



Community Housing Policy Definitions

1 Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide Community Housing Organisations (CHOs) with guidance on the definitions used when applying the [Community Housing Eligibility Policy](#) (CHEP), [Community Housing Allocations Policy](#) (CHAP) and [Community Housing Rent Setting Policy](#) (CHRSP), and Guidelines to their operational practice.

These definitions should be read in conjunction with the CHEP, CHAP and CHRSP, and should not be used or implemented independently.

Further definitions may be included in each legal agreement, specific to the requirements of that agreement.

2 Support and Advice

For support and advice about Community Housing policies 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.

For further information on the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987* and obligations as a landlord, refer to or contact the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety on 1300 304 054 or www.dmirs.wa.gov.au/renting.

3 Definitions

The terms and definitions in the CHEP, CHAP and CHRSP, and their Guidelines, refer to usage by the Housing Authority (operating within the Department of Housing and Works), specifically. There may be variations utilised by the wider Sector and other organisations.

| Term | Definition |
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| Affordable Rental Housing | Subsidised long term rental housing, other than Social Housing, secured under a Legal Agreement, and in accordance with the Community Housing Eligibility Policy, for housing Eligible Persons. Affordable Rental Housing includes Band B and any other designated Affordable Rental Housing program agreed between the CHO and the Housing Authority (operating within the Department of Housing and Works) where a Rental Subsidy is provided. |

Community Housing Policy Definitions

| Term | Definition |
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| Applicant | <p>A person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has applied for Community Housing and/ or Public Housing, or a person referred for housing by a governmental agency under a specific program; or • with respect to Social Housing, refers to the Applicant, partner and co-Applicant who are seeking to be housed; or • with respect to Affordable Rental Housing, refers to all the household members who are seeking to be housed. |
| Assessable Income | An Applicant or Tenant's income that is included in their eligibility or rent assessment. |
| Asset | Any property or items of value owned by the members of a household or in which those members hold an interest, including those held outside Australia. These may include (but are not limited to) land, vehicle, boat or caravan. |
| Band A | A very low to low Applicant/ Tenant income and asset range which matches the Public Housing income eligibility limits. Applicants/ Tenants falling within this range are targeted for Social Housing. |
| Band B | A low to moderate Applicant/ Tenant income and asset range which matches the Affordable Rental Housing income eligibility limits. Applicants/ Tenants falling within this range are targeted for Affordable Rental Housing. |
| Base Rent | The percentage of the Total Rent Payable which is calculated on the assessable household income for non-dependent householders. |
| Cash Asset | A lump sum cash or investment, which is easily accessible to a person to be used for any purpose. Cash may be received in a number of ways including inheritance, compensation payout (less care costs), gift or savings |
| Child Maintenance Payments | Amount of money paid between separated parents to help with the cost of raising their children. It can also be paid between a parent and a non-parent carer. It is sometimes referred to as Child Support Payments. |
| Community Disability Housing Program (CDHP) | Supported housing for people with disabilities or mental illness. |
| Community Housing | Social Housing and/ or Affordable Rental Housing owned or otherwise under the legal control of a CHO. |

