

*British Columbia-
Temporary Rental Supplement*

Program Framework

April 2020



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INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, as part of the province's efforts to ensure British Columbians do not lose their home during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Province of BC launched the British Columbia Temporary Rental Supplement (BC-TRS) program to be administered by BC Housing. This temporary program provides a short-term Benefit¹ to assist eligible Low and Moderate Income renters who are struggling to pay their rent as a result of income loss or reduction due to the impact of COVID-19. This program may also assist in minimizing any financial losses experienced by landlords who have tenants who are impacted and eligible to receive this rent supplement. The program will be delivered by BC Housing starting April 2020, with Benefits advanced directly to Landlords on behalf of eligible households, and is expected to run through June 30, 2020.

This framework outlines the key elements, standards and guidelines of the BC-TRS program and defines the roles and responsibilities of BC Housing in the delivery and management of the program. It ensures the program is accountable to the Recipients and the public by providing for the equitable distribution of the Benefit in a fair and consistent manner.

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

The following principles ensure equitable and accountable delivery and management of the BC-TRS program. They guide the operation of the program and govern BC Housing's interaction with the program, Applicants², Recipients³ and Landlords⁴.

1. Consistency and fairness in service delivery

- a) BC Housing will provide consistent and fair service to all Applicants, Recipients and Landlords.
- b) The program will integrate with, and be consistent with, other government programs to the greatest extent possible.

2. Program is accessible and responsive to all eligible households

- a) All eligible households will have an equal opportunity to access the program.
- b) Every effort will be made to respond to the diverse needs of households and reduce barriers to access (e.g., language, physical ability, etc.).

3. Transparency and accountability

BC Housing will:

- a) Develop and maintain program policies and procedures.
- b) Maintain reliable and consistent records.
- c) Provide clarity to program Applicants and Recipients regarding program requirements.

¹ A monthly non-taxable payment issued directly to Landlords of eligible households to help with paying Rent and minimize financial losses by the Landlords.

² The individuals or households applying for BC-TRS program, prior to application approval.

³ Eligible individuals or households who are approved for the Benefit.

⁴ Landlords of Recipients

- d) Monitor the program to confirm that services are delivered effectively and meet the program's objectives.
- e) Ensure the confidentiality of participating households and Landlords is respected.
- f) Establish quality assurance guidelines for processing the Applications⁵.

PROGRAM GOAL, OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES, MEASURES

Goal

To assist eligible households and Landlords affected by the COVID-19 pandemic by providing financial assistance for households who may have difficulty paying their rent due to a sudden loss or reduction of income.

Objectives

1. Provide a temporary Benefit to Low and Moderate Income households to support their ability to pay rent and limit rent arrears.
2. Support Landlords during the temporary eviction moratorium by ensuring at least a portion of rent is paid by eligible households facing financial difficulty due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Provide timely processing of Applications and response to inquiries.

Outcome

1. Reduce financial losses experienced by eligible households and their Landlords who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Measures

1. Number of households assisted.
2. Total amount of Benefits approved.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements⁶:

1. In 2019, had an annual gross household income not exceeding BC Housing's current Low and Moderate Income Limits:
 - For singles and couples, this figure is \$74,150.
 - For Families⁷, this figure is \$113,040.
2. Experienced a loss or reduction of income due to COVID 19, and;
 - a. in receipt of, or eligible for Employment Insurance (EI); or
 - b. in receipt of, or eligible for Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB); or
 - c. have experienced a 25% or greater reduction in employment income.

⁵ An application made by an Applicant who is not currently receiving the Benefit.

⁶ These eligibility criteria are accurate at the time of program launch but it is acknowledged that they may be adjusted to meet the needs of emerging demographics as needed to respond to the rapidly changing pandemic situation.

⁷ A Family consists of a parent/grandparent and their dependent child(ren)/grandchild(ren) or other legal ward, regardless of age; or three or more people related by blood, marriage, common-law partnership, or adoption.

3. Currently pay more than 30 percent of gross monthly income⁸ toward the rent for their residence.
4. Rent primary⁹ residence in British Columbia. Members of non-subsidized housing co-ops may be eligible.
5. Rent must not be subsidized by any other government program, including subsidized housing or rent supplements such as Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER) or the Rental Assistance Program (RAP).
6. Not in receipt of Income Assistance or Disability Assistance.
7. The Landlord has completed the Landlord Application and submitted all required information.

KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS

1. Recipients are entitled to a fixed amount of Benefit depending on the household size:
 - a. For couples and singles: \$300/month
 - b. For Families: \$500/month
2. The Benefit is paid directly to Landlords on behalf of Recipients and must be applied toward the rent payable by the Recipient.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BC Housing

BC Housing is responsible for administering the BC-TRS program. Its role includes:

1. Providing clear program guidelines to Applicants, Recipients and Landlords
2. Responding to all program inquiries.
3. Managing and processing Tenant and Landlord Applications in a timely manner.
4. Determining eligibility and issuing Benefits.
5. Promoting the program to the public.
6. Data collection and analysis.
7. Audit of Recipient files.

Applicants and Recipients

Applicants and Recipients are responsible for:

1. Maintaining their rental accommodation and ensuring the full market rent is paid on a monthly basis.
2. Submitting a complete Tenant Application and supporting documentation required to assess eligibility including contacting their Landlord to ensure the Landlord Application is submitted. A complete BC-TRS Application includes the Tenant and Landlord Application.
3. Advising BC Housing when changes occur that may impact eligibility and/or the Benefit amount.

⁸ BC Emergency Benefit for Workers is excluded from current gross household income.

⁹ Primary residence is where the tenant lives permanently for at least 6 months per year and is the residential address used on documentation including but not limited to identification, vehicle registration and income tax returns.

