



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Housing Services

APPLICATION GUIDE

RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME ASSISTANCE

&

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Housing Services Intake

5th Floor, 34 N. Cumberland Street, Thunder Bay ON P7A 8B9

Telephone: (807) 766-2112 Toll Free 1-866-363-0929

Fax: (807) 344-4543

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Closed for Lunch from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Applications may also be put in
the Drop Box**

www.tbdssab.on.ca

APPLICATION GUIDE

The Application Guide has been developed to assist households when applying for RGI Assistance and Special Needs. Households will be required to complete one of four application forms:

1. **Seniors** – at least one household member is sixty (60) years of age. In the case of some housing projects, at least one household member is fifty (50) years of age.
2. **Singles** – single individuals or couples without dependents
3. **Families** – individuals providing accommodation for one or more dependents
4. **Special Needs** – at least one household member requires a unit that has been modified with accessibility features and/or provincial support services is available to assist the individuals to live independently.

In order to qualify for RGI assistance you must be able to check (✓) the following boxes:

- Is at least one member of the household 16 years of age or older?
- Are all household members: (1) Canadian Citizens, (2) permanent resident applicants, or (3) refugee claimants under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada)?
- Are all household members exempt from an enforceable removal order under the *Immigration & Refugee Protection Act* (Canada)?
- Are all household members free of rental arrears with respect to a previous tenancy in any housing project under any housing program, except in the case of a household that qualifies for Special Priority Status?
- Are all household members free of any conviction by a court of law or findings by an administrative tribunal (Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal) for misrepresenting their income for the purposes of RGI assistance?
- Do all household members intend to divest of residential property (sell home) within six (6) months of receiving RGI assistance?

Household Income Limits			
City of Thunder Bay (includes: Conmee, Gillies, Neebing Township, O'Connor, Oliver-Paipoonge Township, Shuniah)		District of Thunder Bay (Whole service areas except those set out)	
Bachelor	\$22,000	Bachelor	\$21,000
One Bedroom	\$28,000	One Bedroom	\$26,500
Two Bedrooms	\$33,500	Two Bedrooms	\$32,000
Three Bedrooms	\$42,000	Three Bedrooms	\$35,000
Four or More Bedrooms	\$47,500	Four or More Bedrooms	\$41,000

You will qualify for a specific size of unit based on the number of people in your household. A complete description of the Local Occupancy Standards can be found further along in this Guide. If the total household income exceeds the Household Income Limits, noted above, you will be considered a market rent applicant. **Market rent applicants must apply directly with the housing providers who offer units at market value. Please visit the Housing Services Intake for a complete listing.**

TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

1. Complete all sections of the application and provide the required document(s). If any questions are left unanswered, your application will be deemed incomplete and mailed back to you. Please print in blue or black ink.
2. We encourage you to hand deliver your application and document(s) to:

HOUSING SERVICES INTAKE

**34 North Cumberland Street, 5TH Floor, Thunder Bay ON P7A 8B9
(807) 766-2112 Toll Free 1-866-363-0929 FAX (807) 344-4543**

3. While delivering your application in person, staff will make photocopies of your documents and identification. If it is inconvenient to deliver your application in person, you may mail your completed application with photocopies of the required identification and income documents to the above noted address. **DO NOT FAX YOUR APPLICATION FORM. FAXED APPLICATIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.**
4. Remember to sign your application! All applicants aged 16 years and older must sign and date the last page of the application.
5. The Housing Services Intake will send a letter within seven business days confirming receipt of the application and indicating whether the application is complete or incomplete.
6. If you have any questions regarding the application please contact the Housing Services Intake.
7. Review the checklist located on the last page of this guide to ensure your application is complete.

IMPORTANT: You may be deemed ineligible for RGI Assistance and removed from the waiting list if you fail to report any changes in income, address, phone number, and family composition within fifteen (15) business days of the change.

Required Documents:

Your application will not be assessed for eligibility if it is not accompanied by the required document(s).

SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER

- Photocopies of Social Insurance Numbers for each household member 16 years of age and older

PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP

- Photocopies of one of the following for each household member:
 - Canadian Provincial Birth Certificate, Certificate of Canadian Citizenship, Canadian Passport, Native Status Card, Ontario Health Card
 - Canadian Immigrant ID card, IMM 1000, Visa Counter foil with “Confirmation of Permanent Residence Paper”, or Permanent Resident Card
 - Refugee Status Claim (IMM 1442 indicating refugee claimant)

PREGNANCY (if applicable)

- A note from your physician, nurse practitioner or mid-wife indicating the approximate due date of the baby.

CUSTODY OF DEPENDENTS (if single parent)

- Applicable sections of divorce/separation agreement (Court Order and Minutes of Settlement)
- Documentation indicating primary residency of dependant household members identified (i.e. School records, Child Tax Benefit receipts, etc.)

INCOME & ASSETS

- Current *Two-Page Income Tax Return Information Form RC143 E* from Canada Revenue Agency or *Notice of Assessment* from Canada Revenue Agency for each household member with declared income. Note: T4s & T5s must accompany these documents.
- Cheque stubs indicating the gross monthly income for each household member
- Any other income or asset information requested by the Housing Services Intake

PRIORITY STATUS (if applicable)

If you or a member of your family is experiencing family violence, personal safety issues or issues of an extraordinary nature, or serious medical problems where your current accommodation poses a life threatening risk, you may qualify for one of the following priority statuses:

- Special Priority Status: Verification Declaration Form and support letter must be completed & submitted
- Urgent Status for Medical Reasons: Medical Report must be completed & submitted
- Urgent Status: Support letter or Supporting documentation must be provided

Definitions and Terms Used in the Application:

GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME: means total income of the Tenant and all other persons residing in the unit and/or every tenant on the lease temporarily residing elsewhere.

INCOME: means all income, benefits, and gains, of every kind from every source including, but not limited to the following:

- gross salaries, wages, overtime payments, commissions, bonuses, tips, gratuities;
- gross amounts of social assistance (Ontario Works) and disability pensions (ODSP, CPP D);
- band allowance for post-secondary education
- the greater of the net income from the business or the total withdrawals from the business as personal salary or other benefits of anyone who is self-employed in a business;
- the gross amount of employment insurance benefits (EI);
- the gross amount of all pensions such as: old age security (OAS), federal guaranteed income supplement (GIS), spouses allowance, Ontario guaranteed annual income systems (GAINS), pension benefits, and/or annuity from all federal, provincial, or municipal governments whether from Canada, other countries or states and/or from any other source;
- the gross amount of alimony, separation, maintenance or support payments;
- the gross amount of support or maintenance resulting from an undertaking given with respect to the member under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada)
- the gross amount of interest from: savings and chequing accounts, investments such as: term deposits, bonds, debentures, capital gains, stocks, shares, securities, and/or lump sum payments. Where the actual income cannot be determined, an imputed rate of return set by the Canada Savings Bonds Rate shall be used;
- the total appraised value of all non income producing assets such as: cottages, properties, and/or homes, multiplied by an imputed rate of return set by the Canada Savings Bonds Rate will equal an imputed income;

PRIORITY STATUS: refers to the fact that some applicants may be disadvantaged by a chronological tenant selection system and have unique circumstances, sometimes beyond their control. These circumstances may qualify the applicant for “Special” or “Urgent” status that gives them priority placement on the waiting list. Additional documentation is required to determine eligibility. Further details of these special statuses are outlined in this Guide.

SENIOR: for the purpose of social housing, a senior is designated as someone 60 years of age and older. Some seniors' buildings within the district of Thunder Bay accept applicants 50 years of age and older.

SPECIAL NEEDS –MODIFIED/SUPPORTIVE/ALTERNATIVE

Special needs housing has either been modified with accessibility features and/or it is supported with provincially funded support services. There are many housing providers in the District of Thunder Bay that own and administer special needs housing. A complete listing of the housing providers with special needs units can be found in the Special Needs Application form. Alternative housing is specifically mandated for individuals who are homeless or hard-to-house.

