: (807) 597-1431
Fax: (807) 597-1493

WELCOME to the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB)! We are pleased to provide you with information regarding Social Housing available within our District and invite you to submit an *Application* for residency, if you are interested.

At any point during the process, you may contact our office.

APPLYING FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

How do I apply for Housing?

We have designed a common *Application* for those interested in most of the Housing in our District. *Applications can* be found at www.rrdssab.on.ca, or picked up at the RRDSSAB office; Municipal offices in Emo, Rainy River & Atikokan; any Non-Profit Housing Provider office; or we would be happy to mail or email you one, if requested.

YOUR APPLICATION MUST BE COMPLETE. You must include the following documents in order to be considered for placement:

1. Verification of monthly income (see *Income & Assets Verification* on page 2 of the *Application*);
2. Previous year's *Notice of Assessment*;
3. A *5 year Landlord Reference* for all applicants who have resided in rental accommodation;
4. Verification of Canadian citizenship for all people listed on the application;
5. The *Application Form* which must be signed & dated by each member of the household 16 years of age or older; and
6. Any other applicable documents as indicated on the *Application*.



IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR HOUSING, BUT DO NOT REQUIRE RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME (RGI) SUBSIDY, YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO SUBMIT ANY FINANCIAL INFORMATION.

Please let us know if you feel that acquiring any of the above documents may put you in danger, as you may not be required to submit them.

Can I specify which Housing Project(s) I am applying for?

Absolutely. On the *Application*, you will identify which housing project(s) you are applying for. If you do not complete the building selections section of the application, your application will be considered incomplete and will be returned to you.

You may also indicate a preference for a particular municipality, in which case you will be included on all *Housing Provider Waiting Lists* in that municipality for which your household is eligible.

All applicants are allowed one (1) offer from their building selection list. Please select only the buildings that you wish to live in. If an applicant refuses an offer they will be removed from all waiting lists and your application will be canceled.

If your household currently pays *Market Rent* in Social Housing but is applying for *RGI*, you may indicate a preference for the unit you currently occupy.

What if I change my mind and wish to withdraw my application from a specific Housing Project?

Simply contact the office to make a change to your application prior to an offer being made. We can be reached at 807-274-5349 (Fort Frances Office) or 807-597-1431 (Atikokan Office).

Can I specify what size of unit I am applying for?

Yes. On the *Application*, you will identify which size unit you are applying for. If you are applying for *RGI*, you may indicate a preference for all sizes of units for which your household is eligible or for the largest size of unit for which your household is eligible (see *Occupancy Standards* below).

If you don't indicate a preference for a size of unit, your household will be deemed to have indicated a preference for the largest unit for which it is eligible.

What is a Centralized Waiting List and how does that affect my Application?

The RRDSAB will maintain a *Centralized Waiting List* for most housing projects in the District, with the exception of some *Special Needs* and *Market Rent* units which will be managed by the actual *Housing Providers*.

If you are a new applicant who does not require *RGI* subsidy, you may be required to submit your application directly to the *Housing Provider*. Please contact our office for more information.

Once your completed application has been received and your household has been determined eligible, your name along with your preferred housing project(s) and unit size(s) will be added to the *Centralized Waiting List*.

Your household will be removed from the *Waiting List* if it requests to be removed, if it ceases to be eligible, or if it accepts an offer of *RGI* assistance. Your household will also be removed from the *Waiting List* if you have declined, or failed to respond to, one housing offer for which your household is eligible.

