



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Housing and Works**

OFFICIAL

Community Housing Allocations Guidelines



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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide Community Housing Organisations (CHOs) with guidance when applying the [Community Housing Allocations Policy \(CHAP\)](#).

The Community Housing Allocations Guidelines (the Guidelines) should be read in conjunction with the CHAP and should not be used or implemented independently.

The CHAP aims to:

- Ensure Social and Affordable Rental Housing is used to provide housing assistance to very low to moderate income earners.
- Provide opportunities for Social Housing Tenants to transition from Social to Affordable Rental Housing; and
- Ensure consistency and compliance with legislative and contractual requirements.

2 Scope

The CHAP applies:

- To CHOs that have a legal agreement with the Housing Authority (operating within the Department of Housing and Works) to provide **Social Housing** (Band A) and/ or **Affordable Rental Housing** (Band B);
- Where the Housing Authority has a financial/ interest in Dwelling/s within a CHO portfolio; and
- To **Affordable Rental Housing** (Band B) projects delivered in partnership between the State Government and CHOs.

The CHAP may also be utilised where a CHO provides Social Housing and/ or Affordable Rental Housing programs within their portfolio, as defined by the Housing Authority.

CHOs offering Transitional Accommodation may choose to utilise the CHAP where there is no existing or relevant policy.

The Community Disability Housing Program (CDHP) is not included in the CHAP. For further information, please refer to the [Community Housing Disability Program Policy](#) and [Community Housing Disability Program Guidelines](#).

2.1 General Information

The CHAP works in conjunction with the Community Housing (CH) and Public Housing policies, which can be found at [Community Housing - Policies and Resources](#), and [Department of Housing and Works – Public Housing](#).

There are two categories of CH allocation settings referred to in these Guidelines which relate to Applicants/ co-Applicants, Tenants/ co-Tenants and partners who are income and asset eligible for:

1. **Social Housing** (Band A) based on Public Housing eligibility settings determined by the Housing Authority;
2. **Affordable Rental Housing** (Band B) based on eligibility settings as set out in the Community Housing Eligibility Policy (CHEP).

3 Application Waitlists

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 4

Applications may be listed on:

- a. Housing Authority's Joint Wait List (JWL);
- b. CHO Wait Lists such as the CHO's own register or waiting list.

3.1 Joint Waitlist

The Housing Authority (operating within the Department of Housing and Works) is responsible for the management of the Joint Wait List (JWL) for Social Housing (Public and Community).

CHOs may sign up to the JWL to access Applicants/ co-Applicants/ Tenants/ co-Tenants from the JWL.

CHOs not signed up to JWL may access applications on the JWL by emailing CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au

The JWL is date-listed based on the date of registration. Urgent and priority circumstances are considered when determining an Allocation.

Applications on the JWL can be considered for Social Housing (Public and Community) unless Applicants opt out of this option.

For assistance regarding the JWL, CHOs may contact

CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au.

3.1.1 Access to JWL via Habitat

Access to the JWL is via the Communities' application, Habitat.

To access Habitat, CHOs should contact CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au.

CHOs can receive details to allow for Allocation or Transfer such as:

- a. Applicant's name;
- b. registration date of Application;
- c. waitlist type – Priority or Wait Turn;
- d. zone of preference; and
- e. housing needs.

When an Applicant is listed on the JWL, the Housing Authority will share relevant information with the CHO. Should additional information be requested, the CHO will be required to provide a consent form signed by the Applicant to the above email address.

3.2 Non-JWL Allocations

Non-JWL Allocations include:

- a. CHO Tenant Transfers, either internal or between CHOs; and
- b. Affordable Rental Housing Applications not listed on the JWL.

4 Available for Allocation

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 5

Before CHOs progress to Allocation, they should:

- ensure vacant property notifications have been provided to the Housing Authority;
- conduct an eligibility assessment for the ingoing Applicant ([Community Housing Policy and Resources – CHEP](#))
- consider other updated and relevant factors or changes in circumstance from the date of Application to the time of CHO Assessment or Allocation.