How to Apply for Special Needs Housing

If you are interested in applying for RGI assistance and special needs (modified) housing, please apply directly with the Housing Services Intake.

If you are applying for RGI assistance and special needs (supportive/alternative) housing, please submit a completed RGI Application Form for determination of basic eligibility. If your household has been deemed eligible, your application will be forwarded to the selected housing provider for assessment for eligibility for their project. You will be contacted by the housing provider for further assessment to determine eligibility. If determined eligible your household will be notified and placed on the waiting list for the project selected.

PROVINCIAL PRIORITY RULES

The province has established by regulation, the following two (2) provincial priority rules for ranking households on the centralized waiting list:

Ranking According to Date

- A household ranks higher than another household with a later ranking date.
- The ranking date for a household that was added to the centralized waiting list is the date the household applied for RGI assistance.
- The ranking date for a household requesting a transfer to a different housing provider is the date it requested to be added to the centralized waiting list.
- The ranking date for an over-housed household that was added to the centralized waiting list is the date the household applied for RGI assistance before first beginning to receive RGI assistance.

Priority for Special Priority Households

A household with special priority status (households that have been subject to abuse) ranks higher than another household that is not a special priority household. The ranking date for a special priority household is the date the household requested to be included in the special priority household category.

Special Priority Status

Special priority status for households applying for RGI assistance is to be given to an applicant whose personal safety or whose family's safety is at risk because of abuse by **someone with whom they live in a familial relationship**. This special priority status is to enable the applicant to separate permanently from the abuser. Due to the urgency of the situation, the application is processed as quickly as possible. For the purpose of this provincial policy, abuse means:

Any incident or physical or sexual violence;

- words/actions/gestures which threaten ones person, children, family, or property.

• Applicants eligible for special priority status include:

- a woman or a man (with or without children) who has been abused by a partner with whom she/he lives in a familial relationship and intends to separate from him/her permanently;
- a senior who has been abused by a family member/caregiver;
- a parent/guardian whose children have been abused by another member of the family; or
- a person sixteen (16) years of age or older who has been abused by another family member.

How to Apply for Special Priority Status

To apply for special priority status, an individual is required to submit a Verification Declaration form and a Letter of Verification, completed by a community service provider knowledgeable about the applicant's situation. In addition, a Consent and Notification form, must be completed which gives the Housing Services Intake permission to seek housing among other housing providers.

• Verification to support an applicant's application for special priority status can come from one (1) of the following community service providers:

- Doctor
- Lawyer
- Law Enforcement Officer
- Clergy
- Social Service Worker
- Teacher/Guidance Counsellor
- Housing Provider - Management/Administration Staff
- Community Health Care Worker
- Social Worker
- Social Services Worker
- Victim Services Worker
- Settlement Services Worker
- Shelter Worker

• Once Housing Services Intake has determined that the applicant meets the eligibility rules for RGI assistance, and the applicant's situation has been verified by an appropriate verifier, special priority status will be assigned and the application will be given top priority on the centralized waiting list.

• If the Special Priority household feels at risk when obtaining the required documentation, they must inform the Housing Services Intake.

• Requests for Special Priority Status from an individual who no longer lives with the abuser and the date of the request is not within 3 months of when they ceased living together, will be reviewed by the Housing Services Intake on a case by case basis.

• If after a thorough review, the request is denied, the household will be advised of their ability to appeal the decision through Internal Review.

Urgent Priority Status

In addition to the provincial priority rules, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) has established a local priority group – households with urgent needs based on extraordinary circumstances. Urgent priority status may be granted under the following situations:

• An applicant's permanent residence has been destroyed and they have no place to live.

- An applicant's child(ren) is (are) removed by the Children's Aid Society because their current housing is inappropriate and the child(ren) will be returned if adequate housing is provided.
- An applicant is ready to be released from the hospital or other care facility and cannot return to their former residence or has no place to live.
- An applicant has personal safety or social issues of an extraordinary nature where a member or household members are at risk.
- An applicant has serious medical problems where his/her current accommodation poses a life threatening risk.

