

Allocations Policy

Purpose

This policy explains how HousingFirst will allocate its properties and meet its contractual and legal duties.

Scope

This policy applies to all tenable properties owned and/or managed by HousingFirst.

Policy Statement

General

HousingFirst establishes an allocations criterion for its housing to:

- fulfil its social mission
- ensure appropriate housing is made available to people seeking social housing assistance
- meet its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations
- support the financial viability of its housing programs.

Allocations

HousingFirst is a participating registered agency of the Victorian Housing Register (VHR). When HousingFirst has a vacant property, it will make an allocation of housing from the VHR.

Allocations may include new applicants or tenants who have been approved for transfer from both the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other participating registered agencies.

Eligibility

The Director of Housing has established common eligibility criteria for the (VHR) that are set out in the Eligibility Criteria Operational Guidelines. The Victorian Housing Register's eligibility criteria apply to all long-term housing owned and/or managed by HousingFirst.

Specific eligibility requirements

HousingFirst may have additional eligibility criteria for a specific property depending on the housing program. This can include an allocation that is targeted towards:

- households on the Priority Access List or Register of Interest
- households that demonstrate significant links to the local community
- target groups such as, but not limited to, older persons (generally 55+ years of age), people with disability, families/ people who have experienced family violence, people who are at risk of, or have experienced, homelessness

- people who are in paid employment and meet the income & asset eligibility set by the DHHS.
- people who are receiving support from a specific support agency who have nomination rights to that property
- households who meet other eligibility requirements as set by the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS).

HousingFirst will communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the particular eligibility criteria that apply to that property or program prior to an allocation being made.

Approach to allocation

Allocations Target - Victorian Housing Register (VHR)

HousingFirst is required to meet an annual Priority Allocations Target which is set by the Victorian Housing Register Allocations Framework each financial year.

Sourcing applicants

HousingFirst will at first instance seek suitable applicants from the VHR. HousingFirst may use other means to source applicants, for example through partnerships with support agencies.

Where a suitable applicant being considered for a vacancy does not have a current Victorian Housing Register application but is eligible for social housing under the Victorian Housing Register and is suitable for that vacancy, then HousingFirst will ensure where applicable that the applicant completes a Victorian Housing Register application at the time of making an offer of housing.

Housing entitlements

HousingFirst will offer and allocate properties that are suitable for the applicant and their current household members. The table below shows the minimum bedroom entitlements per household.

Household composition	Minimum bedrooms
Single person	Studio/ one bedroom/ room
Couple	One bedroom
Single person or couple with one other household member	Two bedrooms
Single person or couple with two other household members	Two bedrooms
Single person or couple with three other household members	Three bedrooms
Single person or couple with four other household members	Four bedrooms
Single person or couple with five other household members	Five bedrooms

When determining the suitability of a household to a property at the point of allocation, HousingFirst will use the following rules:

- people 18 years and over are entitled to their own bedroom
- siblings of different genders are not required to share a bedroom regardless of age
- children of the same gender within a household can share a bedroom
- only single person households can occupy studio units or rooming houses.

Matching households to the right house

HousingFirst will match applicants to properties so that an allocation:

- is the right size for the applicant's household
- is in an area consistent with the applicant's needs
- assists the applicant to access employment or any support services that they need
- makes the best use of housing stock owned or managed by HousingFirst
- encourages a sustainable tenancy
- meets any expressed needs of the applicant so far as they are known, such as modifications for people with a physical disability or mobility impairment, availability of car parking or room for carers.

HousingFirst aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those applicants who need them, including:

- properties that are suitable for older people
- properties that have been built or modified to meet the needs of people with disability
- properties on the ground floor
- properties with level access
- properties with a yard/garden.

The eligibility of the whole household is reassessed prior to an offer of housing being made, and prior to a household signing a lease for a property.

Nomination rights

Where nomination rights apply, HousingFirst will:

- establish appropriate arrangements in protocol agreements with referral agencies who have responsibility for nominating applicants for vacancies, to ensure timely and appropriate referrals

- require that referral agencies nominate applicants who have a current Victorian Housing Register application.

HousingFirst will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate any requirements, if this is not contained in a Victorian Housing Register application.

Supporting sustainable and harmonious communities

HousingFirst may, to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies in allocation in response to:

- a high concentration of public and community housing stock in a particular area
- a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic issues in a particular area or building
- existing tenancy management issues (or a potential for them to develop)
- existing neighbourhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled
- a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

Definitions

In this policy:

Applicant	means a person who has applied for housing via the Victorian Housing Register (VHR)
DHHS	means the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
Director of Housing	DoH means the Victorian government statutory authority that owns all public housing land in Victoria, and which is the principal funding body for community housing
Nomination rights	means arrangements between HousingFirst and third-party support providers where the support provider nominates applicants for certain vacant properties
Priority Access	applicants on the Victorian Housing Register (VHR) who have been assessed as having a priority housing need. The Priority Access Categories are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emergency Management Housing ▪ Priority Transfers ▪ Homeless with Support ▪ Supported Housing ▪ Temporary Absence ▪ Special Housing Needs

- Special Housing Needs (Aged 55 years and over)

Public housing	Housing owned and managed by DHHS
Register of Interest	Applicant on the Victorian Housing Register who have otherwise met eligibility requirements but do not have a demonstrated priority need.
Social housing	Housing that is owned and managed by either DHHS or a community housing provider
Targeted social housing	The properties that are considered Targeted Social Housing under agreements between HousingFirst and the Director of Housing.
Victorian Housing Register (VHR)	The state-wide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing

Related information

- HousingFirst Transfer Policy
- HousingFirst Succession of Tenancy Policy
- HousingFirst Significant Links Policy
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Victorian Housing Registrar Performance Standard 1 (Tenant and housing services)
- Legal agreements between HousingFirst and the Director of Housing relating to the Victorian Housing Register and funding programs
- DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines

Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available at www.housingfirst.org.au

Version control

Version	1	Review frequency	24 months
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