
Eligibility Policy

Category: Operations

1 PURPOSE

In order to ensure that houses are directed to households in financial need and meet the eligibility criteria of for the property.

2 OBJECTIVE

- To provide a clear framework for determining whether tenants are eligible for housing at the commencement and duration of their tenancy.
- To ensure we apply the correct rent setting calculation for tenancies.

3 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all tenancies under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (RTA). It does not apply when there is a License to Occupy.

4 Eligibility

Prior to making an offer of housing, Stellar Living will assess financial and non-financial criteria to determine whether the applicant meets the applicable eligibility and property criteria.

These criteria can vary according to different funding and management programs.

4.2 Non-financial Criteria

- Applicants must be able to establish their identity.
- Applicants must provide evidence they are Australia Citizens or Permanent Residents and reside in Western Australia.; and are 16 years of age or over.
- Applicants must provide evidence that they have the means to pay rent.
- Applicants may not own or part own property or land that could be used as a viable housing option.
- Applicants or members of the household who have outstanding debt with Stellar Living or other social or community housing provider will not be housed until reasonable efforts are made to reduce the debt and an arrangement is made to repay debt is made.
- Applicants with an unsatisfactory tenancy history or a history of violence or threatening behavior towards staff, contractors or partners may not be housed.
- Properties linked to a specific housing program will have additional eligibility criteria which must be met.

4.3 Financial Criteria

- Income and Assets Criteria are described in Attachment 1 to this policy.
- The applicant, partner and co-applicant will initially have a financial assessment based on their total weekly gross assessable income and cash assets to see if they fall into Band A which is very low income bracket. Assessable income will reflect the Department of Communities assessable income for eligibility.
- If financially ineligible for Band A then an assessment for Band B will take place to see if the applicant falls into the Low income bracket. This will take into account the total weekly gross income and assets of all adult members of the household.
- If an adult who will live in the property has no income then for eligibility purposes a deemed income will be applied equivalent to the statutory benefit that they may have received if eligible.
- A person that meets the disability criteria will be have a higher eligibility limit than non-disabled applicants.
- Additional criteria and evidence requirements apply to National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) properties as outlined on the Department of Social Services website.

4.4 Eligibility During a Tenancy

Tenants must remain eligible for affordable housing throughout their tenancy and Stellar Living will reassess eligibility at the following times:

- Change in household income and assets
- Material change in household composition or circumstances
- Prior to a request for a move, a move or with any change in leasing arrangement.
- 12 months after the last eligibility review.

Tenants who fail to provide satisfactory proof of eligibility including household income and assets when requested and within a nominated timeframe may be deemed ineligible.

Tenants housed under specific program and funding arrangements such as supported housing arrangements or NRAS may be required to provide additional information to confirm annual eligibility. These requirements will be clearly described in the tenancy agreement.

5 INELIGIBILITY

If an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria for Affordable Housing for that property they will not be offered housing.

If an existing tenant does not meet the eligibility criteria including income and assets or fails to provide sufficient proof for continued eligibility they will be deemed ineligible.

Tenants that are ineligible will be advised and offered an interview to review and discuss the situation and plan for them exiting housing with Stellar Living. They tenants will be advised in writing and given notice to vacate. Each case will be looked at individually and a notice will be given allowing them time to transition into suitable accommodation.

Discretion by Managers can be applied where income limits are exceeded for a short period and where the tenant does not have the long term capacity to secure alternative housing.

6 Exit Planning

The purpose of Exit Planning is to work with tenants and where appropriate support staff to ensure that tenants move into suitable alternative accommodation.

Exit Planning is discretionary and participation by the tenant is voluntary. Exit Planning reviews housing options and provides structure to the exit process.

Where the tenant is not eligible as a result of their income the Exit Plan is to ensure that tenants who are endeavouring to improve their financial security are supported and are not dis-incentivised or unreasonably penalised. In this circumstance The Exit Plan provides tenants with up to two years to consolidate their financial situation.

Normal rent setting shall apply during the Exit Planning process but may be adjusted to Market Rent dependent on household income.

Effective date:	01/10/2019
External references:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Tenancies Act 1987 • Residential Tenancies Regulations 1989 • Privacy Act 1988 • Community Housing Agreement • CH Income and Asset Limits Policy • NRAS Legislation
Version:	1

Custodian:	General Manager
Internal references:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals policy (under review) • Eligibility Policy • Privacy policy • Rent review procedures (under review) • Information and Records Management Policy (to be developed)
Review:	01/10/2024

Version Notes

This policy is to be reviewed following legislative or organisational changes, or as a minimum, every five years.

Date of Chang	Changes	Reason for Change	Author	Authorised
1/10/19	New Policy		K Moorey	CEO

