



Priority Housing Need Policy

Purpose

To outline how the Department of Communities (Housing) identifies and assesses clients for priority housing assistance.

Scope

This policy relates to clients deemed eligible for priority housing assistances by the Department of Communities (Housing) in Western Australia.

Policy statements

1. Priority Housing Need Eligibility

To be identified as having a priority housing need, clients must be:

- a. Eligible for public housing; and
- b. Able to demonstrate alternative housing options have been exhausted and barriers to resolving their priority need continue, resulting in no other viable option than public housing; and
- c. Able to demonstrate external risk factors are present and threatening the safety of the household in their current living situation or able to demonstrate personal vulnerabilities are impacted by, or will deteriorate, a person's wellbeing in their current living situation.

2. Priority Housing Need Factors

Key risk and vulnerability factors and ongoing priority housing need may include:

- a. Homelessness;
- b. Threat of or harm (including abuse within a household, neighbourhood tensions);
- c. Client, householder or perpetrator have left housing due to threat of or harm;
- d. Acute and chronic medical conditions;
- e. Inability for client or householder to access essential support services and facilities;
- f. Family reunification;
- g. Cultural considerations.

3. Supporting Priority Housing Need

The Department of Communities (Housing) will assess the need for priority housing assistance based on the information provided by clients.

Clients are required to provide supporting documentation which demonstrates their ongoing need for priority assistance.

4. Assessing Priority Housing Need

The Department of Communities (Housing) will take the following into consideration when assessing a client's need for priority assistance:

- a. Circumstances where clients may not be able to provide supporting documentation; and
- b. Cultural needs or requirements where the client's current living situation is hindering their wellbeing.

5. Reassessing Priority Housing Need

Clients found with a priority housing need will have their application for priority housing assistance reassessed when:

- a. Their circumstances change,
- b. They wish to change the location preference of their application; or
- c. At the discretion of the Department of Communities (Housing).

Related legislation

- Housing Act 1980
- Residential Tenancies Act 1987
- Residential Tenancies Regulations 1989

Related policies

- Family Violence Policy
- Cultural Diversity and Language Policy
- Housing for People with Disabilities Policy
- Transfer Policy
- Application Management Policy
- Clients with Adverse History Policy

Definitions

Household	A group of individuals who share or will share the same accommodation.
Householder	Is an individual that belongs to or is part of a household.

Document control

Version number	002
Last updated	January 2022
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Owner	Community Services - Service Design & Operational Improvement

Version history

Version	Effective	Amended section	Description	Reference number
2	January 2022	Section 1 Section 2 Section 5	<p>Updated policy format to align with Department format.</p> <p>Amendment to Statement 1 b. and c. to align with minister rapid response items and directional change by identifying a client's need based on risk and vulnerability.</p> <p>Amendments made to section 2 to align with section 1 amendments.</p> <p>Removal of previous section 5 <i>Clients' previous and current history with the Housing Authority will be reviewed.</i> Covered in new</p>	

Version	Effective	Amended section	Description	Reference number
			stand-alone Applicants with an Adverse History Policy.	
1	April 2018		<p>The Priority Assistance Policy, previously located in the Rental Policy Manual, has been superseded by the Priority Housing Need Policy.</p> <p>The Priority Housing Need Policy is now a standalone policy document and improves clarity of the strategic policy intent for the identification of priority housing need and the provision of priority housing assistance.</p>	<p>2018/03740/1</p> <p>2018/00045/9</p> <p>2018/00647</p>