



Housing Access Dufferin

Information For Applicants

Housing Access Dufferin

30 Centre Street

Orangeville, ON L9W 2X1

T: (519) 941-6991 x 2021

F: (519) 941-0271

www.dufferincounty.ca

If you require information in an alternate format, please contact us at 519-941-2816 ext. 2500. We will work with you to understand your specific accessibility needs and to provide you with the information within a reasonable time frame.





This Brochure provides answers to the following questions:

What is Housing Access Dufferin?4

Where is the Housing Access Dufferin Office located?4

What is Rent Geared-to-Income assistance?4

Am I eligible for Rent Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance?4

What are my obligations as an applicant on the HAD Centralized Waitlist?5

How soon will I know if I am on the waiting list?6

What if I can't get some of the information needed to complete my application?6

Are there any special circumstances that would enable me to be housed more quickly?7

How do I get assigned Special Priority?7

Does Housing Access Dufferin provide access to Emergency Housing?7

When will I get housing?8

Does being on a waiting list ensure I will be housed?8

Can a Housing Provider turn me down?8

Are interpretation services available?9

What if I am unable to sign the application and consent, or am unable to make a valid application and give valid consent?9

What happens while I'm waiting for Housing?9

How are people chosen for housing? 10

What is Co-operative Housing? 10

How will I be contacted for an offer? 10

How many offers for RGI housing do I get? 11

What if I know that I will not be able to move during a certain time period? 11

Do I get to pick the size of the unit I want? 11

How many housing units can I choose? 12



Can I add to/change my building selections? 12

What if I do not agree with the decision about my application? 12

How much will I pay in rent?..... 12

Are appliances and parking included in my rent? 13

If I own my own home, do I still qualify?..... 13

If I don't have any income, am I still eligible for geared-to-income housing?..... 13

Can I decide after I move in that I want to move to a housing unit managed by a
different Housing Provider? 14

What about Market Housing? 14

What is a Rent Supplement?..... 14

What is a Portable Housing Benefit? 14

How do I apply for Housing in other areas outside of Dufferin County?..... 15





Information for Applicants

What is Housing Access Dufferin?

Housing Access Dufferin (HAD) is part of the County of Dufferin's Community Services division. HAD manages the Centralized Waiting List for those seeking Portable Housing Benefits, Rent-Geared-to-Income, Rent Supplements, Affordable and Market housing for County owned properties. They can also offer referral services to those seeking other types of market housing or shelter services and can assist clients in maintaining their eligibility on the Centralized Waitlist for housing in Dufferin County.

All applications for Portable Housing Benefits, Rent Supplements, Rent Geared-to-Income, Affordable and Market assistance in the County of Dufferin is managed by HAD, and all eligible applications are added to the Centralized Waiting List. This "one-stop," centralized approach means applicants only need to complete one application form to apply to multiple different housing options.

Where is the Housing Access Dufferin Office located?

County of Dufferin Community Services
 30 Centre Street, Orangeville, ON L9W 2X1
 Phone: (519) 941-6991 Fax: (519) 941-0271
 Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (Closed all Statutory Holidays)

What is Rent Geared-to-Income assistance?

Rent Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance is also known as subsidized housing. RGI assistance is for eligible households who meet the required income and asset levels. Rent for tenants is based on their income and is available to those who have applied to move into rental units where this type of subsidy is offered.

Am I eligible for Rent Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance?

To be eligible for Rent Geared to Income (RGI) assistance, you must meet the following criteria:

1. At least one member of the household must be over the age of 16;



2. You must be able to live independently with or without support services;
3. Each member of the household must have legal resident status in Canada (Canadian Citizen, permanent resident status, or have applied for permanent resident status or refugee protection under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada)). Please note that you do not have to live in Dufferin County to apply;
4. No removal order has become enforceable against any member of the household under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada);
5. No member of the household owes money from a previous tenancy in any housing project under any housing program to a social housing landlord or has entered into a repayment plan that is in good standing;
6. No person on the application has been convicted for misrepresentation of income in relation to RGI assistance under the Criminal Code, by a Court of Law or under the *Residential Tenancies Act* by the Landlord and Tenant Board, or the former *Tenant Protection Act* by an Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal;
7. If you own a residential dwelling that is suitable for year-round occupancy, you must agree to sell it within 180 days of being housed; and,
8. Your household's gross monthly income must not exceed the maximum Household Income Limit specified for households that are your size (this limit is higher for households with more people in them). These limits can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110370>

What are my obligations as an applicant on the HAD Centralized Waitlist?

