



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Client Services

APPLICATION GUIDE

RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME ASSISTANCE

&

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Client Services Intake

231 May Street South, Thunder Bay ON P7E 1B5
Telephone: (807) 766-2111 Toll Free 1-877-281-2958
Fax: (807) 623-4902

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Applications may also be put in the Drop Box

www.tbdssab.ca

Definitions and Terms Used in the Application:

CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST: refers to a chronological and priority waitlist for all RGI housing applicants within the District of Thunder Bay.

GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME: means total income, before deductions, of the Applicant and all other persons on the application who will be residing in the unit.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME LIMITS (HIL)

If the total household income exceeds the Household Income Limits, you will be considered a market rent applicant. **Market rent applicants must apply directly with the housing providers who offer units at market value.**

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	\$27,000	Bachelor	\$24,500
One Bedroom	\$34,000	One Bedroom	\$31,000
Two Bedrooms	\$41,500	Two Bedrooms	\$38,000
Three Bedrooms	\$51,000	Three Bedrooms	\$43,500
Four or More Bedrooms	\$71,000	Four or More Bedrooms	\$54,000

INCOME: means all income, benefits, and gains, of every kind from every source (see Income and Assets below).

LOCAL OCCUPANCY STANDARDS

Applicants qualify for a specific size of unit based on the number of people in their household. A complete description of the Local Occupancy Standards can be found below.

PRIORITY STATUS: refers to applicants who may be disadvantaged by a chronological waitlist and have unique circumstances beyond their control. These circumstances may qualify the applicant for “Special Priority” or “Exceptional” status that gives them priority placement on the centralized waiting list. Additional documentation is required to determine eligibility for a priority status. Further details of priority status is outlined in this Guide.

RGI

Rent-Geared-to-Income housing assistance.

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.

The Application Guide has been developed to assist households when applying for RGI Assistance and Special Needs. Applicants will be required to complete an RGI Housing Application form and indicate on the form which of the following Unit Type you will be applying for:

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

Singles - single individuals or couples without dependents

Families - individuals providing accommodation for one or more dependent

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.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

1. Complete all sections of the application and provide the required verification 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.

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

- At least one member of the household is 16 years of age or older.
 - All household members are any one of the following: (1) Canadian Citizen (2) Permanent Resident Applicant or (3) Refugee Claimant under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada).
 - All household members are exempt from an enforceable removal order under the *Immigration & Refugee Protection Act* (Canada).
 - All household members are 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.
 - All household members are free of any conviction by a court of law or findings by an administrative tribunal (Landlord & Tenant Board - LTB) for misrepresenting their income for the purposes of RGI assistance.
 - All household members intend to divest (sell) residential property within six (6) months of receiving RGI assistance.
2. We encourage you to hand deliver your application and document(s) to:

CLIENT SERVICES INTAKE
231 May Street South, Thunder Bay ON P7E 1B5
(807) 766-2111 ~ Toll Free 1-877-281-2958 ~ FAX (807) 623-4902

3. While delivering your application in person, staff can 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 verification 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 declaration on the last page of application form.
6. If you have any questions regarding the application please contact the Client Services Intake.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Your application will not be assessed for eligibility and will be returned 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, valid Canadian Passport, Native Status 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 DEPENDENT(S)

- Applicable sections of divorce/separation agreement (Court Order / Minutes of Settlement) for shared / sole custody arrangements
- Documentation indicating primary residency / custody arrangement of dependent(s) (i.e. School records, Child Tax Benefit receipts, Letter from Child Welfare agency, etc.) for non-birth children

INCOME & ASSETS

- Current *Two-Page Income Tax Return Information Form RC143 E* from Canada Revenue Agency or current *Notice of Assessment* from Canada Revenue Agency for each household member with declared income. Note: All T-Slips (T4s / T5s, etc.) must accompany these documents.
- Three (3) months bank statements for all bank accounts for every household member (Chequing, Saving, TFSA, etc.)
- Current value of all investments (RRSP, GIC, RESP, RDSP, etc.)
- Current value of home, camp, property or real-estate
- Cheque / paystubs indicating the gross monthly income for each household member

Any other income or asset information requested by Client Services Intake including but not limited to:

- Employment - Gross salaries, wages, overtime payments, commissions, bonuses, tips, gratuities;
- Social Assistance - amounts of social assistance (Ontario Works) and disability pensions (ODSP, CPP-D);
- Post-Secondary funding – Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) funding or Band allowance for post-secondary education;
- Self-employment - 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;
- Employment Insurance Benefits (EIB) - Gross monthly amount of EIB;
- Pension income - Gross amount of all pensions such as: Old Age Security (OAS), federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), Spouses Allowance, Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS), employee pension income, annuity from all federal, provincial, or municipal governments whether from Canada, other countries or states and/or from any other source;
- Spousal Support / Alimony - Gross amount of alimony, maintenance or support payments;
- Sponsorship Support - Gross amount of support or maintenance resulting from an undertaking given with respect to a member under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada)
- Interest accrual - 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;
- Non-Income Producing Assets - 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 (if applicable)

If you or a member of your family is experiencing family violence, personal safety issues or issues of an extraordinary nature, or terminal 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, support letter and residency verification must be completed & submitted. Form available from Client Services.
- Exceptional Status for Medical reasons: Medical Report must be completed & submitted. Form available from Client Services.
- Exceptional Status for custody reasons: Support letter or supporting documentation must be provided

IMPORTANT: You must report any changes to your application immediately.

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 thirty (30) days of the change.