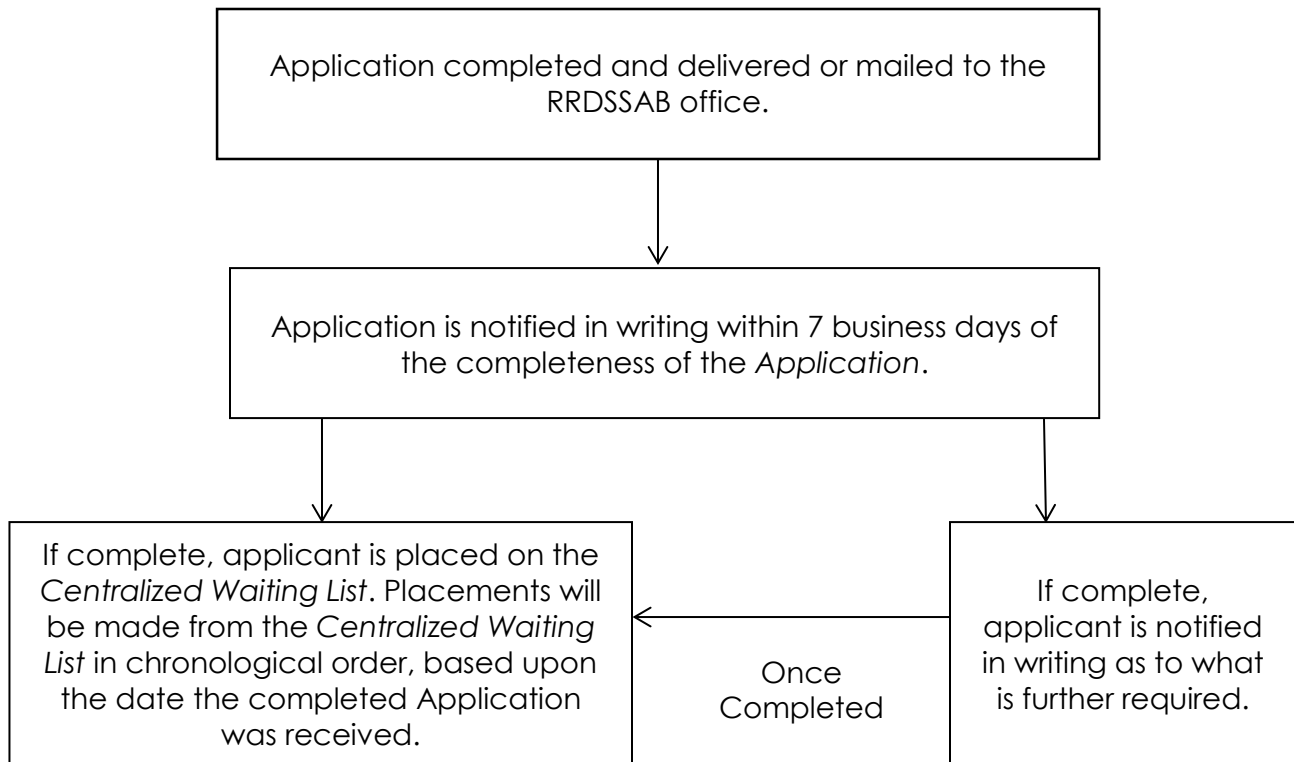
How are households ranked on the Waiting List?

A household ranks on the *Waiting List* according to the date it was added to the *Centralized Waiting List*. When a unit becomes vacant, it is offered first to households on the *Waiting List* for an *Internal Transfer* (see *Internal Transfers* below). If there are no *Internal Transfer* applicants on the *Waiting List*, the unit is then offered to *Special Priority/Homelessness Priority* households, then to all other households according to application dates.

What if I am unable to accept an offer of housing for a period of time?

Let RRDSSAB know if you will be unable to accept an offer of housing for that period of time. RRDSSAB may temporarily remove your household from the *Waiting List* for a period of time agreed upon by RRDSSAB and your household. Once the agreed-upon time has expired, RRDSSAB will reinstate your household to the *Waiting List*.

APPLICATION PROCESS FLOW CHART



RENT GEARED TO INCOME ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) subsidy?

In order to be eligible for *RGI*, households must meet the following criteria:

- At least one member of the household is 16 years of age or older, and is able to live independently with or without support services;
- Each household member is a citizen of Canada, an applicant for permanent resident status, a refugee, or a refugee claimant;
- No member of the household has an enforceable removal order made against them;
- No member of the household has been convicted by a court of law, or found the *Landlord and Tenant Board*, to have misrepresented their income for RGI purposes within the past 2 years;
- All household members have applied for all forms of assistance for which they may be eligible, including Ontario Works, Employment Insurance, government pensions or support from a sponsor under the *Immigration Act*;
- All household members have divested, or are divesting, their interest and holdings in residential property (suitable for year-round occupancy), in or outside Ontario within 180 days of receipt of RGI;
- The household's aggregate household assets must be less than or equal to \$100,000; and
- Former Social Housing tenants with outstanding arrears will only be considered for *RGI* eligibility if the arrears are paid in full or if verification of a repayment agreement in good standing is provided or if RRDSSAB is satisfied that extenuating circumstances exist.

What if my circumstances change?

