

**SERVICE MANAGER DIRECTIVE 20-03**  
 (Service Manager Directive 20-03 replaces Service Manager Directive 17-03)

**SUBJECT: LOCAL PRIORITY RULES**

The policies and procedures in this Directive are to be implemented by the Centralized Wait List Administrator or by Housing Providers funded by the City of Ottawa for the programs checked below:

X	Public Housing Program
X	Rent Supplement Program (commercial)
X	Ontario Community Housing Assistance Program (OCHAP)
X	Community Sponsored Housing Program (CSHP)
X	Provincial Reformed ( <i>Provincial, Federal/Provincial Non-</i>
X	Provincial Reformed ( <i>Provincial Co-operative</i> )
	Limited Dividend Program
	Section 26/27
	Section 95 – Private
	Section 95 – Pre 86 MNP
	Pre-86 Urban Native Housing Program
	Post-85 Urban Native Housing Program
X	Centralized Wait List (CWL) Administrator

If your program is not checked, this Directive does not apply to your project(s). \_\_\_\_\_

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Directive is to communicate to housing providers and the CWL administrator, the City of Ottawa Local Priority Rules effective January 1, 2020. This Directive replaces Directive 17-03 to incorporate provincial regulatory amendments that take effect on January 1, 2020. Directives are issued by the Service Manager to provide operational details for the application of the Local Rules approved by the Council Report.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:**

Housing Services Act, 2011 sections 47 to 49  
 HSA O. Reg. 367/11 sections 45 to 48 & 52 to 58  
 HSA O. Reg. 318/19

**BACKGROUND:**

As Service Manager under the *Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA)*, the City has the ability and the responsibility to establish certain local policies, referred to as local rules, in order to administer, implement and distribute social housing resources, which include access to rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) assistance in an equitable and consistent manner for prescribed RGI housing programs. Local priority rules are made pursuant to

section 48 of the HSA and are in addition to the provincial priority rules set out in Section 53 of O. Reg. 367/11. These rules determine the priority of households waiting for RGI assistance including whether a household is included in a category given priority over other categories.

Accordinging priority status to certain households over others recognizes that there are some designated households that should be given priority access to subsidized housing based on their current living situation, notwithstanding the chronological nature of their application.

Council adopted four (4) local priorities in 2002 (Homeless, Urgent Medical, Urgent Safety and In-situ Market Rent) as part of the report entitled *Social Housing Local Policies*. In the fall of 2008, Council reviewed and approved the continuation of these four (4) local priorities and approved the introduction of two (2) new local priorities (Displaced RGI Tenant and Graduates of Supportive Housing) as part of the report entitled *Evaluation of Local Policies in Social Housing*.

On September 13, 2017, Council approved the continuation of the six (6) existing local priorities and approved new rules for households that have been accorded local priority access status on the Centralized Wait List (CWL). These are explained below.

On September 23, 2019, the Province of Ontario filed Ontario Regulation 318/19 which amended Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. The amendments included new provincial eligibility rules on refusal of offers, rules on household preferences for a housing project and changes to a Service Manager's authority to make a local rule where a household ceases to meet occupancy standards. These amendments come into force on January 1, 2020.

The following Directives have been updated in regard to Local Priority Rules to incorporate the provincial regulatory changes that take effect on January 1, 2020.

### **DIRECTIVES:**

The Province has legislated two provincial priorities:

1. Special Provincial Priority (SPP) for victims of abuse and human trafficking; and
2. Over housed households.

In addition, Section 48 of the HSA permits Service Managers to create local priority rules. The Service Manager has created local priority rules which entitles certain households to "Local Priority Access Status" (also referred to as "LPAS"). These priorities are in addition to the Provincial Priorities.

### **Local Priority Groups:**

The LPAS is accorded to the below groups, being the six (6) Local Priorities, if the relevant criteria set out in *Appendix "A"* to this Directive are met.

