Toronto Community Housing

Crisis Priority Transfers

Item 6C
November 18, 2021
Tenant Services Committee

Report:	TSC:2021-71
To:	Tenant Services Committee ("TSC")
From:	Chief Operating Officer
Date:	October 31 2021

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the TSC on the plan to undertake a review of the Toronto Community Housing ("TCHC") internal transfer program, including the crisis priority program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the TSC receive this report for information and forward it to the TCHC Board of Directors.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The information contained within this report will provide the information related to the timing, scale and scope of staff's review of the internal transfer program.

BACKGROUND:

In February 2018, the Toronto Ombudsman ("Ombudsman") presented a report to the City Council on an investigation of TCHC's Medical and Safety priority transfer process. The report included a series of recommendations to ensure that TCHC:

- Applies its processes correctly, fairly and consistently;

- Helps tenants through the application process for transfers;
- Makes timely decisions;
- Communicates those decisions clearly; and
- Makes transfers promptly.

TCHC and staff accepted the recommendations of the Ombudsman. As a result, a multi-disciplinary team was convened and a series of external consultations were carried out with tenants and community partners with the support of a third-party consultation firm. In July 2018, a new internal transfer process was introduced and operationalized. Offers were made to households to define priorities and then a chronological order of approval within each category. The priority order of transfer requests are as follows:

1. Special priority policy ("SPP");
2. Crisis priority;
3. Accessibility/accommodation;
4. Over housed; and
5. Under housed.

Along with undertaking the extensive work of clearly defining the criteria of each priority, equal effort was required for the following:

1. Identification of staff roles and responsibilities;
2. Development of rules of procedure;
3. Staff training;
4. Establishment of service levels;
5. Implementation of a communications plan; and
6. Establishment of a process for exceptional circumstances approval through the Chief Executive Officer's ("CEO") office.

Currently, the program is being delivered through the Tenancy Resolutions Office ("TRO") established as part of the restructuring to deal with complex tenancies. It is staffed with 6 Intake Specialists and 2 Special Initiative Clerks. Attachment 1 provides an overview of transfer applications received by the TRO.

Program Review Rationale

Since the approval by the Board, there have been more than three years of experience in the delivery of this new process. Transfers continue to be an issue of importance for TCHC tenants and transfers are a significant driver of tenant inquires through the local regional teams. Changes in the Operating environment, such as the operations restructuring over the last two years to bring services closer to tenants, warrant TCHC to assess the current policies and processes to ensure alignment to meet tenant needs.

Scope

The TRO will lead the review of the policy and processes with the support of a multi-disciplinary team comprised of representation from Legal Services and Regional Operations. Areas of focus in the project team's review include:

- Tenant engagement processes and materials;
- Staff and tenant education;
- Alignment and diversity of vacancies to the program;
- Vacancy matching;
- Review of approval criteria by category;
- Procedural review processes;
- Enhanced tenant support models that will support tenancy; stabilization; and
- Regulatory review.

Staff will complete the program review throughout Q4 2021 and Q1 2022 and there will be a report back to the TSC and Board in Q2 2022.

Engagement Plan

As part of the review, TCHC must gather and learn from the feedback received from tenants regarding their experience. As well, staff input from the regional teams and those who are tasked with the program delivery will be vital to managing and improving service gaps. Staff are developing a work plan to review the policy and process that ensures a comprehensive consultative process with tenants, staff and stakeholders. The series of consultation sessions will include:

1. Tenant/applicant experience;
2. Regional staff;
3. Program delivery staff;
4. External partners, including City of Toronto and Agencies; and
5. TCHC Legal Services.

Operational Impact

In 2018, the redevelopment of the internal transfer program required a full pause of intake and processing of applications; it is not anticipated that such measures are necessary for this review. Intake Specialists will continue to receive new applications and processing existing applications will remain uninterrupted during the review. Throughout the review, the TRO will be responsible for keeping all stakeholders informed to ensure that next steps, procedures, and timelines are well understood.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:

TCHC must meet the legislative requirements as set out in the Housing Services Act ("HSA"). The HSA and associated regulations outline specific requirements for Housing Providers and allow the Service Manager to establish local rules related to transfers. Additionally, TCHC is obligated to meet requirements set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code related to our "Duty to Accommodate" Tenants

ATTACHMENT:

1. Crisis Priority Transfers Applications, 2020 & 2021

SIGNATURE:

"Sheila Penny"

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Sheila Penny
Chief Operating Officer

STAFF CONTACT:
Richard Grotsch
Tenancy Resolutions Officer
416-981-4054
Richard.Grotsch@torontohousing.ca

Attachment: Crisis Priority Transfers Applications, 2020 & 2021

| | **2020** | | | | | **2021** | | | |
Quarter	Accommodation	Add. Bedroom	Crisis	Total	Quarter	Accommodation	Add. Bedroom	Crisis	Total
Q1	190	58	223	471	Q1	166	28	264	458
Q2	66	33	171	270	Q2	175	24	291	490
Q3	126	15	296	437	Q3	132	62	354	548
Q4	207	16	270	493	Oct	14	11	66	91
Total:	**589**	**122**	**960**	**1671**	**Total:**	**487**	**125**	**975**	**1587**