

# THE GN STAFF HOUSING POLICY



**April 2019**

# Government of Nunavut Staff Housing Policy

## POLICY STATEMENT

The Government of Nunavut (GN) provides subsidized staff housing to *term* and *indeterminate* employees to aid in the recruitment and retention of staff. Employees are responsible for securing their own accommodation: however, housing may be provided when it is necessary to facilitate the delivery of programs and services to Nunavummiut.

Given the realities of Nunavut's limited housing market, there may always be a role for the provision of some staff housing in the territory. However, as Nunavut grows, and private housing markets develop, Nunavummiut can become more self-reliant and less dependent on subsidized housing. The staff housing program, including its eligibility criteria and rental rates, is intended to support Nunavut's housing market, and stimulate the emergence of private affordable home rental and homeownership in the territory.

This policy is written, and should be implemented based on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values. Particularly, by supporting the delivery of GN programs and services, the provision of staff housing aligns with the Inuit Societal Value of *Pijitsirniq; Serving and providing for family and/or community*. Further, the GN Staff Housing Allocation Committee, as outlined in this policy, is comprised of multiple GN departments and agencies, and operates based on the principles *Aajiqatigiinni* and *Piliriqatigiinni*; decision making through discussion and consensus, and working together for a common cause, respectively.

## PURPOSE

The Staff Housing Policy sets out the scope and principles of the GN Staff Housing Program. Along with the GN Staff Housing Procedures Manual, this policy establishes the guidelines for fair implementation and administration of GN Staff Housing.

## PRINCIPLES

- a) The GN's role in staff housing addresses market and infrastructural gaps that limit affordable housing options and that hinder the recruitment and retention of staff. Staffing GN positions is essential for government service delivery to Nunavummiut.
- b) The GN's role in the provision of staff housing supports and recognizes private sector housing in Nunavut.
- c) The GN will identify its staff housing requirements based on departmental staffing needs.
- d) The GN is committed to allocating staff housing in a transparent and fair process, which is consistent across all regions of Nunavut.
- e) The GN recognizes that a portion of the costs of staff housing provision should be recovered from those using this service through the payment of rent. The employee portion of the rental cost for staff housing will be made through payroll deduction.

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- f) GN employees occupying staff housing are expected to adhere to the *Code of Values and Ethics*, and meet their responsibilities in accordance with the tenancy agreements.
- g) The GN is committed to providing a high level of service standards, guided by the following Inuit Societal Values:
  - *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq*: Respecting others, relationships and caring for people;
  - *Aajiqatigiinni*: Decision making through discussion and consensus; and
  - *Piliriqatigiinni/Ilkajuqtiinni*: Working together for a common cause.
- h) All GN employees are expected to adhere to Inuit Societal Values and to cooperate in a respectful manner with all parties involved in the staff housing processes.

### SCOPE

This Policy applies to all individuals, GN departments, ministerial staff, and participating GN boards and agencies that apply for and/or access the GN staff housing programs, portfolios and services defined in this Policy and the accompanying Procedures Manual.

Eligibility requirements for the GN Staff Housing Program are outlined in the provisions section of this policy, with further implementation detail found in the GN Staff Housing Procedures Manual.

### DEFINITIONS

The following terms apply to this Policy:

**Allocation Committee:** A forum that consists of Assistant Deputy Ministers from all GN departments, the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and the Nunavut Arctic College, established to assign staff housing units according to set procedures.

**Allocation Committee – Chair:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations, Department of Human Resources.

**Appeals Committee:** A forum that consists of several Deputy Ministers, established to consider any written appeals against the decisions of the Allocation Committee, or against regulations imposed under this Policy. Members will include representatives from the Departments of Human Resources, Culture and Heritage, Justice and the Nunavut Housing Corporation. The Appeals Committee is convened at the call of the Chair.

**Appeals Committee – Chair:** Deputy Minister of Human Resources, or his/her designate.

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**Applicant:** An individual who has applied for staff housing accommodations or programs under this Policy.

**Base Rent:** Is defined as Rentable Area (m<sup>2</sup>) x Base Rate.

**Casual Employee:** A person who is hired to perform work of a temporary nature, not in excess of four (4) months.

**Code of Values and Ethics:** The Nunavut Public Service Code of Values and Ethics.

**Dependent:** For the purposes of unit occupancy, and the Rental Assistance Program, a dependent is considered to be:

- a) the spouse of an employee who is residing with the employee;
- b) any child, adopted child or stepchild of the employee who:
  - i. is attending school or is a student at some other institution, and is under twenty-four (24) years; or
  - ii. is under twenty-four (24) years and dependent upon the employee for support; or
  - iii. is twenty-four (24) years or older and dependent upon the employee because of a mental or physical illness; or
- c) any other relative of the employee who is a member of the employee's household and is totally dependent upon the employee for support because of a mental or physical illness;

**Emerging Markets:** For the purposes of this policy, communities categorized as emerging markets include Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, and Cambridge Bay.