How to Apply for Urgent Priority Status

If you are applying for urgent priority status, you will be required to submit documentation substantiating your request. Requests of a health or medical nature must be accompanied by a completed Medical Report. This form is available from the Housing Services Intake or printed from the TBDSSAB website.

Housing Services Intake will review each request on an individual basis and determine if urgent priority status will be granted. Households given urgent priority status will be placed on the centralized waiting list after households with special priority status.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL TRANSFERS

How to Apply for a Transfer

If you are receiving RGI assistance and wish to apply for a transfer within the portfolio of your current housing provider, this is referred to as an internal transfer. Requests for internal transfers must be made directly to your current housing provider and not the Housing Services Intake. Each housing provider will have its own policies and procedures related to internal transfers.

If you are receiving RGI assistance and wish to apply for a transfer to a housing project with a different housing provider, this is referred to as an external transfer. To apply for an external transfer, please follow the RGI application procedures found in this Guide. If you are deemed eligible you will be placed on the centralized waiting list. Such is the case with applicants who are residing in the only unit that is managed by a housing provider and desire a unit at a different location.

LOCAL OCCUPANCY STANDARDS

The following local occupancy standards have been approved by the TBDSSAB to guide housing providers in the determination of the appropriate size of unit a household may be eligible for:

STANDARDS

1. Only household members who are spouses of each other or same sex partners of each other may share a one bedroom unit.
2. Bedrooms may be shared by:
 - a) Two children at the request of the applicant and discretion of the housing provider after considering bedroom size, medical conditions, ages and sex of the children.
 - b) A parent and a child if they are of the same sex, and the child is under five years of age.
3. A household member who does not meet the conditions outlined in sections 1 & 2 will require a separate bedroom.

ADDITIONAL BEDROOMS

Additional bedrooms may be allocated under the following circumstances:

1. Disability or Medical Conditions – when one of the spouses or same sex partners requires a separate bedroom because of a disability or medical condition. Supporting documentation is required.
2. Equipment Storage – to store equipment required for use by a member of a household who has a disability or medical condition.
3. Pregnancy – when a member of the household is pregnant. The pregnancy must be confirmed by medical documentation.
4. Students living away from the household – when a child of a household member who is less than 27 years of age, relies on the household for financial support and does not live with the household while in full-time attendance at a recognized educational institute, but resides with the household while not attending the educational institute.
5. Shared physical custody – refers to an arrangement where a child or children spend part of the time with each parent. Parents may have joint custody where only one parent has physical custody, with the other sharing in the decision making. The number of children that a member of the household is responsible for under a shared physical custody agreement may determine the size of the allocated unit.

Additional bedroom may be allocated when:

- A member of the household has joint custody over a child who is not a member of the household;
- The member is required to provide accommodation for the child, and the bedroom is required to accommodate the child;
- A member of the household has visiting rights with respect to a child who is not a member of the household;
- It is a condition of the member's visiting rights with respect to a child who is not a member of the household;
- The child with stay overnight with the member frequently.

A household member's request for an additional bedroom to accommodate a child or children who regularly require overnight accommodation must be accompanied by a document verifying shared physical custody. The following documents are proof of shared physical custody:

- A court-ordered custody or separation agreement and accompanying minutes of settlement if necessary.
- A letter of confirmation from a child welfare agency, which indicates that the child or children reside with the parent.
- Income tax returns, Child Tax Credits or other financial documents.
- Income support program drug and dental card which lists dependant children.
- a statement from a school or daycare regarding the home address of the child or children.
- A sworn statement in writing by the parent or parent's that the child or children will or do reside with them;

For parents without shared physical custody, temporary crowding will be permitted to allow parents' access to their child or children. Specifically, where there is no court stipulation of adequate accommodation as a condition for access, extra space is not normally granted.

SPECIAL PRIORITY HOUSEHOLD

If a household with Special Priority status feels at risk if they were to obtain the required documentation for determination of unit size, they must inform the Housing Services Intake.

