

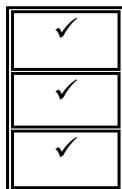
# Communiqué

Issue

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

2018-7

*The Requirements, Recommendations and Guidelines in this Communiqué are applicable to the social housing providers administered by the City of Hamilton.*



Providers Under *Housing Services Act, 2011*

Providers Under a Federal Operating Agreement

Requirement

## **SUBJECT: Ontario Basic Income Pilot (OBIP) - Amended Regulations**

Effective April 24<sup>th</sup> 2018, The Ministry of Housing made amendments to O. Reg. 367/11 under *the Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA)* related to the **eligibility** of households participating in the Ontario Basic Income Pilot (OBIP) for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance or a portable housing benefit (PHB).

The amendments help ensure that the recipients of OBIP **do not** lose eligibility for RGI assistance or a PHB as a result of participation in the Pilot.

**Payments received through the OBIP are considered income for the purpose of RGI calculations under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. This will continue to be the case.**

The amendments relate to the “*eligibility rules*” for RGI assistance and to the program criteria and rules prescribed under section 68(2) (a) of the HSA. The amended regulations can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulations/r18328>

## **BACKGROUND:**

In April 2017, the Government of Ontario announced details of the Ontario Basic Income Pilot (OBIP), a three-year study to test how a basic income might improve the health, education, housing and job prospects of those living on low incomes. The communities selected to take part in the OBIP are:

- Hamilton, Brantford and Brant County
- Lindsay, Thunder Bay and the surrounding area

Basic Income payments are considered income for RGI calculations and social assistance recipients who withdraw from social assistance to participate in the Pilot no longer pay rent according to prescribed rent scales.

Basic Income payments have resulted in increased rents, but OBIP recipients are supported to make fully informed decisions about their participation and can opt out of the Pilot at any time. Therefore, the recipient's eligibility for RGI should remain intact.

If a household's RGI or PHB is set at maximum RGI (equal to the market rent or housing charge for the unit) they continue to be eligible for RGI assistance although no subsidy is being paid. They are also exempt from the maximum household income limits to ensure eligibility continues.

The following is a summary of the specific changes to O. Regulation 367/11:

**Section 30 Cessation of RGI eligibility- 12 months of normal rent**

RGI households do not cease to be eligible for RGI assistance under this rule if the amount of rent would have been below normal rent had the basic income payments received by the household not been included in the calculation of geared-to-income-rent.

**Section 34: Local RGI eligibility rule- maximum household income**

Basic Income payments are excluded from the calculation of income under any local maximum household income eligibility rule.

**Section 86: Prescribed program criteria and rules**

Payments received under the Pilot are not included in the calculation of household income under program rules requiring that the annual income of a household not exceed the applicable household income limit (HILs) or a limit set by the service manager at the time of offer to reside in a unit.

**Schedule 4.1, Section 3: PHB continued eligibility rule- benefit is zero for 24 consecutive months**

Households do not cease to be eligible for a PHB under this rule if the amount of the benefit payable in respect of the household would not have been zero had basic income not been included in the calculation of the benefit.

**Schedule 4.1, Section 2 Local PHB eligibility rule- maximum household income**

Basic Income payments are excluded from the calculation of income under any local maximum household income eligibility rule.

Any instance where this regulatory change conflicts with the newly released City of Hamilton Policies such as the RGI to Market (12 month rule) Policy or the Income and Asset Limits Policy (Local Rule) the regulatory change supersedes the Policy.

Any questions regarding this matter may be directed to your City of Hamilton- Housing Administration Officer or to the Ministry- Rhona Duncan, Manager, Housing and Homelessness Policy Unit -rhona.duncan@ontario.ca.

If Tenants are receiving OBIP and have questions about how the Pilot interacts with other services, supports and benefits; they are encouraged to contact Pilot Administrators directly with any questions.