

December 23, 2020

To: All Service Managers

**Re: Temporarily pausing intake of new applications to the Canada-Ontario Benefit Housing Benefit program**

Thank you for your work to date delivering the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) program to households in your local communities.

Through your efforts, over 6200 households in need have received payments, and more applications have been received and are being processed. At this time, we are forecasting the COHB program funding for 2020-21 to be fully committed.

This is a considerable achievement, especially considering the challenges your offices have faced supporting households during the COVID-19 outbreak. Congratulations on assisting so many households in need, at such a difficult time.

Accordingly, we ask that no new applications to households be distributed, and that any requests for one-time first-and-last month's rent assistance be provided from your CHPI and SSRF funding allocations.

We also ask that any applications you have in process with your staff, or out in the community, be finalized and submitted **no later than Friday January 8, 2021**. Applications received after this date may be determined ineligible for assistance at this time; those households will receive a Notice advising they can re-apply when new annual planning allocations become available in April 2021.

This temporary pause will not affect households that have already received approval for assistance in a Notice of Eligibility letter. These approved households will continue to be eligible for monthly payments for the remainder of the current Benefit Year (until June 30, 2021) so long as they continue to meet program criteria for eligibility.

Please also note this temporary pause will not affect your requests for administration fees or compensations for first-and-last month's rent assisted prior to December 31, 2020. Your quarterly reports will be processed on January 15, 2021 and March 15, 2021, in accordance with the program guidelines.

If you have any questions, please contact Matt Ferguson at [matthew.ferguson@ontario.ca](mailto:matthew.ferguson@ontario.ca) or Jaspreet Araich at [Jaspreet.araich@ontario.ca](mailto:Jaspreet.araich@ontario.ca) for more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Adams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "A".

Jim Adams  
Director

Attachment: Additional Questions and Answers on Allocations (Dec 2020)

# Attachment: Additional Questions and Answers on Allocations (Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit)

Updated December 2020

## 1. Why are applications being paused at this time?

Forecasts for the 2020-21 program allocation indicates funding has been fully committed. As a result, there is no available funding to support new applications for the remainder of the program year.

This forecast includes all projected expenditures for the remainder of the benefit year made to new households approved in fiscal 2020-21 for monthly benefit payments, SM administration fees, and first-and-last month rent payments, for the period ending June 30, 2020.

## 2. What is the difference between the fiscal year and the benefit year?

The fiscal year runs annually from April 1 to March 30. For example, the 2021 fiscal year starts April 1, 2021.

The benefit year runs from July 1 to June 30, to allow the Ministry of Finance to use each household's net income submitted to the Canada Revenue Agency for the previous calendar year, to calculate the monthly benefit. For example, the 2021 benefit year starts July 1, 2021.

## 3. The forecasted expenditures for households approved in my SM area this fiscal year is different (greater or lesser) than the annual planning allocation I was provided in December 2019. Will that impact my annual planning allocation next year in 2020-21?

There is no impact to the amount of 2021-22 annual planning allocations previously announced.

The initial annual planning allocations provided to Service Managers in December 2019 were determined using the same methodology used in the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative under the National Housing Strategy and past federal/provincial programs:

- a) the Service Manager's share of total provincial households, and
- b) the share of households in core housing need equally weighted.

The benefit's portability and responsiveness to household composition and decreases in income can cause commitments to households to vary considerably throughout the year

after initial approval. In addition, the outbreak this year significantly impacted the incomes of many households, and caused monthly payment amounts to increase.

As a result, while the total program's 2020-21 program funding is forecasted to be completely committed, each Service Manager's forecasted total commitment varies from the initial 2020-21 annual planning allocation announced out in 2019. The overall program goal for this year will be achieved, with the understanding that each Service Manager's contribution to the goal will vary somewhat from the planned amount.

**4. How do I calculate how much annual planning allocation I expect a new household will use?**

Funding in the annual planning allocations will be used for new applications approved during the fiscal year (April 1 to March 30) for the following expenses:

- c) MOF monthly payments to households starting on their Effective Start Date (ESD) during that fiscal year  
(starting no earlier than the beginning of their initial fiscal year on April 1, until the end of the Benefit Year on June 30 after the end of their initial fiscal year), and
- d) any administration payments and/or reimbursement for first/last month's rent assistance claimed by the Service Manager for applicable households.

**For example:** If a household is approved for a monthly benefit of \$575 per month in April 2021 and receives \$2,100 for first and last month's rent assistance from the Service Manager, this household will be forecasted to reduce the Service Manager's 21-22 annual planning allocation by:

- \$6,900 for the PHB (\$575 x 15 months, until the end of June 2022)
- \$2,100 for first and last month's rent assistance
- \$250 for the administration payment

... for a total commitment of \$9,250 from the 21-22 annual planning allocation.

Once a household is approved for assistance, you can use ONT-TAXS to confirm the monthly benefit payments for all households approved from your SM area. For each households, ONT-TAXS reports on "Expenditure to Date" (in column AO) and "Remaining Payable for Benefit Year" (in column AN).

**Please note:** ONT-TAXS 'reboots' at the beginning of every benefit year on July 1, so the amounts for April 1 to June 30 contained in the June 30 ONT-TAXS report should be added to the amounts for July 1 to March 31 in subsequent ONT-TAXS reports.

**For example:** A new household was approved for assistance with an Effective Start Date of April 1, 2021, and a monthly payment of \$200. On June 30, 2021, ONT-TAXS reports the households had an “Expenditure to Date” of \$600, and a “Remaining Payable for Benefit Year” of \$0 (since no more payments remain in that Benefit Year ending June 30, 2021).

Starting July 1, ONT-TAXS reboots and begins counting payments from that date. The July 30, 2021 ONT-TAXS report will show the household with an “Expenditure to Date” of \$200, and a “Remaining Payable for Benefit Year” of \$2200 (since there are 11 more payments remaining in that Benefit Year ending June 30, 2022).

As a result, on July 30, 2021, this household has received \$800 to date (\$600 + \$200) with an additional \$2200 remaining that benefit year, for a total commitment of \$3000 out of the Service Manager’s 21-22 annual planning allocation.