BACHELOR UNITS

Bachelor units are defined as smaller units without a separate bedroom. These units are usually allocated to single member households, including single senior citizens.

FOSTER CHILDREN

The Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 defines child in relation to an individual as a child born inside or outside marriage or as a child adopted by an individual in Ontario. This does not include a child placed in an individual's home as a foster child for consideration by another person having lawful custody. Consequently, foster children are not included as a household member and are not considered in allocating unit size.

ADDITIONS TO THE LEASE

Approval from your current housing provider must be obtained to add household members to an existing lease. Approval is dependent on current occupancy of the unit and the circumstances of the household member(s).

MUNICIPAL BYLAWS

Municipal By-laws prevail over local occupancy standards.

CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST REQUIREMENTS

- Housing Services Intake has the sole responsibility of maintaining a centralized waiting list for all housing providers in the District of Thunder Bay. Households that are eligible for RGI assistance will be placed on the centralized wait list based on their status and ranking date.
- Households will be removed from the centralized waiting list if they request to be removed, if they cease to be eligible or have accepted an offer of RGI assistance.
- The size of unit with respect to which a household has indicated a preference, either in their application for RGI assistance or subsequently, shall be indicated on the centralized waiting list.
- A household may indicate a preference for all sizes of units within the range that they are eligible based on local occupancy standards. If a household does not indicate any preference for a size of housing unit, they will be deemed to have indicated a preference for the largest unit for which they are eligible.
- The housing projects, to which a household has indicated a preference either on their application or subsequently, shall be indicated on the waiting list.
- A household's preferred selection will be ineffective and shall not be indicated on the waiting list if no member of the household meets the requirements of the housing provider's mandate.
- A household may indicate a preference for one or more geographic areas established by the TBDSSAB.
- A household's preference for a housing project or geographic area shall be removed if they request it.
- If a household does not indicate a preference for a housing project, the Housing Services Intake will make every reasonable effort to contact them to determine their project preferences.

- A market household may indicate a preference to receive RGI assistance for the unit they occupy at the time of indicating the preference.

OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

- Households must be given an opportunity to comment if the Housing Services Intake/ Housing Provider receives information that will lead to a decision that will affect the household in an adverse way. The information could come from outside the household, or from any household member. If the information comes from outside the household, all household members must be given an opportunity to comment.
- If it comes from one household member, unless all household members have “signed off” on the information, all other household members must be given an opportunity to comment.
- The only time a housing provider is not required to give a household an opportunity to comment is when all household members acknowledge the information, and the housing provider has received it within the past 30 days.
- It is the housing provider that makes the decision as to whether a specific item of information, provided by a third party or household member may form a significant basis for the decision and is therefore subject to the opportunity to comment.
- A housing provider must give a household notice of the opportunity to comment on information that in the opinion of the housing provider may form a significant basis for an RGI decision.
- The notice must contain the following information:
 - A summary of the information
 - A description of the proposed decision
 - A statement informing the household of their right to comment in writing
 - A date by which the household can comment. This date must be at least 30 days after the date of the notice.
- Comments from the household must be in writing and must be signed by each individual providing the comments.

INTERNAL REVIEW

The following decisions made by either the Housing Services Intake or housing providers are eligible for review under The *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000* regarding rent geared-to-income-assistance and special needs housing:

- That the household is ineligible for RGI assistance.
- That the household is ineligible for special needs housing.
- That respecting the category into which the household has been placed on the waiting list.
- That respecting the type of accommodation in which the household may be accommodated.
- That respecting the amount of RGI assistance payable by the household.
- That respecting a deferral of RGI assistance by the household.
- You have ten (10) business days to make a request for an Internal Review from the person that made the decision you want reviewed.
- Requests for an internal review must be made on an Internal Review form available from the Housing Services Intake or the housing provider.