You are responsible to notify the RRDSSAB office of all changes in your household composition or income within 30 days of the change. This includes any change of employment, contact information, family composition, etc.

Why do I/we have to keep the RRDSSAB updated on the changes listed above?

We require your most up to date financial information to ensure your household's eligibility for *RGI* and accuracy of your rent calculation upon offer of a unit. If you move and we are unable to contact you, your application will be cancelled.

Will my eligibility for RGI be reviewed?

Yes, we will review your eligibility on an annual basis. You will be asked to provide information within a specific time frame.

Can my eligibility for RGI assistance be terminated?

Yes, for several reasons, including:

- a) The household no longer meets an eligibility requirement of the Province or RRDSSAB;
- b) The household fails to apply for benefits to which they are entitled;
- c) The household exceeds any household income/asset limit;
- d) The household fails to provide updated information prior to being housed, during tenancy or during annual reviews;
- e) The household fails to divest residential property within the required timeframe;
- f) An over-housed household which refuses to comply with the rules for transfer (see *Occupancy Standards* below);
- g) A household refuses one offer for housing; and/or
- h) When the *RGI* rent payable by the household has been at “market” level for 24 consecutive months.

What happens when I am no longer eligible for RGI?

The RRDSSAB will notify your household that it is no longer eligible and that its rent will increase to the market rate for the unit, as of 90 days following the decision.

OCCUPANCY STANDARDS

What are Occupancy Standards?

Occupancy Standards are set by the Province and based on your household size and composition. They determine the size of unit your household is eligible for while in receipt of *RGI*.

What is the largest unit I may be eligible for?

The largest unit a household may be eligible for is a unit that has one bedroom for any two members of the household who are spouses or same-sex partners, and one bedroom for each additional member.

An additional bedroom can be added for an ADULT if:

- a) One of the spouses or same-sex partners requires a separate bedroom because of a disability or medical condition;
- b) The room is required to store equipment required by the member because of a disability or medical condition;
- c) The bedroom is required to accommodate an individual who provides a member of the household with support services; and/or
- d) A household member is pregnant.

An additional bedroom can be added for a CHILD if:

- a) A household member has joint custody of a child who is not a member of the household;
- b) The member is required to provide accommodation for the child and the bedroom is required to accommodate the child; and/or
- c) A household member has visiting rights with respect to a child that requires them to provide overnight accommodation and the bedroom is required to accommodate the child.

What is the smallest unit a household is eligible for?

The smallest unit a household is eligible for is a unit that has one bedroom for every two members of a household, and an additional bedroom if there are an odd number of members in the household. If the household consists of one individual or two individuals who are spouses or same-sex partners, the smallest unit the household is eligible for is a bachelor unit.

What about full-time students?

A dependent student who is attending full-time at a recognized educational institution but lives at home when not attending school and is financially dependent on the household is considered to be a member of the household.

What if I become over-housed?

Should you become over-housed (be in a unit with more bedrooms than you are eligible for), you must advise the *Housing Provider* and the RRDSSAB. The *Housing Provider* or RRDSSAB will transfer your household to a suitable unit within their portfolio, once one becomes available. If a suitable unit is not available after one year, your household will be placed onto the *Centralized Waiting List*, with the ranking date being the date you first applied for RGI assistance.

If your household asks to be removed from the *Centralized Waiting List*, it becomes ineligible for *RGI* assistance.

INTERNAL TRANSFERS & TRANSFERS TO OTHER HOUSING PROVIDERS

What is an Internal Transfer?

In *Internal Transfer* is a transfer of a household from one unit to another unit in the same or another housing site of the Housing Provider.

How do I request an Internal Transfer?

To transfer, households must complete an *Internal Transfer Application* and forward it to the Integrated Caseworker (ICW). The ICW will review the *Application* and determine the household's eligibility for a transfer. For more information on *Internal Transfer*, you may contact your ICW or request a copy of RRDSSAB's *Internal Transfer Policy* from our office.

How do I transfer to another Housing Provider?

To transfer to another *Housing Provider* in the Rainy River District you must submit an *Application* to the RRDSSAB which will be reviewed. Once the *Application* is complete, your name will be placed on the *Centralized Waiting List*. The ranking date on the *Centralized Waiting List* is the date the completed *Application* is received.

In certain circumstances, applicants who do not require *RGI* may be required to apply directly to the *Housing Provider* to which they wish to move. Please ask your ICW.