### **In Situ Market Rent Households**

Households residing with a prescribed social housing provider that:

1. moved into their current unit as market tenants paying market rent;
2. have continued to pay market rent since moving into the unit;
3. meet local occupancy standards;
4. have been living with the provider for a minimum of one year; and
5. who, by no fault of their own, have experienced a significant loss of income since moving into their current unit may apply for RGI assistance for the current unit that they occupy. Eligible households will receive a priority ranking date that is the effective date of their application to the CWL. Market rent households applying for RGI assistance in either another project or another unit will not be eligible for this priority.

### **Displaced RGI Households**

RGI households who are displaced as a result of their housing unit no longer being available for RGI housing, through no fault of their own, will receive priority for a new RGI placement. Eligible households will receive a priority ranking date that is the effective date of their application to the CWL.

### **Homeless Households**

Households who are confirmed as experiencing homelessness. For the purpose of this priority, “homeless” means: households who are staying in a City of Ottawa emergency shelter or who are living unsheltered in Ottawa.

### **Life Threatening Medical Households**

Households where a member has a terminal illness or a life threatening medical condition made worse by the current housing situation. The household must demonstrate through a licensed physician’s medical opinion that a move in housing will remove the life threatening aspect of the condition.

### **Urgent Safety Households**

Households where a member does not qualify for SPP but is subject to current abuse from a family member or former partner or where a member of the household is subject to ongoing or extraordinary threat to personal safety by a non-family member and a change in housing will result in a significant increase to personal safety.

### **Graduates of Supportive Housing**

Households who, as tenants of a supportive housing agency with onsite support have demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the supportive housing agency, that they are now capable of independent living with or without support. A list of agencies is outlined in Appendix B.

### **Determination of Eligibility for Local Priority Access Status**

The Centralized Waiting List Administrator has been delegated the authority for determining, based on Appendix “A” to this Directive, eligibility for LPAS when a household applies for local priority status. Once priority status has been assigned, the CWL administrator has the authority to review or re-assign priority status while on the

centralized waiting list. Housing providers do not have authority to make LPAS determinations.

**Local Priority Access Status**

Households who are eligible for one or more local priorities shall be accorded one generic Local Priority Access Status (LPAS) on the CWL. The date accorded the LPAS shall be either the date of eligibility for a local priority for households eligible for one local priority, or the oldest eligibility date of all local priorities for households eligible for more than one local priority.

Should the household no longer meet criteria for a LPAS, the household shall revert to the chronological list based on the initial date of application.

**Selection of Communities by Households**

Households with a Local Priority Access Status (LPAS) shall apply to the CWL and indicate preferences for a minimum number of appropriately sized units as set out below:

*Table 1: Unit Selection by all Local Priority Access Households, excluding Homeless Local Priority*

<b>Unit Selection by all Local Priority Access Households, excluding Homeless Local Priority</b>	
Upon receipt of LPAS	Households shall indicate as a preference a minimum of 30% of the communities that have appropriately sized units on the CWL.
After 365 days of having a LPAS	Households shall indicate as a preference a minimum of 50% of the communities that have appropriately sized units on the CWL.

*Table 2: Unit Selection by Homeless Local Priority Access Status Households*

<b>Unit Selection by Homeless Local Priority Access Status Households</b>	
Upon receipt of Homeless LPAS	Households shall indicate as a preference all communities that have appropriately sized units on the CWL.

**Number of Offers**

The LPAS entitles the household to one valid offer in priority. LPAS households who do not accept their one valid RGI housing offer, shall lose their eligibility to remain on the Centralized Wait List for RGI housing. Refer to *Service Manager Directive 20-02 Local Rent-Geared-To-Income Eligibility Rules* for a definition and guidelines for a ‘valid offer’. Qualifying for multiple local priorities does not entitle a household to multiple offers either in priority or in chronological order.