As an applicant on the HAD waitlist, you are required to keep your file updated in order to remain on the centralized waiting list and maintain your eligibility status. It is your responsibility to notify HAD of any changes in the information or documents you previously submitted. The required reporting time is thirty (30) business days.

You must notify HAD, within 30 days,

1. If your address changes,
2. If your phone number changes, or



3. If any other information or document on your application changes.

Furthermore, you will be required to complete an Information Update form on an annual basis, whether there have been any changes to your information or not. It will be mailed to you, and the form including all supporting documentation must be returned to the HAD office by the date given on the form.

How soon will I know if I am on the waiting list?

When we receive your application, we ensure that it is complete and that all the information you must provide is included. You will be notified in writing from HAD within fourteen (14) days.

If your application is incomplete, the letter that we send to you will request the missing information.

If your application is complete, the letter will verify whether you are eligible for the housing options you selected on your application.

If you are eligible, the letter will also detail which Housing Provider waiting lists you are approved for, and for how many bedrooms your household qualifies.

If you are not eligible, the reasons for your ineligibility will be given, and you have the option to appeal this decision by the date specified in the letter.

If the letter advised you that information was missing from your application, you will be given a deadline to get the information to the HAD office. If you do not submit the missing information by the date required, you will receive a letter notifying you that your application has been cancelled and that you can appeal the decision by the date given. When the information is received to complete your application, you will receive a letter verifying whether you are eligible.

What if I can't get some of the information needed to complete my application?

If you are unable to get the information that HAD requires for your application, please contact us as we may ask you for other information in its place.



Until the application is complete, we will not place your household on the waiting list.

Are there any special circumstances that would enable me to be housed more quickly?

One category on the waiting list called "Special Priority," is for people who are experiencing domestic violence or trafficking. Another category on the waiting list is for people experiencing homelessness. If you are experiencing homelessness, please contact the Housing Stability Team at (519) 941-6991 ext. 2110 to discuss your eligibility for the By-Name List special priority.

How do I get assigned Special Priority?

You are required to complete a Household Category: Special Priority Verification Declaration form and supply supporting information and documentation for verification purposes. This request may be attached to your HAD application form or submitted separately. These forms are available from the Housing Access Dufferin office or website.

Does Housing Access Dufferin provide access to Emergency Housing?

No, but emergency shelter and/or emergency assistance is offered by the following providers in the County of Dufferin, and they may be able to assist you in finding accommodation:

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| For Women and Children | Family Transition Place | 1-800-265-9178 |
| For Youth | Choices Youth Shelter | (519) 940-5687 |
| For Men | Choices Men's Shelter | (519) 940-5687 |
| For Families | Salvation Army | (519) 943-1203 |
| Everyone | Community Connection | 211 |



When will I get housing?

The waiting time will vary depending on the housing locations you choose and the number of bedrooms you require.

Does being on a waiting list ensure I will be housed?

No. If you do not keep HAD informed of changes to your contact information, and we are unable to contact you as a result, you cannot be offered housing.

In addition, if a household is applying to live in a co-operative, they will be interviewed to ensure they understand the obligations of being a co-op member and are able to commit to the responsibilities of living in a co-operative. Co-operative households must participate in the co-operative to contribute to their community.

Can a Housing Provider turn me down?

If a Housing Provider decides not to offer you a unit, you will be told in writing about the reasons for the refusal. You may appeal this decision by requesting a review.

A Housing Provider may refuse to offer housing to an applicant if:

- The household does not meet the Housing Provider's mandate.
- The household's rental history, either in the private sector or in social housing raises concern. Chronic late payments are part of that history.
- A household member does not agree to accept the co-operative's membership responsibilities.
- There are reasonable grounds to believe that the household would not be able to live in shared accommodation successfully. ("Shared" means sharing some of the housing unit space such as kitchen, bathroom, living room, etc.)
- There are reasonable grounds to believe the unit is not suitable for the household based on the number, gender and ages of the household members and the physical characteristics of the housing unit.
- A Special Needs Applicant requires greater or fewer support services than provided by the support service provider.



Note: If an applicant owes money for arrears or damages to a Social Housing Provider, he/she is not eligible to be placed on the Housing Access Dufferin waitlist and therefore would not be considered when a Housing Provider has a vacancy. If you are in arrears, Housing Access Dufferin will notify you of the steps you must take to become eligible for the Housing Access Dufferin waitlist.