When a Dwelling is available for Allocation, CHOs should make a reasonable Offer of Accommodation which:

- assesses the needs of the Household against the available Dwelling;
- allocates according to the earliest listing date on the JWL for Wait Turn Applications;
- considers housing Priority Applications;
- allocates in accordance with the CHOs legal agreements and growth commitments.

The Application assessment process requires CHOs to conduct sensitive and sustainable Allocations when assessing an Application for assistance.

Sensitive Allocations refers to matching tenants with appropriate Dwelling types, location requirements, cultural and family (including extended) structures. By Sustainable Tenancies, it is meant that the CHO considers sensitive Allocation to ensure that the Allocation is sustainable for the tenant and the CHO.

This is to achieve efficiencies in Social and Affordable Rental Housing through better matching of Tenants with appropriate Dwelling types and provide better social and economic participation for Social and Affordable Rental Housing Tenants by locating housing closer to transport, services and employment opportunities.

4.1 Allocation Targets

Where CHOs have specific Allocation targets, these should be considered according to relevant legal agreements and growth commitments.

4.1.1 Social Housing Allocation Target

Allocations from the JWL (for Social Housing – Band A) should aim to be on an 80:20 ratio for Priority Applications (including Priority Transfers) and Wait Turn Applications in any 12-month period. The recommended Allocation target responds to the growing demand among Applicants with the greatest housing need and is consistent with Public Housing Allocations.

4.1.2 CHOS using the Joint Wait List

Applicant/ co-Applicant/ Tenant/ co-Tenant eligibility for being placed on the JWL is determined in accordance with Housing Authority procedure, and the eligibility of these Applications is reviewed annually by the Housing Authority.

Applications on the JWL are shortlisted and assessed for Allocation in the following order:

1. Application listing date;
2. Priority Applications;
3. Waitlisted Applications;
4. Transfer Applications.

CHOs can seek assistance accessing and making allocations via the JWL by emailing CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au.

4.1.3 Affordable Rental Housing Allocation Target

Not all CHOs will be eligible to allocate Affordable Rental Housing Dwellings. Where CHOs provide Affordable Rental Housing, they should aim to allocate on a 70:30 ratio for Allocations with an Affordable Rental Housing component and considered according to legal agreements and growth commitments.

- 70% or more Dwellings should aim to be Allocated to Social Housing Applications;
- Up to 30% of the Dwellings may be Allocated to Affordable Rental Housing Applications, according to legal agreements and growth commitments.

Where the over-income Social Housing Tenants transitioning to Affordable Rental Housing has been exhausted, Allocation may then be made to Affordable Rental Housing Applications sourced from the CHOs own register or waiting list.

5 Offer of Accommodation

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 6

CHOs should complete Allocation procedures in a timely and efficient manner. A decision to make an Offer of Accommodation, or assess the next Application, should be made within 21 working days.

5.1 Social Housing Allocations

Applications considered for Social Housing (both Public and Community Housing – Band A), may be offered a Dwelling by either the Housing Authority or a CHO, via the JWL.

The Housing Authority is responsible for management of JWL Applications, until Allocation.

Where a CHO has a Dwelling for Allocation, the CHO will manage this Allocation. CHOs who use the JWL should record Allocations in Habitat within three (3) working days of the Allocation occurring.

Discussion with Housing Authority Regional Managers may occur when (but not limited to):

- considering out-of-turn Transfers; and
- an Applicant/ co-Applicant, Tenant/ co-Tenant becomes over-income.

5.2 Affordable Rental Housing Allocations

Affordable Rental Housing Allocations should occur in accordance with CHO growth commitments, legal agreements, the [Targeted Affordable Rental Housing Policy](#) and any other relevant policies.

Affordable Rental Housing Applicants on the JWL are Public Housing Tenants no longer income or asset eligible for Social Housing and have been asked to transfer out of Public (or Social) Housing (listed on the JWL as a Transfer).