### **Selection of Priority Households by Housing Providers**

In accordance with section 47, 48 and 49 of the HSA, pertaining to the ranking of households on waiting lists, the Service Manager has established the ranking of priority groups with their ratio of access to units. Housing Providers shall select and fill RGI units for their project from the Centralized Wait List in the following eligible household priority order:

*Tableau 1: Ranking of priority groups with their ratio of access to units*

<b>Selection</b>	<b>Household Priority Status</b>	<b>Unit Access Ratio</b>
1st	Provincial Special Priority	Mandatory if there are SPP
2nd	Over housed	Mandatory if there are no SPP
3rd	Local Priority Access Status	1 in 5 placements, then
4th	Chronological	Remainder out of 5 placements

Housing providers shall not be apprised as to which particular local priority a household was accorded Local Priority Access Status.

The Service Manager shall determine housing provider compliance with priority group selections as part of the operational review/site visit process. The Service Manager may appoint an Eligibility Review Officer to review housing provider compliance with priority group selections.

### **Request for Exemption from Local Priorities**

Under extenuating circumstances there may be a need for housing providers to balance and stabilize their communities. If a housing provider wishes to exempt a particular housing community, for a particular period of time, from the requirement of selecting households from the LPAS list, the housing providers may request a temporary exemption by submitting a business case to the Service Manager for approval.

### **ACTION REQUIRED:**

Implement the Local Priority Rules outlined in this Directive effective January 1, 2020.

Lisa Goodfellow  
Program Manager, Social Housing

Dated: December 30, 2019

**APPENDIX “A”**  
**Definitions for Local Priority Access Status (LPAS)**

*Table 3: Definitions for Local Priority Access Status (LPAS)*

<b>Priority Group Definition</b>	<b>Guidelines for Verification</b>
<p><b>Homeless</b></p> <p>The following households may be granted Homeless priority status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons who are confirmed as experiencing “Homelessness”.</li> <li>• “Homelessness” means households who are staying in a City of Ottawa emergency shelter, or who are living unsheltered in the City of Ottawa.</li> <li>• Applicants staying temporarily with friends or family do not qualify for homeless status.</li> </ul>	<p>Verification Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of OW, ODSP to verify applicant is not in receipt of shelter allowance. Confirmation from a City of Ottawa emergency shelter</li> <li>• If applicant has income other than OW or ODSP, a letter from a professional verifying the applicant meets the definition of Homelessness.</li> <li>• A professional is defined as: a doctor, lawyer, law enforcement officer, member of the clergy, guidance counselor, individual in a managerial or administrative position with a housing provider, community health care worker, social worker, victim services worker, social services worker, settlement services worker or a shelter worker.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Life Threatening Medical</b></p> <p>Life Threatening Medical priority status may be granted if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member of the household has a terminal illness or a life threatening medical condition made worse by the current housing situation.</li> <li>• The household shall demonstrate through a licensed physician’s medical opinion that a move in housing will remove the life-threatening aspect of the condition.</li> </ul>	<p>Verification Guidelines – Medical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A written medical opinion from a licensed physician outlining the medical condition, and that a move from the current housing will remove the life-threatening aspect of the medical condition.</li> <li>• Completion of the Request for Life Threatening Medical Status Form.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Urgent Safety</b></p> <p>Urgent Safety priority status may be granted if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a member of the household does not qualify for SPP but is subject to current abuse from a family member or former partner; or</li> <li>• A member of the household is subject to ongoing or extraordinary threat to</li> </ul>	<p>Verification Guidelines - Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A written document or support letter from a professional verifying current abuse, ongoing extraordinary threat to personal safety and confirmation a change in housing will result in a significant increase in personal safety.</li> <li>• A professional is defined as: a doctor, lawyer, law enforcement officer, member</li> </ul>