Community Housing Policy Definitions

| Term | Definition |
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| Community Housing Agreement (CHA) | A Legal Agreement that may exist between the Housing Authority (operating within the Department of Housing and Works) and specific CHOs which establishes the terms by which that CHO must discharge its functions and deliver robust and consistent standards of service across the Community Housing sector in increasing the supply of Community Housing in WA. |
| Community Housing Organisation (CHO) or Community Housing Provider (CHP) | <p>[Terms may be used interchangeably] Any not-for-profit organisation incorporated under a law of the Commonwealth of Australia or of an Australian State or Territory, that provides Community Housing.</p> <p>For the purposes of Community Housing policy, this includes both Registered and Unregistered organisations, and any Local Government Authority or organisation whose primary objective is to provide Community Housing.</p> |
| Community Housing Registration Office | Administers the Community Housing Regulatory Framework which is consistent with the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH). The office is managed by the Registrar and its regulatory functions include assessing and maintaining CHO applications for Registration and monitoring the compliance of Registered CHOs. |
| Community Housing Regulatory Framework | <p>The Community Housing Framework establishes an administrative system of registration and regulation for CHOs in WA. Registration is the entry point for the framework, with a three-tiered registration system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 1 – these providers typically operate at large scale, meaning regulatory non-compliance has the potential to impact on large numbers of tenants and assets; and have ongoing development activities at scale, meaning regulatory non-compliance has the potential to affect their viability. • Tier 2 – these providers typically operate at moderate scale, meaning any serious non-compliance has the potential to impact on a moderate number of tenants and assets; and have small-scale development activities, meaning regulatory non-compliance has the potential to their viability. • Tier 3 – these housing providers are typically involved in small-scale tenancy management activities. <p>The National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) is the regulatory system for all states and territories in Australia, excluding WA which has its own Community Housing Regulatory Framework that aligns to the national legislation.</p> |

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| Term | Definition |
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| Community Housing Sector (the Sector) | <p>Housing organisations that provide subsidised rent for eligible tenants of Social, Affordable and Supported Housing across WA.</p> <p>For the purposes of Community Housing policy, this also includes a Local Government Authority which provides Community Housing.</p> |
| Co-Resident Carer | A co-resident carer is defined as someone who lives with a person with a disability to provide ongoing care and uses that property as their principal place of residence who would otherwise live elsewhere if they were not the carer for that person. |
| Disability | <p>As defined in the Disability Services Act 1993 a disability may be intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or combination of those impairments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is permanent or likely to be permanent; • may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature; <p>and result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and • a need for continuing support services. |
| Dwelling | A residential property on land and within the premises. |
| Eligible Person/s | Person/s who meet the Housing Authority's eligibility criteria for Social or Affordable Rental Housing. |
| Fixed Term Tenancy Agreement (FTT) or Fixed Term Agreement (FTA) | A tenancy with a set end date. |
| Gross Household Assessable Income | The combined gross Assessable Income received by all members of the household (before tax or other deductions). |
| Habitat | The Housing Authority's electronic tenancy management system which may be accessed by CHOs for the purpose of allocating Applicants from the JWL. |
| Householder | A person who stays at the property for longer than eight consecutive weeks is regarded as a householder or household member and may have their income assessed for rent from the ninth week. |

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|---|---|
| Housing Authority (HA) | The body corporate with perpetual succession constituted under the Housing Act 1980 and an agent of the Crown, responsible for the implementation of the provisions of the Act. The Housing Authority operates within the Department of Housing and Works. |
| Income | Any money received by non-dependant household members who have reached 16 years of age, which is regular, ongoing and provided to meet the general costs of living. |
| Joint Wait List (JWL) | <p>The electronic list, maintained by the Housing Authority, of eligible persons from which Housing Authority and CHOs make offers of accommodation and allocate Social Housing.</p> <p>The JWL may contain over-income Social Housing tenants that may be required to transfer into Affordable Rental Housing.</p> |
| Legal Agreement | A legally enforceable agreement between the Housing Authority and a CHO creating obligations enforceable by law. This agreement can include, but is not limited to, a Community Housing Agreement (CHA), Lease Agreement, Funding Agreement, Joint Funding Agreement, Project Agreement or Deed. |
| Market Rent Value or Market Rent | The amount of rent a tenant in the private market would pay for a similar property in that area. |
| Maximum Rent | The cap applied to rents charged by CHOs accessing GST charity concessions. It is set at 74.99% of the Market Rent. |
| National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) | Australian Government initiative, delivered in partnership with WA Government to provide people on low to moderate incomes with an opportunity to rent homes 20 per cent below market value. |
| Net Household Assessable Income | The combined net (after tax and other deductions) assessable income received by all non-dependant household members who have reached 16 years of age, which is regular, ongoing and provided to meet the general costs of living. |
| Non-dependant Householder | A person 16 years or older living in the Dwelling who is in full-time education or training and not receiving income or statutory benefits. |
| North-West/ Remote | Areas in WA north of the 26th parallel and remote parts of the Midwest/ Gascoyne and Goldfields regions. |

