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**YUKON HOUSING CORPORATION UPDATES HOUSING POLICIES**

WHITEHORSE - Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) is introducing changes to its policies on how social housing applicants are accessed.

“We know from a 2004 report: *Evaluation of the Social Housing Program* that there are many reasons why people require social housing. These reasons range from medical and mobility reasons to people wanting to get away from violent and abusive situations,” minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation Jim Kenyon said. “I am pleased that the board is refining the priorities for social housing applications.”

“We approved this new policy direction recognizing that there was a need to formally address the housing requirements of victims of violence and other applicant categories,” YHC Board chair Rudy Couture said. “Clearly there are people who require housing to be near medical attention and others are looking to leave abusive relationships and require affordable housing in order to do so. We are looking into this new approach to help address these situations.”

Before approving the policy amendments at the June 2006 meeting, YHC staff worked with a variety of client groups and stakeholders to develop this new approach of assessing priority housing.

Kaushee’s Place staff and executive director Bonnitta Ritchie appreciate YHC’s efforts to ensure priority for victims of violence. “The new policies demonstrate the corporation’s sensitivity and awareness of issues surrounding women, especially those who are victims of abuse.

“The changes in the point-rating system will assist women leaving abusive situations by giving them greater opportunity to access social housing, and therefore, not having to return to an unhealthy and unsafe housing arrangement. The corporation has responded to previously identified challenges that prevented women in need from accessing social housing,” Ritchie said.

YHC has a total inventory of 519 housing units territory wide with 331 housing units located in Whitehorse.

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Attachment: Backgrounder – Yukon Housing Corporation Priority Housing Assessment Policies

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## **BACKGROUNDER – Yukon Housing Corporation Priority Housing Assessment Policies**

The YHC Board of Directors approved a number of amendments to Yukon’s social housing eligibility and housing priority policies. These amendments include:

### **Amended Priority-Assessment Point Rating System**

YHC shall assess applicant housing-priorities according to an amended point-rating system.

All eligible, approved applications shall be reviewed and point-scored according to YHC’s established methodology.

The revised point-rating system shall recognize the following targeted housing priorities, in descending order:

- Victims of Violence/Abuse
- Rural Relocation Households (seniors)
- Homeless or Evicted Households
- Mobility-Challenged Households
- All Other Households

The priority-assessment system shall not guarantee that every applicant in one target priority group will be housed ahead of every other applicant in another target priority group. However, the point-rating methodology shall assure that in the significant majority of cases, applicants will be housed according to their targeted housing priority.

### **Victims of Violence/Abuse**

A Victim of Violence/Abuse applicant:

Must meet YHC’s standard Canadian-citizenship or equivalent requirements; and must submit independent confirmation that the member/household has been subject to violence/abuse from another individual.

Eligibility to this program is based on the principle that the applicant desires a life free from the abuser.

### **Seniors’ Rural Household Relocations for Medical Reasons**

Households eligible for consideration under this policy include those with seniors who have severe, chronic or acute medical/health problems requiring prolonged or recurring treatment, care and/or support that is not available in their present residential location or community.

The senior applicant must provide verification of medical condition completed by a health care professional.

### **Social Housing Eligibility, Residency Criteria**

YHC shall apply a one-year Yukon residency requirement as primary eligibility criteria for social housing consideration.

The residency criteria shall not apply to Victims of Violence/Abuse; or where there are suitable, vacant units available for occupancy and there are no other approved applicants on a community wait list for those vacant units.

### **Age of Eligibility**

Subject to standard eligibility criteria being met, YHC shall consider applications for housing from: a person who is 19 years of age or over; or, a person under the age of 19 years, where the housing request is supported by the Department of Health and Social Services. For the purposes of this policy, seniors are qualified as being 65 years or older.

### **Income Threshold**

Except as noted below, Housing Income Limits shall apply as primary eligibility criteria for all persons/households seeking Yukon social housing consideration.

Income limits shall not apply for the purposes of assessing applicant eligibility of Victims of Violence, seniors in need of relocation due to critical medical reasons, and persons meeting the YHC Mobility-Challenge policy/criteria.

On a one-year pilot-project basis, YHC shall accept applications from family households and seniors whose total household income, as defined by YHC, does not exceed *by more than 10 percent (10%)* the applicable Housing Income Limit for the community for which application is being made.

### **Eligibility with Former Tenant Arrears**

YHC shall permit the approval of applications from former tenants in arrears for either rent or unit damages providing the applicant meets all other standard eligibility requirements and will have to repay the arrears prior to being allocated a housing unit. Exceptions will be made for Victims of Violence/Abuse and critical medical relocation applicants.

In the case of former joint-tenancy situations, and in consultation with the Director of Housing Operations or senior YHC executive staff, a local Housing Board may proportionately allocate the outstanding arrears between each of the former co-tenants if appropriate, given the circumstances giving rise to the arrears.

### **Rental Rates**

The rental rate for Yukon Housing's Social Housing program for all clients remains at 25% of the gross household income.