Are interpretation services available?

HAD will co-ordinate interpretation services if the applicant is unable to bring interpretation assistance with them.

What if I am unable to sign the application and consent, or am unable to make a valid application and give valid consent?

You may have the application and consent forms signed on your behalf by another individual who is either:

- your parent or legal guardian,
- your attorney under a power of attorney that authorizes the attorney to make the application and give the consent on your behalf, or
- someone else authorized to make the application and give consent on your behalf.

HAD will require verification of this person's authority to sign on your behalf.

What happens while I'm waiting for Housing?

It is important that you keep your application up to date. Once per year, near the anniversary date of your application, you will receive an Information Update package by mail. A covering letter will provide you with a due date for this update to be completed and returned to our office.

Additionally, you must notify HAD about changes to any of the information you have given us in your application form. You must do this within thirty (30) business days of the change occurring (see "What are my obligations...").



Failure to report changes within thirty (30) business days and/or to keep your application up to date may result in the removal of your name from the waiting list or not being offered housing. We advise all applicants to fill in the section for an alternate contact on the application, just in case you cannot always be reached at your primary phone number. If you forgot to do this and have already handed in your application, submit a written letter, email, or call HAD requesting that the contact's information be added to your application.

How are people chosen for housing?

The system for selecting households is based on date of application, so households who have applied before you will be offered housing before you. Special priority may be given to your application if you are a person experiencing domestic violence, trafficking, or homelessness, and if your situation qualifies your household for that priority (see "How do I get assigned Special Priority").

What is Co-operative Housing?

Co-operative ("co-op") housing is jointly owned and managed by the members who live in the co-op. A co-op is not operated for profit and no one can buy or sell their unit. Each co-op elects a board of directors from its membership. Co-op members are required to work together to share the responsibility in keeping their housing community strong and vibrant. Each co-op has a membership committee responsible for selecting new members. Applicants for co-op housing must take part in the co-op's interview process in order to be considered for membership.

How will I be contacted for an offer?

You may be contacted initially by telephone to determine if you are still interested in the unit. If you are still interested and are the applicant selected for the unit, you will be formally offered the unit through a written offer letter. If you refuse the unit, please see below for more information on the one offer rule. Please make sure that HAD has a daytime phone number and your current mailing address so you can be contacted when a unit becomes available. If you cannot be reached during the day, it would be helpful to



give us the telephone number of a contact person we could reach during the day so they could pass on the message to you.

How many offers for RGI housing do I get?

An applicant ceases to be eligible for housing on the Centralized waiting list if the household refuses one (1) offer of housing. If you refuse the unit, your application will be cancelled, or you can request to have your application re-dated to the date of the refusal. If this happens, you will be notified in writing of your cancelled application and will be given the option to appeal the decision by the date provided in the letter.

What if I know that I will not be able to move during a certain time period?

You may, at any time, contact the HAD office to advise us of a change in circumstances regarding your ability to move. If you are nearing the top of the waiting list, you may wish to consider having your application put "on hold" for a period of time.

HAD will consider requests for temporary removal from the waiting list (or for an application to be put "on hold"), in accordance with the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, and the local rule regarding temporary removal. The maximum length of time for which a household may be put on hold is 6 months, and a household may request on hold status only once.

Do I get to pick the size of the unit I want?

You can indicate the size of unit (number of bedrooms) you want to live in. Your choice must fall within a range of unit sizes determined by your household size. Generally, the rules for occupancy are:

- Largest size unit = one bedroom per two members who are spouses of each other; one bedroom for each additional member; and additional bedrooms required for medical or custody reasons (contact HAD)
- Smallest size unit = one bedroom per two members who are spouses of each other; one bedroom for every two other members of the household; and an additional bedroom if there is an odd number of members in the household. Note: two



members who are spouses of each other are eligible for bachelor sized units but may request that they be offered only a one-bedroom unit.

If you require more bedrooms than would normally be required for your household's composition, please contact HAD.

How many housing units can I choose?

There is no limit. You can choose as many locations as you wish. Your eligibility for each location will be assessed upon receipt of your application.

Can I add to/change my building selections?

Applicants can add to and/or change the building selections on their application at any time. Please contact HAD to make these changes.

You can choose more than one unit size if they match your household's size. For example, a couple with three children may choose a three- or four-bedroom unit.

