

H01 Eligibility & Allocation of Housing

1. Purpose

YWCA National Housing and YWCA Housing (YWCA) is committed to creating successful and sustainable tenancies through the practice of clear and fair processes. The purpose of this Policy is to outline the approach of YWCA regarding:

- eligibility criteria for its housing programs.
- the prioritisation and allocation of vacant properties in its housing portfolio; and
- appropriate matching of tenants to suitable properties to create sustainable tenancies

2. Scope

This policy applies to all housing owned and/or managed by YWCA and will always consider the YWCA and/or other program guidelines associated with the specified dwelling.

3. Policy Aim

YWCA allocates its housing to eligible applicants in a selection process that is transparent and accountable, and meets all legislative requirements, industry standards and guidelines. YWCA follows agreed federal and state allocation policies as part of maintaining its registration to provide community and/or social housing in each jurisdiction.

The overarching aims of this policy are:

- to ensure YWCA match individual housing needs to the best of its capacity at any given time, with available properties.
- YWCA housing is allocated to eligible applicants fairly and appropriately
- YWCA maintain compliance with regulatory bodies and contractual requirements for housing management.

4. Policy Statement

YWCA housing eligibility and allocation criteria for housing is designed to fulfill its social mission, ensuring that our housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress. YWCA will observe all contractual arrangements that apply to program specific, funding or government stated eligibility criteria that may exist in relation to its property portfolio. YWCA will allocate from state-based waitlists and central registers in appropriate locations and adhere to the agreements surrounding their use for allocation purposes.

Accordingly, YWCA will:

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

5. Definitions

Allocation	means a property is offered to a specific person
Applicant	means a person who has applied for housing via a State government managed waitlist or, where permitted by this policy, directly to YWCA Housing
Eligible	means a person has met the criteria required for them to be considered for housing in a YWCA property or program
Nomination Rights	means an agency or provider outside of YWCA has the right to determine which applicants are to be assessed and considered for housing in certain properties
Priority	Applicants on housing registers or waitlists identified as having a priority housing need as per the requirements in that state.
Public housing	Housing owned and managed by state government housing authorities
Target Groups	means specific groups of people that some specific housing may be reserved for, such as but not limited to, older people, women with children, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with a disability, etc
Transitional Housing	means a housing program to provide housing on a short to medium-term basis to people at risk of homelessness seeking long term housing options
Waitlist or Register	means a state based government approved and/or operated housing database that potential applicants are required to listed on to be eligible for housing allocation

6. Policy Principles

YWCA will employ the following principles to ensure the aim and purpose of this policy is achieved.

YWCA will allocate 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's housing programs.

YWCA is committed to promoting successful and sustainable tenancies when matching applicants to its properties. This means that YWCA 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.

7. Eligibility for Housing

YWCA participates in the use of housing registers and waitlists in its operating jurisdictions across Australia and as determined by its housing programs. Eligibility criteria applies to all that is owned, managed, or controlled by YWCA. Prospective applicants will be provided with clear and detailed information about the eligibility requirements (including income and assets), potential location and/or features of the accommodations available. Language support is also provided when and as required.

Prospective applicants that require but do not have an active registration on a housing waitlist or register, who have established they meet eligibility criteria, will be assisted to make application. This may occur through referral to a suitable service or by assistance from YWCA.

In addition, to be eligible for housing with YWCA Housing, applicants must:

- have no previous debt with YWCA, 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 had a previous tenancy with YWCA terminated for antisocial, illegal or dangerous behaviours.

Where YWCA owns or manages housing under programs that do not require housing register or waitlist registration, YWCA will comply with any other legal or contractual obligations that apply to eligibility housing in that program. YWCA 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's objects and purposes.

Where social housing renters income exceeds the allowable limits, please refer to the Sustaining Tenancies policy.

Affordable Housing

All applicants must be over 18 years of age and meet the following criteria:

- Ability to live independently;
- Maintain paid employment throughout their tenure, with the ability to access YWCA hardship policy during any periods of unemployment
- Income and Asset limits as specified by the relevant State body

In circumstances where the household's income increases and remains above the limit for Affordable Housing, the renters may remain for up to 1 year. After this time, the renters will be encouraged to make the transition to private rental

8. Target Groups and Housing Programs

YWCA may have housing programs where additional eligibility criteria applies. 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 will communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the specific eligibility criteria that applies to any housing program we operate.

