

Housing Services Policy	 Hamilton	Content Updated: 2014-11-11
Social Housing Administration		Housing Services Division
Eviction Prevention		Co-ordinated Access Guide
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Eviction Prevention Policy		
POLICY STATEMENT	The City of Hamilton as Service Manager under the <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i> (HSA), has established eviction prevention best practices.	
PURPOSE	<p>To identify eviction prevention best practices for non-profit Housing Providers who adhere to the <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i> (HSA), and for all Housing Providers and Rent Supplement Landlords to use these best practices to help tenants maintain their housing.</p> <p>Eviction is a last resort. Tenants living in non-profit housing or rent supplement units are generally low-income households who, if evicted, would find it difficult to obtain housing either in alternate affordable housing or the private market. Therefore, all non-profit Housing Providers and Rent Supplement Landlords are encouraged to adopt the activities identified in the <i>Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit</i> to avoid evictions due to economic reasons.</p> <p>The Eviction Prevention Policy describes the information and key elements necessary for non-profit Housing Providers to engage in eviction prevention activities. This policy aligns with the City of Hamilton's 2013 Housing and Homelessness Action Plan; specifically, Strategy 3.7: "Encourage the development and implementation of enhanced eviction prevention policies in the social housing system."</p>	
SCOPE	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-profit Housing Providers; • Rent Supplement Landlords; • All tenants living with any non-profit Housing Provider; when it comes to eviction prevention activities, there is no need to distinguish between tenants who are in receipt of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance and tenants who pay market rent; • Social Housing Administration team members, particularly: Senior Policy Analyst, Housing Administration Officers and the Manager of Social Housing; <p>The selection of best practices in the <i>Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit</i> is intended to represent the activities that are most commonly used to prevent rental arrears and economic evictions.</p>	
DEFINITIONS Best Practices	a set of operational practices generally accepted by an industry as leading to increased operational efficiency, and thus worthy of being shared and copied among like service providers	
Eviction Prevention	a range of strategies that help tenants remain housed	



TERMS & CONDITIONS

The City of Hamilton provided hard copies of the *Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit* to all non-profit housing providers and rent supplement landlords under its jurisdiction. The *Toolkit* is available electronically on the City of Hamilton’s website.

The *Toolkit* gives information and key elements required for effective eviction prevention. Eviction Prevention is a range of strategies that help tenants remain housed. There are 36 Communication, Rent Repayment, Education and Training strategies in the *Toolkit*. Key strategies include:

- Develop and implement an Eviction Prevention Policy;
- Train new staff and have annual refresher training for existing staff;
- Host information sessions for tenants;
- Tell tenants about eviction prevention at lease signing, annual reviews and when tenants are having trouble paying their rent;
- Make rent repayment agreements that are fair and realistic.
- Establish a standard of three attempts to contact a tenant before giving the N4 – Notice to End a Tenancy Early for Non-Payment of Rent; a Notice should be preceded and followed up with personal, direct contact whenever possible; Direct contact may include a letter, phone call, visit or any other contact that gives tenants the chance to respond to the situation and discuss solutions.

The *Toolkit* also has five tools to be used along with the strategies:

1. Do you know there are things you can do to avoid eviction?
2. Top 5 Things You Need to Know about Your Lease
3. Language Translation Aid
4. Community Resource Sheet
5. Eviction Prevention Policy Template

RESPONSIBILITIES

Housing Provider:

- Create new, revise and/or maintain eviction prevention practices
- Report eviction prevention practices to the Service Manager
- Approve a Board Resolution ensuring eviction prevention best practices are adopted.

Housing Administration Officer:

- Ensure each Housing Provider has received the *Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit*;
- Annually report to the Manager of Social Housing as to whether each Housing Provider has adopted Eviction Prevention Best Practices;
- Monitor each Housing Provider Board Minutes to verify the

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	<p>resolution/approval to adopt new or confirm existing eviction prevention best practices; obtain a copy of the Board Minutes wherein the best practices have been recorded</p> <p>Senior Policy Analyst:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the <i>Toolkit</i> contents up-to-date; make necessary revisions; • Post information to City of Hamilton website; • Create, distribute, collect and analyze a survey for Housing Providers and other stakeholders in Summer 2015 to evaluate eviction prevention efforts <p><u>Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit</u></p>	
COMPLIANCE	<p>There is no legislated requirement under the HSA for Service Managers or Housing Providers to implement Eviction Prevention policies and procedures; however, the City of Hamilton, acting as Service Manager, strongly encourages all non-profit housing providers to adopt an eviction prevention policy and engage in eviction prevention activities.</p> <p>Housing Administration Officers monitor the number of evictions through RGI monthly reports and confirm new or existing eviction prevention best practices through annual operational reviews with Housing Providers.</p> <p>The Manager of Social Housing is responsible for encouraging compliance with this policy.</p>	
HISTORY	<p>The Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit was developed in consultation with representatives from non-profit housing providers, tenant advocates, the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic as well as a City of Hamilton staff.</p> <p>The <i>Toolkit</i> was released on March 4, 2014.</p>	
Approval	<p>Author Name: Tammy Morasse, Senior Policy Analyst Manager Name: Bob McKnight, Manager of Social Housing Director Name: Gillian Hendry, Director of Housing Services Date: 2014-11-11</p>	