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 Building Section of the 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 applying for RGI Housing assistance **and** Special Needs (supportive/alternative) housing, please submit a completed RGI Application Form for determination of RGI eligibility. If your household has been determined RGI eligible, you will be notified that your application was forwarded to the Special Needs housing provider for their project. You will be contacted by the housing provider for further assessment to determine Special Needs eligibility. If determined eligible your household will be notified and placed on the waiting list for the project selected.

PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL PRIORITY RULES

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

1) Chronological Wait list

- The ranking date for a household that was added to the centralized waiting list is the date the TBDSSAB has received a complete RGI Application form.
- A household ranks higher than another household with a later ranking date.
- The ranking date for an over-housed household is the date they applied for RGI assistance prior to receiving RGI Housing Assistance.

2) Special Priority Status

Special Priority status for households applying for RGI Housing 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.

A household with Special Priority status (households that have been subject to abuse) will rank higher than another household that is not Special Priority. The ranking date for a Special Priority household is the date the household was approved to be included in the Special Priority household category.

For the purpose of this provincial policy, abuse means:

Any incident of physical, verbal, 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;
- a person sixteen (16) years of age or older who has been abused by another family member; or
- households who are currently being trafficked or those who have exited trafficking within a period of 3 months.

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 Client Services Intake permission to seek housing among other housing providers. We also require a document which verifies both individuals resided at the same address. This could include rent receipts, bills, bank statements, mortgage statements, etc.

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

- Medical Professional; physician, nurse practitioner, psychiatrist, etc.
- Lawyer, Law Enforcement Officer
- Clergy
- Teacher/Guidance Counsellor
- Housing Provider - Management/Administration Staff
- Community Health Care Worker, Registered Social Worker, Registered Social Services Worker, Victim Services Worker, Shelter Worker, Settlement Services Worker
- Early Childhood Educator
- Member of the College of Midwives of Ontario
- Indigenous Elder, Indigenous Traditional Person or Indigenous Knowledge Keeper
- Indigenous person who provides traditional midwifery services

Once it has been determined that the applicant meets the eligibility rules for RGI Housing assistance, and the applicant's situation has been verified, 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 for their housing application, they must inform the Service Manager.

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 Service Manager 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. If you are denied Special Priority status, your household will be placed chronologically on the waiting list.

3) Exceptional Status Priority

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 exceptional needs based on extraordinary circumstances. Exceptional Status may be granted under the following situations:

- A household whose dependent children are at risk of apprehension or will not be returned by a child protection agency due to the household not having adequate housing **AND** lack of adequate housing is the only protection issue outstanding.
- A household with a member with a terminal illness that is aggravated by their current housing situation and that would result in personal risk should the household be required to wait a prolonged period of time to access housing.

How to Apply for Exceptional Status

If you are applying for Exceptional 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 confirming a terminal condition. This form is available from the Client Services Intake or printed from the TBDSSAB website.

The Service Manager will review each request on an individual basis and determine if Exceptional Status will be granted. Households given Exceptional 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 not the Client 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, you must submit a new application. When you are determined 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 gender of the children.
 - b) A parent and a child if they are of the same gender, 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. Supporting documentation is required.
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.

An 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 and 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 will 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 dependent 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.

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 *Housing Services Act, 2011* defines a child in relation to an individual as a child born inside or outside the 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.

MUNICIPAL BYLAWS

Municipal By-laws prevail over local occupancy standards.

THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD UNITS:

- No one may smoke or use cigarettes, cigar or similar products that generate smoke in the residence. Smoking is prohibited in the residential units, within buildings, balconies and patio, enclosed common areas, as well as outside within 5 meters of doorways, operable windows and air intakes.
- Tenant Insurance (with recommended comprehensive liability coverage) is now mandatory as long as you live in TBDSSAB properties. Proof is required at time of lease-up and annually with tenants lease renewals.
- No more than two **(2)** household pets (e.g. cats and dogs) are allowed. No pet may exceed 35 kilograms (75 pounds) and pets must be registered with TBDSSAB using the *Pet Identification Form*.

CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST REQUIREMENTS

- Client 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 Waiting 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 Centralized Waiting list.

- A household's preferred selection will be ineffective and shall not be indicated on the Centralized 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 removal.
- A market household may indicate a preference to receive RGI Assistance for the unit they occupy at the time of indicating the preference.

INTERNAL REVIEW

The following decisions made by either Client Services Intake or housing providers are eligible for review under The *Housing Services Act, 2011* regarding Rent-Geared-to-Income Assistance and Special Needs housing:

- A determination under subsection 45(1), that the household is not eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance.
 - A determination under subsection 46(1), of the size and type of unit that would be permissible if the household received rent-geared-to-income assistance.
 - A determination under subsection 48(1), the household is not included in a category given priority over other categories as it relates to rent-geared-to-income assistance.
 - A determination under subsection 50(1), of the amount of rent payable by the household.
 - A determination under subsection 52(1), that the household is no longer eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance.
 - A determination under subsection 61(1), that the household is not eligible for special needs housing.
 - A determination under subsection 63(1), that the household is not included in a category given priority over other categories as it relates to special needs housing.
 - A determination, under subsection 65(1), that the household is no longer eligible for special needs.
- You have thirty (30) calendar days to make a request for an Internal Review.
 - Requests for an Internal Review must be made in writing or on an Internal Review Form which is available from Client Services Intake or the Housing Provider.
 - The thirty (30) day timeframe may be extended if the Service Manager feels that the person is acting in good faith and is satisfied that the applicant was unable to comply with timeframe due to circumstances beyond their control.
 - Once you have the request for the Internal Review completed, forward it to TBDSSAB Client Services Intake.
 - Client Services Intake will then forward the request to the Internal Review Officer.
 - After the Internal Review is completed, you will be notified in writing of the decision by the Internal Review Officer.
 - All decisions of the Internal Review Officer are final.

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