Where CHOs provide Affordable Rental Housing they should aim to Allocate a 70:30 ratio in any 12-month period, for Social Housing and Affordable Rental Housing, respectively (see section 4.1.3, above), and in accordance with their legal agreements.

In this ratio, the 30% is the maximum Affordable Rental Housing Dwellings that should be Allocated.

CHOs select Applications where needs match the vacant Dwelling, in the following order:

1. Current Social Housing tenants on the JWL who have become ineligible for Public Housing, according to the earliest listing date.
2. Applications sourced by the CHO from their internal waitlists and/or registers in accordance with the [Targeted Affordable Rental Housing Policy](#).

6 Declines

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 7

6.1 Reasonable Decline

CHOs may consider any extenuating circumstances that fall outside of what is considered a reasonable decline.

Grounds for a reasonable decline by the Applicant/ co-Applicant, Tenant/ co-Tenant after an Offer of Accommodation has been made, include (but are not limited to):

- the Dwelling does not meet the Applicant's demonstrated housing need;
- the Dwelling is not in the metropolitan zone or country town of the Applicant's choice;
- the Applicant is committed to private leasing arrangements; or
- other grounds determined by CHO.

Where an Applicant on the JWL declines an offer and the CHO deems this to be reasonable, the Application will remain on the JWL and retain the listing date.

6.2 Unreasonable Decline

Where the CHO deems the decline of an offer as unreasonable, the CHO should;

- enter the unreasonable decline into Habitat, with clarifying comments; and
- advise the Applicant/ co-Applicant, Tenant/ co-Tenant that their decline has been deemed unreasonable.

If an Applicant/ co-Applicant, Tenant/ co-Tenant refuses a valid Offer of Accommodation, the Application may be removed from the JWL.

CHOs should have an Appeals mechanism to account for circumstances when an Applicant believe an unfavourable decision has been made.

7 Withdrawals

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 8

7.1 Withdrawal of Applications from the JWL

Applications may be withdrawn from the JWL by the CHO and/ or Housing Authority if the Applicant/ Tenant makes an unreasonable decline of an Offer of

Accommodation. Further information is contained in the [Public Housing Application Management Policy](#).

8 Fully Accessible Housing

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 9

Fully Accessible housing (previously known as Mobility housing), that are not Community Disability Housing Program (CDHP), should be utilised by Applicants with a physical disability or impaired mobility.

9 Transfer Allocations

A Tenant may Transfer from Public Housing to Community Housing where a priority housing need is established.

Tenants are not eligible for Transfer back into a Public Housing property unless one of the following circumstances is established:

- a. they have a priority housing need which the CHO cannot deliver;
- b. the accommodation provided by the CHO is short-term; or
- c. they are in rehabilitation, recovery or therapy provided by the CHO.

The [Priority Housing Need Policy](#) provides further information on key risk and vulnerability factors.

CHOs may Transfer a Tenant within their own portfolio or between other CHO Dwellings from the JWL, in accordance with its own policies.

10 Residential Tenancy Agreements

CHOs are required to use Periodic Tenancy Agreements, unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a Fixed Term Agreement.

Exceptional circumstances may include, but is not limited to poor tenancy history, anti-social behaviour or major breaches of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1987* (WA).

11 Discretionary Decision Making

A discretionary decision is used to address a situation where an Applicant's circumstances fall outside existing policy parameters or where a decision made solely within current policy could result in inequitable treatment of the client.

CHOs may make discretionary decisions that fall outside of the parameters of the CHAP, ensuring access to social housing is equitable, fair and transparent.

Prior to making a discretionary decision, CHOs should ensure they have assessed the circumstances against all existing policies and legal agreements.

12 Definitions

The terms and definitions in the CHAP and Guidelines are contained in the [Community Housing Policy Definitions](#).

13 Support and Advice

For support and advice about CH policies, procedures and guidelines, please email CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au. Further information may also be found at wa.gov.au.

For further information regarding the registration process, please contact the Registrar of Community Housing at Registrar@dohw.wa.gov.au.

14 Document Control

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