

Eligibility and Allocation of Housing

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the approach of YWCA Housing to establish:

- eligibility for its long-term social housing programs;
- the prioritisation and allocation of vacant properties in its long-term social housing portfolio; and
- successful and sustainable tenancies and communities through the matching applicants to properties

2. Scope

This policy applies to all long-term social housing properties owned and/or managed by YWCA Housing.

3. Policy Statement

Guiding Principles

Eligibility for Housing

YWCA Housing establishes eligibility criteria for long-term housing to fulfill its social mission and to ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress.

Accordingly, YWCA Housing will:

- only allocate long-term housing to eligible applicants;
- communicate clearly to applicants and the community as to who is eligible for long-term housing with YWCA Housing; and
- comply with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for long-term housing.

Approach to Allocation

YWCA Housing will allocate long-term housing to eligible applicants and in a manner which:

- is fair, transparent and equitable;
- relieves households from housing stress;
- is in accordance with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations; and
- supports the financial viability of YWCA Housing's long-term housing programs.

YWCA Housing is committed to promoting a successful and sustainable tenancy when matching applicants to its properties. This means that YWCA Housing will allocate housing in a way that:

- gives appropriate priority to households in need of housing assistance;
- considers the health, safety and support needs of applicants;
- matches individual housing needs with available properties; and
- supports sustainable and harmonious communities.

Eligibility for Housing

YWCA Housing participates in the Victorian Housing Register (VHR). The VHR is a common register for all applicants seeking public and community housing in Victoria.

DHHS has established common eligibility criteria for the VHR that are set out in the Eligibility Criteria Operational Guidelines. The VHR's eligibility criteria apply to all long-term housing that is owned, managed, or controlled by YWCA Housing in Victoria.

All applicants with a current VHR application are taken by YWCA Housing to meet the VHR eligibility criteria.

Applicants without a current VHR application can provide evidence to YWCA Housing that establishes they meet the VHR eligibility criteria. YWCA Housing will then assist such applicants to make a VHR application either through referral to a suitable service or by assisting the applicant to lodge a VHR application.

Additional Requirements for Eligibility for Long-Term Housing

In addition to meeting the VHR eligibility criteria, to be eligible for long-term housing with YWCA Housing, an applicant must:

- have no previous debt with YWCA Housing, or repay the debt prior to entering into a tenancy/residency agreement, or in some circumstances enter into a repayment agreement to repay the debt; and
- Not have had a previous tenancy with YWCA Housing terminated for antisocial behavior or danger.

Specific Requirements for Particular Long-Term Housing Programs

YWCA Housing has some particular long-term rental housing programs where additional eligibility criteria to the general eligibility criteria apply. This can include, for example 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.

YWCA Housing will communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the particular eligibility criteria that apply to that program.

Eligibility for Long-Term Housing Programs Outside the Scope of VHR

Where YWCA Housing owns or manages housing under programs that are outside the scope of the VHR, then:

- YWCA Housing will comply with any other legal or contractual obligations that apply to eligibility housing in that program; and
- YWCA Housing may within the scope of such legal or contractual obligations:
 - elect to apply the general eligibility criteria as a generally accepted benchmark to establish that the applicant needs affordable housing; or
 - apply some other reasonable eligibility criteria that is consistent with YWCA Housing's objects and purposes.

Approach to Allocation

Allocations Target - Victorian Housing Register

Under the VHR's allocations framework, YWCA Housing is required to meet an annual Priority Allocations Target.

Sourcing Applicants

YWCA Housing will at first instance seek suitable applicants from the VHR. YWCA Housing may source appropriate applicants through partnerships with other organisations at its discretion. Where a suitable applicant being considered for a vacancy does not have a current VHR application but is eligible for social housing under the VHR and suitable for that vacancy, then YWCA Housing will ensure that such applicants complete a VHR application at the time of making an offer of housing.

YWCA Housing will advertise vacancies in our Affordable Housing program properties on the website and through online real estate listing websites.

Other Legal Requirements

YWCA Housing will ensure in making any allocation that it complies any other legal or contractual requirements concerning eligibility for housing or allocation of housing.

Matching Households to the Right House

In allocating housing, YWCA Housing will also have regard to the VHR operational guideline, *Clients with Special Accommodation Requirements*.

YWCA Housing 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 YWCA Housing;
- encourages a sustainable tenancy; and
- meets any particular 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.

YWCA Housing 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 a disability;
- properties on the ground floor,
- properties with level access; or
- properties with a yard/garden.

YWCA Housing will assess all applicants before making an offer of housing to determine suitability for a particular vacancy (and eligibility if the applicant does not currently have a VHR application). YWCA Housing will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate any particular requirements, if this is not contained in a VHR application.

Bedroom Size

YWCA Housing 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	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 during allocation, YWCA Housing 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.

Supporting Sustainable and Harmonious Communities

YWCA Housing 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 renters 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 neighborhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
- a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

4. Definitions

Applicant	means a person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to YWCA Housing
DHHS	means the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
Director of Housing	means the Victorian government statutory authority that owns all public housing land in Victoria and which is the principal funding body for community housing
Priority Access	Applicants on the 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Targeted Social Housing	The properties that are considered Targeted Social Housing under agreements between YWCA Housing and the Director of Housing.
Transitional Housing	means the Victorian Government program to provide housing on a short-term basis to people at risk of homelessness seeking long term housing options
VHR	The Victorian Housing Register, the statewide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing

Document Control Data	
Policy Framework	
Responsible Body	Chief Executive Officer
Accountable Officer	Senior Manager, Community Housing
Transparency and Accessibility	This policy will be available on the website https://www.ywcahousing.org.au/policies/
Supersedes	All previous local policies
Associated documents	YWCA Housing Tenancy Transfer Policy YWCA Housing Client and Renters Privacy Policy YWCA Housing Rent Setting Policy
Legislation	Housing Act 1983 (Vic) Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies Residential Tenancies Act (VIC) Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Legal agreements between YWCA Housing and the Director of Housing relating to the VHR DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines

Approval and Amendment History			
Review period – 2 years			
Approval Date	Version	Amendments	Next Review

12/01/2021	1.0		2 years
24/03/2021	1.1	Minor wording updates (renters to renters)in line with Rental Reforms	2 years