9. Housing Needs Assessment

YWCA believes that quality allocation processes that match an applicant with appropriate and suitable housing substantially contributes to the creation of sustainable tenancies and harmonious communities.

YWCA will carefully 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 an appropriate wait list or housing register application). YWCA will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate any particular housing requirements, if it is not contained in their registered application.

YWCA will, to the best of its ability at any given time, 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 any support services that they need;
- makes the best use of housing stock owned or managed by YWCA;
- 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 aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are highly desired/in demand are allocated to applicants requiring them, based on greatest 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; and/or
- properties with a yard/garden.

10. Sourcing Applicants

YWCA will in the first instance seek suitable applicants for vacancies based on the requirements of any housing program that may be applicable to the property.

YWCA may source appropriate prospective applicants through partnerships with other organisations at its discretion. YWCA will ensure that all prospective applicants for its properties have completed any required applications and/or registrations prior to accepting an offer of housing from YWCA.

YWCA will advertise property vacancies in our Affordable Housing program on our website and through online real estate listing websites as appropriate/required. In Victoria, YWCA may search for suitable applicants via the VHR Register of Interest category.

11. Nomination Rights

YWCA engages in arrangements with referral agencies in some jurisdictions regarding the nomination of applicants for housing allocations to specified properties. Where an agency outside of YWCA has nomination rights to a property, YWCA will establish and maintain suitable protocols and agreements so that nominations for vacancies are appropriate and referred in a timely manner. YWCA is committed to ensuring our property portfolio is assigned and utilised to the best of its capacity for our communities, clients, and stakeholders.

12. Making an offer

An offer of housing is the formal process that, if accepted, will result in the signing of a tenancy agreement for a household. A formal offer of housing will be made in writing to the applicant. The applicant will have 4 business days to respond to the offer of housing. If the applicant requires more than 4 days to consider the offer, they must

contact YWCA to seek an extension. YWCA will seek to understand the reason that the extension is required, and this consent will be considered reasonably. Applicants are required to commence their tenancy within an agreed timeframe which is usually 7 business days of accepting an offer of housing.

If an applicant from a State waitlist or register accepts the offer of housing, YWCA are required to notify the outcome on the State waitlist or register.

If the applicant from a State waitlist or register refuses the offer of housing, YWCA are required to notify the outcome on the State waitlist or register.

13. Supporting Sustainable and Harmonious Communities

YWCA has a commitment to the creation and maintenance of sustainable and harmonious communities within which its housing and clients reside and understands the importance of quality allocation processes and practices to achieve this commitment.

YWCA 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 neighbourhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
- a mismatch of supply and demand making properties hard to let.

14. Complaints, Feedback and Appeal of decisions

YWCA has an effective and appropriate response in place to deal with complaints and ensures that accurate information and records of investigations are maintained. YWCA will ensure that privacy principles are followed at all times and tenant confidentiality is maintained throughout the incident management process.

YWCA welcomes anyone to query any decisions we make and/or ask questions about our work practices. If a customer wishes to provide feedback to YWCA and/or believes a decision made by us is incorrect, they can register their feedback and/or lodge an appeal using the YWCA Feedback and Appeals Policy.

Document Control Data	
Policy Framework	
Responsible Body	Chief Executive Officer
Accountable Officer	General Manager, Community Housing
Application	All employees of YWCA
Supersedes	All previous local policies
Associated documents	YWCA Housing Policies and Procedures YWCA Feedback and Appeals Policy and Procedures YWCA Privacy Policies and Procedures YWCA Customer Service Charter
Legislation, Frameworks, Standards, Codes and	Housing Assistance Act 1996 (COM) Housing Act 1983 (VIC) Housing Act 2003 (QLD)

Agreements	Housing Regulations 2015 (QLD) Housing Act 1982 (NT) Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (VIC) Residential tenancies & Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (QLD) Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT) National Affordable Housing Agreement Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Queensland Human Rights Act 2019 National Community Housing Standards Department of Human Services Standards (VIC) Consumer Charter for Community Managed Housing and Homelessness Services (VIC) National Community Housing Regulatory Code Victorian Community Housing Regulatory Code State based agreements between YWCA and statutory bodies
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Approval and Amendment History

Review period – 2 years

Approval Date	Version	Amendments	Next Review
May 2022	1.0	Superseded Eligibility and Allocation	May 2024
July 2022	1.1	Minor wording updates	July 2024