



<b>PROGRAM POLICY</b>		
<b>Policy # 5</b>	<b>Housing Participants</b>	
		<b>Effective Date: January 1, 2011</b>

**Policy:**

Transitions to Home primary goal is to offer long term shelter assistance in finding and access to stable housing. The program generally works with five types of housing, private market single occupancy rooms; rent geared to income single occupancy rooms; self-contained private market apartments, housing allowance supported self-contained private market apartments and/or self-contained rent geared to income apartments. A description is provided at the end of this policy.

The program strives to remove individuals as quickly as possible from the shelter system into housing. Often this process involves a step into a single occupancy room, then moving to an affordable small private apartment as these become available. Case management home visits are used to support the individual’s abilities to, establish and maintain a stable successful tenancy and make other life changes that improve their personal social determinants of health.

**Housing Partners**

City of Hamilton Housing and Homelessness Division – Private Market Landlords

T2H works in partnership with the City of Hamilton to link participants with private market landlords who rent affordable housing. As well, to improve the affordability of the housing, housing allowances are used to enable participants in receipt of Ontario Works in their search for affordable stable housing. All participants who receive a housing allowance are also required to submit an application for rent-geared-to-income housing.

Housing Help Centre

T2H participants may find their own housing and are encouraged to use the services of the Housing Help Centre. In these circumstances T2H will actively work with the Housing Help Centre to coordinate the services provided. In all circumstances T2H case management and clinical staff will work with the Housing Help Centre to ensure services are provided in the best interests of the participant.

## **Housing Pockets**

### Single Occupancy Rooms

Transitions to Homes identifies and uses single private rooms in buildings managed by other social service agencies and privately owned buildings that meet an acceptable standard. This form of housing is viewed as a transitory step that removes individuals from the shelter system quickly when there is no available self-contained apartment or other reasons that make it necessary to remove the individual from the shelter system or prevent their return to the shelter system

From time to time, dependent on an individual's medical needs and age, Residential Care Facilities will also be used in this capacity.

### T2H Supported Housing

It is the goal of the program to house individuals in private self-contained bachelor or 1 bedroom apartments for individuals or an appropriately sized apartment/house for families. T2H works in coordination with the City of Hamilton Housing and Homelessness Division and with private landlords, and property management companies. All participants are the lease holders of their unit under the Residential Tenancy Act. Rents are geared to creating a stable housing unit for an ODSP recipient.

When negotiated T2H can supply assistance to the landlord with unit damage, cleaning and provide some protection against vacancy loss in respect to units occupied by participants.

### Housing Allowances

Housing Allowances are an additional rent supplement provided to low income individuals who are on the Access to Housing wait list for social housing. T2H in partnership with the City of Hamilton directs these to participants who are in receipt of Ontario Works. Housing allowances are attached to the unit or apartment and require a legal agreement between the landlord and the City of Hamilton. When the legal agreement is in place, T2H can supply assistance to the landlord with unit maintenance, cleaning and provide some protection against vacancy loss in respect to units occupied by participants.

### Rent Geared to Income

All participants will have completed an application for rent-geared-to-income housing as a precondition to program participation. This allows for an eventual stable long-term affordable solution to their housing needs. T2H works with City Housing, Wesley Community Homes Inc. and other social housing providers in order to facilitate the acquisition of social housing and creating, maintaining a successful tenancy. Case Management is provided directly in these units in a manner similar to supports provided in private units.

### Wesley Community Homes Inc. – Rent Geared to Income

Wesley Community Homes Inc. (WCHI) is an alternative housing, social housing provider. WCHI provides shared accommodation of single private rooms in 7 houses in the community. It has 64 rent geared to income apartments at 195B Ferguson Avenue and townhouses on Elgin St. that back onto 195B Ferguson. T2H provides case management supports to those tenants who voluntarily agree to case management visits and develop a case plan.

T2H provides case management supports to all tenants in the shared accommodation houses in partnership with WCHI. Participants must be eligible for rent-g geared-to-income housing, and be active on the Access to Housing wait list. T2H participants are placed in these rent-g geared-to-income rooms as temporary steps to leave the shelter system and move to an affordable apartment. Individual tenants must be willing to participate in case management visits, live in a shared common space environment and keep their Access to Housing application up to date.