SPECIAL PRIORITY STATUS

Please explain the Special Priority Status.

Special Priority Status applies to victims of abuse. In order to be included as *Special Priority Status*, the *Applicant Declaration of Abuse* form and the *Confirmation of Abuse* form must be completed by individuals described on the form. In addition, the abused member must intend to live permanently apart from the abusing individual.

According to the *Housing Services Act, 2001* and Regulation 298/01, *abuse* means "an incident of physical or sexual violence against an individual, an incident of intentional destruction of, or intentional injury to an individual's property, or words, actions or gestures that threaten an individual or his/her property, and *abused* and *abusing* have corresponding meaning."

Special Priority households rank in chronological order, separate from other housing applicants. Their ranking date is the date the household requested to be in the *Special Priority* category.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SPECIAL PRIORITY HOUSEHOLD

Application for *Special Priority Status* submitted within 3 months to the RRDSSAB after the abused member and the abusing individual cease to live together.

Applicant notified in writing within 7 business days of the completeness of the *Application*.

If complete, Applicant is added to the *Centralized Waiting List* under the *Special Priority* category.

Once Completed

If incomplete, Applicant is notified in writing, giving an explanation as to what needs to be completed.

Rainy River DSSAB will allow an extension of the time-frame, if there are extenuating circumstances, which will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

What is Special Needs Housing?

Special Needs Housing is housing that is occupied or made available for occupancy by a household having one or more individuals who require accessibility modifications or Provincially-funded support services, in order to live independently in the community. Units referred to as *Modified* are specifically for tenants who qualify for *Special Needs Housing*.

How do I apply for Special Needs Housing?

Applicants who wish to access *Special Needs Housing* complete the same *Application Form* as all other applicants. Applicants can find a listing of *Special Needs Housing* units in the Housing Directory.

Applicants for *Special Needs Housing* must also have their physician complete a *Medical Verification for Special Needs Housing Form*.

Please explain eligibility & Waiting Lists for Special Needs Housing.

RRDSSAB determines whether a household applying for *Special Needs Housing* is eligible. A household is eligible for *Special Needs Housing*, if one or more of its members require accessibility modifications and/or on-site support services to manage the activities of daily living, in order to live independently. A household's eligibility for *Special Needs* will be reviewed regularly. A household need not be eligible for *RGI* subsidy in order to be eligible for *Special Needs Housing*.

RRDSSAB establishes and administers a separate waiting list for *Special Needs Housing*. Once deemed eligible for *Special Needs Housing*, a household is added to the *Special Needs Waiting List*. A household is removed from the *Special Needs Waiting List* if it ceases to be eligible for *Special Needs Housing* or if it requests to be removed from the *Waiting List*.

Special Needs Housing units are filled by comparing the vacant unit's modifications, accessibility or support services to the needs of the applicants on the *Waiting List* and offering it to the household whose needs will be best met in that unit. A *Special Priority* household that is on the *Special Needs Waiting List* ranks higher than a household that is not *Special Priority*.

INTERNAL REVIEW

What if I disagree with a decision made by RRDSSAB?

If you disagree with a decision made by RRDSSAB regarding your eligibility for *RGI* or *Special Needs*, the type of accommodation in which your household may be accommodated, the category into which your household has been placed on a *Waiting List*, the amount of *RGI* payable by your household, or deferral of *RGI* payable by your household, you may request an *Internal Review*.

How do I request an Internal Review?

You must make a request in writing and submit it within ten business days of being notified of the decision. In your request, you must include:

- a) that you wish to appeal the decision;
- b) the reason(s) you disagree with the decision; and
- c) any new information that may affect the decision.

How does RRDSSAB conduct an Internal Review?

A committee of three, comprising of the Integrated Services Manager and one to two other RRDSSAB staff members, form an *Internal Review Committee* and meet to review the tenant/applicant's file to conduct the *Internal Review* within ten working days of receipt of the appeal request. Should the request involve inclusion in the *Special Priority* category, the *Internal Review* will be completed within five days after the appeal is received.

Any staff member involved in the original decision, including the Integrated Services Manager, cannot participate in the *Internal Review*.

The tenant/applicant is notified of the results by mail within five working days after the review is completed. All decisions made by the *Committee* are final.

The complainant can withdraw an appeal by providing the Integrated Services Manager with written confirmation of his or her wish to withdraw the appeal, before the *Committee* has completed its *Internal Review* of the matter.

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