What if I do not agree with the decision about my application?

You will be notified in writing about any decisions regarding your application. If you do not agree, you may request a review of the decision by contacting HAD prior to the deadline given on the notice of decision. Your request must be in writing, along with any supporting documentation you wish to submit, and it will be reviewed when HAD receives your request. You will be notified in writing of the decision of the review committee.

How much will I pay in rent?

Generally, rent geared-to-income tenants and subsidized household members of co-operatives pay 30% of their monthly income in rent. This income is determined on line 23600 on their most recent Notice of Assessment. If you are in receipt of Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program income, your rent is based on a social assistance rent scale from the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. Depending on where you are housed,



you may pay part or all the utilities. A utility allowance or charge is applied to your geared-to-income rent depending on the utilities that are or are not included in the rent.

Are appliances and parking included in my rent?

In some locations, appliances and services such as parking are included. In other locations, tenants must supply appliances and pay for some or all services and utilities.

If I own my own home, do I still qualify?

If you own or have a legal interest in a residential property that can be lived in all year round, you are required to sell your interest in the property within six months after you have moved into a rent geared-to-income housing unit.

If I don't have any income, am I still eligible for geared-to-income housing?

Yes. However, once you are housed, you may be required to pursue income from one or more of the following sources, should your Housing Provider believe that you are eligible:

- Ontario Works,
- Support under the *Divorce Act*, the *Family Law Act*, or the *Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act, 2002*,
- Employment Insurance,
- Any pension or other benefit entitlement from the provincial or federal government, and/or
- Support or maintenance payments required under a sponsorship agreement.

You will be notified in writing if required to pursue one or more forms of income and the steps to take to maintain your eligibility on the waiting list.



Can I decide after I move in that I want to move to a housing unit managed by a different Housing Provider?

Yes, but you must re-apply to HAD to be added back onto the waiting list. Your new application date will be the day your new application is received by HAD.

What about Market Housing?

Many Housing Providers have units that are available at the market rate (like what you would pay a landlord in the private sector). If you are interested in applying for a market unit, you should contact the Housing Provider directly. HAD can provide you with contact information for the non-profit and co-operative Housing Providers in the area. The County of Dufferin also has a market/affordable waitlist. Your eligibility for these units is assessed when you are approved on the waitlist. To apply for Market Housing owned by the County of Dufferin, you need to submit a HAD application.

What is a Rent Supplement?

The Rent Supplement Program provides affordable housing for lower income individuals and families through a rental subsidy that is based on income. It is delivered through community partnerships with Private Sector Landlords. The County of Dufferin enters into agreements with Private Sector Landlords. The tenants pay approximately 30% of their monthly income for rent. This income is determined on line 23600 on their most recent Notice of Assessment. The tenant would pay their portion of the rent directly to the landlord, and the County of Dufferin pays the difference directly to the landlord. The normal landlord/tenant relationship exists and is governed by the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (maintenance, rent collection etc.). To apply for the Rent Supplement program, you need to submit a HAD application.

What is a Portable Housing Benefit?

Housing Allowance (HPP-HA or CHHAP): This housing allowance is funded by the County of Dufferin and is only available to those that are experiencing homelessness,



are active on the By-Name-List, and have a previous history of living within Dufferin County.

Portable Housing Benefit (OPHI or COHB): A Housing Allowance that is funded through the Provincial and/or the Federal government. It is a monthly amount of money to help eligible households pay rent. This option is most suitable for people who want to find their own housing, or who do not want to move but need additional help to pay monthly housing costs. The allowance is paid directly to the individual, so it can be used in the private market. OPHI is only portable within Dufferin County. COHB is portable throughout Ontario, but applicants must reside in Dufferin County at the time of application in order to qualify. To receive a Housing Allowance, you must be on the Housing Access Dufferin centralized waitlist and select the Portable Housing Benefit box on the HAD Application. To apply for the Portable Housing Benefits, you need to submit a HAD application.

How do I apply for Housing in other areas outside of Dufferin County?

You must apply separately to each area in which you are interested in living. The waiting list through Housing Access Dufferin is maintained for Portable Housing Benefits, RGI, Rent Supplements, Affordable and Market housing in Dufferin County only. Most areas have websites through which you may access their application; otherwise, please call the municipality directly for details on how to apply in their area.

**Should you have any further questions
regarding the application process,
please contact Housing Access Dufferin
at your convenience.**