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| Offer of Accommodation | An offer by a CHO to an Applicant or Tenant for a dwelling that is available for a tenancy. |
| Periodic Tenancy Agreement (PTA) | An ongoing tenancy agreement which may only be ended by agreement of both parties, and/ or written notification of termination. |
| Priority Applicant | An Applicant listed on the JWL who has been assessed by the Housing Authority to have an urgent need for housing in accordance with the Priority Housing Need Policy . |
| Public Housing | Social Housing for very low to low-income households that is owned and operated by the Housing Authority. |
| Registration/ Registered | Registration under the Community Housing Regulatory Framework (www.wa.gov.au) . A CHO that has met the requirements of this policy is formally listed as 'Registered' under this policy and is administered by the Community Housing Registration Office. |
| Rent Assistance | An income supplement payable by the Australian Government to eligible persons who rent in the private rental market or Community Housing. Includes Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) and Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Rent Assistance. |
| Rental Policy Manual | The Housing Authority's Rental Policy Manual which contains all policies related to public rental housing. |
| Rental Subsidy / Subsidised Rent | Reduced rent charged for a dwelling either by reference to income or by setting the rent at less than the full market rent. |
| Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (RTA) | The legislation which sets out the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants in WA. |
| Sensitive Allocations | Sensitive Allocations refers to matching tenants with appropriate dwelling types, location requirements, cultural and family (including extended) structures. |
| Social Housing | Subsidised, long-term rental housing for very low to low-income households (Band A), owned by the Housing Authority or CHO. Social Housing dwellings may be managed by the Housing Authority, or CHOs. |

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|---|---|
| Sustainable Tenancies | Sustainable Tenancies means that the CHO considers sensitive Allocation to ensure that the Allocation is sustainable for the tenant and the CHO. |
| Targeted Affordable Rental Housing (TARH) | Targeted Affordable Rental Housing, or 'TARH', is affordable housing delivered by the State Government in partnership with a Community Housing Organisation (CHO), with the benefit of a State Government contribution of land or funding, and in compliance with the TARH Policy . |
| Tenancy Agreement | Any agreement, express or implied, between a CHO (as landlord) and Tenant, by which the CHO grants a right to occupy a dwelling, or part of a dwelling, whether exclusively or otherwise, and includes residential tenancy agreements under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 . |
| Tenant/s | A person/s who occupies a Dwelling under a Residential Tenancy Agreement and is named on the agreement for that property. |
| Transfer | The process by which Tenants are approved to relocate to an alternative dwelling. |
| Total Rent Payable | Total amount of rent the tenant is required to pay, including base rent and any eligible rent assistance. |
| Transitional Accommodation | Short to medium term accommodation, usually accompanied by support services to assist clients in obtaining and maintaining long term rental accommodation. |
| Unregistered | A CHO that has not applied or is not able to achieve registration status via the Registrar. |
| Wait Turn Applicant | Applicants on the JWL who are housed according to their listing date, being the date of their approved housing Application. |

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4 Document Control

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| Publication Date | July 2025 |
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| Owner | Housing Policy and Development |
| Custodian | Strategic Housing and Asset Policy, Planning and Business Development |

5 Amendments

| Version | Date | Author | Description | Objective File Ref |
|----------------|-------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1.0 | July 2025 | Senior Policy and Planning Officer | Establishment of Community Housing Policy Definitions as supporting documentation to the CHEP, CHAP and CHRSP. | 2025/29834 |