Priority Group Definition	Guidelines for Verification
<p>personal safety by a non-family-member and a change in housing will result in a significant increase in personal safety.</p>	<p>of the clergy, guidance counselor, individual in a managerial or administrative position with a housing provider, community health care worker, social worker, victim services worker, social services worker, settlement services worker or shelter worker.</p>
<p><b>Displaced RGI Households</b></p> <p>Displaced RGI Tenant priority status may be granted if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A household in receipt of RGI is displaced from their current RGI unit through no fault of their own (e.g. condominium conversion, fire, natural disaster, etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>Verification Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A written document or support letter from their social housing provider/private landlord confirming that the household has been displaced from their current RGI residence through no fault of their own and that the household cannot be immediately re-housed in an appropriately sized unit within that housing provider’s project/portfolio due to there being no vacant units of the appropriate size for the household.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In Situ Market Rent Household</b></p> <p>In Situ Market Rent Household priority status may be granted if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The household moved into their current unit as market tenants paying market rent,</li> <li>• The household has continued to pay market rent since moving into their current unit,</li> <li>• The household has been living with a prescribed housing provider for a minimum of one year.</li> <li>• The household currently meets local occupancy standards for the current unit that they occupy.</li> <li>• The household, who, by no fault of their own, has experienced a significant loss of income since moving into their current unit.</li> </ul> <p>Eligible households will receive a priority ranking date that is the effective date of their application to the CWL.</p>	<p>Verification Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A completed Application for Market to RGI Housing Form.</li> <li>• A completed Local Priority – In Situ Market Rent Households referral form signed by a Social Housing Provider which verifies that the household meets all requirements for the local priority.</li> </ul>

Priority Group Definition	Guidelines for Verification
<p>In Situ Market Rent Household priority status is <b>not</b> applicable to households such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market rent households applying for RGI assistance in either another project or another unit shall not be eligible for this priority.</li> <li>• Market rent households that voluntarily reduce employment hours and/or end employment shall not be eligible for this priority.</li> <li>• Market rent households that have reduced income as a result of participating in an educational institution program shall not be eligible for this priority.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Graduates of Supportive Housing</b></p> <p>Priority status to Tenants of Supportive Housing may be granted if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tenant has expressed an interest in moving from the supportive housing provider to non-supportive permanent RGI housing. Non-supportive housing is defined as independent housing without in-house supports.</li> <li>• The tenant has demonstrated 'readiness' to move from the supportive housing provider to non-supportive RGI housing.</li> <li>• The tenant is capable of living independently, with or without supports.</li> <li>• The tenant is in good standing with the current supportive housing provider, and has no rental arrears with the provider.</li> <li>• The tenant has been referred by one of the designated supportive housing providers approved by the Service Manager to provide referrals for this local priority.</li> </ul>	<p>Verification Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A completed <i>Local Priority – Graduates of Supportive Housing for Rent Geared to Income Housing</i> referral form signed by a designated Supportive Housing Provider on behalf of the tenant which verifies that the tenant is able to meet all requirements for the local priority.</li> </ul> <p>A list of the approved designated supportive housing providers has been attached as Appendix 'B' to this Directive. Supportive housing providers can be added or deleted from the designated list over time, as determined by the Service Manager, when appropriate.</p>



**APPENDIX “B”**

**List of Designated Supportive Housing Providers Providing Referrals for the  
Local Priority – Graduates of Supportive Housing  
As at January 1, 2020**

1. Options Bytown Non-Profit Housing Corporation
2. Ottawa Salus
3. Cornerstone/Le Pillier
4. Daybreak Non-Profit Housing Corporation
5. John Howard Society of Ottawa
6. Harmony House
7. Project Upstream
8. Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa
9. NCR YMCA-YWCA Ottawa – Supportive Housing Program
10. Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ottawa Branch
11. Tewegan Transition House
12. Montfort Renaissance
13. Bruce House
14. Shepherds of Good Hope Supportive Living Program
15. Emily Murphy Non-Profit Housing Corporation
16. Youville Centre