### **Current Application:**

In considering an individual participant for housing, a Case Manager must ensure that the steps of engagement have been followed to ensure the participant is ready to be housed. The following housing milestones then occur:

1. Meeting between the Supervisor, Case Manager and Participant to present the housing process to the participant and review the case plan.
2. Case Manager-participant view potential units – the program strives to provide individuals with a choice.
3. Participant moves into the unit.

This process must occur as quickly as program resources allow. A checklist of steps to be followed by case managers is in Appendix 1 to this policy.

A trauma informed perspective indicates that individuals will experience an increase in their level of stress throughout this process that can affect their mental and physical health. As well, landlord actions, reactions may be perceived as rejection and judgement, retrieving past experiences and emotions. Case Managers are expected to schedule regular visits with the first one occurring within the first two days of the move.

### Property Manager Relations

T2H must balance the need to act as an advocate for the rights of participants as tenants and the need to have partnerships with private market landlords to secure affordable housing. This is achieved by following these general protocols.

1. Case Managers advocate on behalf of participants and help participants develop self advocacy skills to ensure that building superintendents/landlords meet their legal obligations under the Landlord and Tenant Act. In most cases the Case Manager should not speak directly with a property manager when the program is working with a property management company.

Case managers also support the participant in fulfilling their responsibilities as tenants:

- Paying the rent on time
- Keeping the rental unit clean
- Repairing any damage caused by the tenant or the tenant's guests excluding normal wear and tear

2. It is the role of the Supervisor of Housing to support Property Managers in their dealings with T2H participants as tenants. The Supervisor of Housing is the key liaison with property managers and as such Case Managers in all situations communicate with the Supervisor rather than contacting property managers directly. The Supervisor of Housing makes decisions related to unit maintenance, cleaning and vacancy loss in consultation with the Director.

**Approval:**

	<b>2010</b>
<b>Signature &amp; Title</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>

## **Appendix**

## Steps to Housing Checklist

1. Meet with Supervisor
  - Schedule with supervisor
  - Book room
  - Case plan and participant profile information completed,
  - Process explained to participant
2. Arrange unit viewings with client and Property Manager/Super/Administrator
3. Unit Viewing
  - On way to unit discuss rent and utilities
  - Complete application at time of viewing (unless uninterested or otherwise instructed); attach business card
  - Find out from Property Manager/Super when outcome of application will be learned
  - In anticipation that application will be accepted, call OW Worker or ODSP to schedule an appointment (ensure client speaks with Worker or leaves a confirmation call with Worker okaying the date and time of the appt)
  - Have client sign Landlord Letter and Direct Rent Payment forms
  - Upon leaving the client, inform Supervisor of unit tentatively taken
4. Upon learning that the client's application has been officially accepted, return to building to have Landlord Letter and Direct Rent Payment forms completed by landlord (at some point prior to OW/ODSP appointment)
5. Coordinate, with client and landlord, move-in date (which includes lease signing)
6. E-mail Janet Surmanski, ASAP, to inform of **approved** unit and move-in date, cc Supervisor, and file copy of e-mail in client file
7. Coordinate, with client, hydro hook-up if necessary
8. CSUMB Application (if necessary)
  - Complete paperwork with client prior to OW /ODSP appointment
9. OW appointment (if in receipt of OW)
  - Brief OW Worker prior to the appointment
  - Accompany client to appointment
  - Bring completed Landlord Letter and Direct Rent Payment forms and completed CSUMB application if not already given to OW Worker
  - Following the OW appointment make plans for shopping and move-in
10. ODSP appointment (if in receipt of ODSP)
  - Accompany client to appointment
  - Bring completed Landlord Letter and Direct Rent Payment forms and completed CSUMB application
  - Following the ODSP appointment make plans for shopping and move-in
11. Call Super a day or two prior to move to confirm move-in plans
12. Move-In Day
  - OW Client, with you present, picks up cheque and bank letter at OW office
  - Cash cheque at client's bank or Royal Bank
  - Secure money order for monthly or pro-rated rent
  - Sign lease, pay rent, secure keys, complete move-in inspection, give landlord T2H flyer
  - Shop for furniture and household items
  - Schedule next visit/regular visit time
  - Inform supervisor and team of successful move-in
13. Complete Client Face Sheet

Appendix 2