- The time for receiving a request for internal review may be extended where the person making the decision is satisfied that you acted in good faith and was unable to comply with the timeframe because of a reason beyond your control.
- Once you completed the Request for Internal Review form please forward it to the TBDSSAB.
- The TBDSSAB will schedule the internal review hearing and notify you of the hearing particulars.
- After the internal review hearing, you will be notified in writing of the Internal Review Committee's decision.
- A decision of the Internal Review Committee is final.

Where will Internal Reviews be Held?

Internal reviews requested by persons in the District communities will be held via teleconference. Internal reviews requested by persons in the City of Thunder Bay will be held in Thunder Bay and arranged by TBDSSAB.

Who Conducts an Internal Review?

An Internal Review Committee comprised of one or three Review Officers will hear internal reviews. Review Officers are appointed by TBDSSAB.

What are the Rules for Conducting an Internal Review?

All Review Officers must adhere to certain rules for conducting an internal review as follows:

- No individual who participated in making the decision being reviewed shall participate in a review of that decision;
- The internal review hearing shall be held and a decision made within:
 - fifteen (15) business days after the request for the internal review is received; or
 - five (5) business days after the request for internal review is received where:
 - the decision being disputed concerns a request for inclusion in the special priority household category; or
 - the decision being disputed concerns an application for RGI assistance and a request for inclusion in the special priority household category.
- If you and /or your representative do not appear at the hearing, the Internal Review Committee will proceed with the review and make a decision.
- You may bring a translator, family member, friend, or other advocate, however the Chair of the Internal Review Committee at his/her discretion, may limit the number of advocates at the hearing.
- The housing provider may have a case presenter at the hearing to present the facts of the case on behalf of the housing provider.
- Following the Internal Review Hearing, the final decision of the Internal Review Committee will be rendered in a closed caucus.
- A decision of the Internal Review Committee will be issued within fifteen (15) business days after the review is complete.

Further information about Housing Services and a printable application and guide is available on The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board web site located at www.tbdssab.ca

CHECKLIST FOR SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Check all the boxes below that apply. Please be sure to bring the original documents with you so they can be photocopied. If you are mailing your application please include photocopies.

- Custody of Dependents:** Divorce/Separation agreement (Court Order and Minutes of Settlement required); Current school records; Drug or Dental Benefit Card; Letter signed by other primary child caretaker stating the percentage of time child spends with each parent.
- Income Tax Return:** Current Income Tax Summary from Canada Revenue Agency, or a Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency if accompanied with T4s and T5s.
- Pregnancy:** Letter from a health care professional stating approximate due date.
- Proof of Status in Canada** (Birth Certificate, IMM 1000, IMM 1442, Status card, Passport, Citizenship card).
- Social Insurance Number:** All household members 16 years of age and older.
- Special Priority Status:** Completed Verification Declaration Package and/or Medical Report and/or any additional verifying documentation.

INCOME & ASSET VERIFICATION: Including but not exclusive to the following:

- Employment and Other Income:** Copies of your cheque stubs for the last two months showing hours of work and rate of pay, or a letter from your employer indicating the same.
- Employment Insurance Benefits:** Copies of your cheque stubs for the last two months.
- Interest:** Updated copies of your bank books showing interest earned over the previous 12 months, as well as copies of all GICs and Canada Savings Bonds, RRSPs, and any other investments.
- ODSP:** Cheque stub and Drug/Dental Benefit Card
- Old Age Security; Canada Pension Plan/Disability Pension:** A copy of your cheque stub showing the gross earnings or a copy of your bank statement showing the direct deposit if you do not receive a pay stub.
- Ontario Works:** Cheque stub and Drug/Dental Benefit Card (if applicable).
- Private Pension:** A copy of your cheque stub showing the gross earnings. Please ensure you provide our office with the gross amount of your pension.
- Property:** If you own property, we require a written estimate of its value. (Property Tax statement or MPAC statement). If you have transferred any assets within the last three years, please provide details.
- Self-Employment:** A copy of your latest income tax return along with all the T4 and T5 slips or monthly statements from your business.
- Student grants, OSAP, Band allowance amount:** Include course acceptance letter (if applicable).