**Indeterminate Employee:** A person employed on a permanent basis by the GN for an indefinite period.

**Moves of Convenience:** A tenant that that requests to move from their current staff housing unit to another staff housing unit for any of the following reasons:

- a) an increase or decrease in their family size (over/under accommodation);
- b) dissatisfaction with the unit or building currently occupied.

**Over Accommodated:** An employee who occupies a staff housing unit that is larger than what is needed, according to the National Occupancy Standards.

**Rentable Area:** Rentable area is the whole finished and heated area within the interior surfaces of the exterior walls of the unit, including the interior partitions and stairways but excluding any space where the headroom is less than 1.98 meters (6 feet 6 inches).

**Term Employee:** Any person, other than a casual employee, employed for a fixed period in excess of four (4) months.

**Under-Accommodated:** A tenant that is living in an unsuitable or overcrowded household, according to the National Occupancy Standards.

## PROVISIONS

### 1. General Authority and Accountability

- This Policy is issued under the authority of the Executive Council.
- The Minister of Human Resources is accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy.
- The Deputy Minister of Human Resources is responsible to the Minister of Human Resources for the administration of this Policy.
- Where a conflict between the Policy or the accompanying Procedures Manual and the *Residential Tenancy Act* exists, the *Act* shall take precedence.

### 2. Eligibility and Allocation

This section outlines the basic Eligibility and Allocation criteria for GN Staff Housing. Further details related to the process of allocation can be found in the accompanying Staff Housing Procedures Manual.

#### Eligibility Criteria

All current indeterminate and term employees may be eligible for staff housing, unless they:

- a) Currently own, or have within the past 12 months, owned, developed or sold any residential property in the community in which they will be working;
- b) Purchase residential property in the community in which they are living, in which case they must vacate staff housing within 14 days of the closing of the property purchase;
- c) Were evicted or had a lease agreement terminated for a GN staff housing unit within the last twelve months; or
- d) Have outstanding arrears owing to the NHC for rent and/or damages, or outstanding debt to Qulliq Energy Corporation or for municipal services that may limit the establishment of utility accounts.

Appeals regarding eligibility may be made according to the procedures set out in Appendix II of this Policy (Appeals Committee).

#### Priority and Allocation: New Appointments

- a) The Allocation Committee will assign staff housing in accordance with the staff requisitions based on the established Housing Priority List by Category.

**Category 1:** Health/Safety/Security

Positions necessary to provide for essential services related to the health, safety and security of Nunavummiut, including, but not limited to: medical professionals (e.g. nurses and clerk interpreters), correctional workers, social workers, conservation officers and emergency management personnel.

**Category 2:** Government Operations

Positions necessary for the delivery of core government programs and services to Nunavummiut, including, but not limited to: teachers, management personnel.

**Category 3:** Internal Departmental Operations

Positions necessary to support internal departmental operations in the delivery of programs and services to Nunavummiut, including, but not limited to: coordinators, analysts, communications.

- b) In the interest of maintaining GN operations, and meeting departmental Inuit employment goals and objectives, Deputy Ministers of each represented department or agency may choose to further prioritize position allocations with a departmental ranking outside of the identified categories. The Deputy Minister would present such requests to the Allocation Committee, through their respective ADM.

For example, a position identified as category 3 in the Staff Housing Policy, may be a departmental priority that deserves special consideration by the Committee.

- c) The Deputy Minister of Human Resources has final authority over Category and Priority Rating of positions, according to the procedures set forth in Appendix I (Allocation Committee) of the GN Staff Housing Policy.

**Priority and Allocation: Existing employees**

- a) Existing employees may submit an application for staff housing to the Secretariat representative of the Allocation Committee.
- b) The Staff Housing Allocation Committee will review requests and determine the nature and urgency of each application.
- c) Eligibility appeals may be made according to procedures in Appendix II of this Policy (Appeals Committee).

**Assignment of units for all employees approved for staff housing**

- a) Where available, employees allocated staff housing will be shown three (3) different units, and will have the option to choose between these units for their assigned housing. The viewing of units will be arranged by the employing department, in coordination with the NHC. Units will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.

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- b) Every effort will be made to ensure employees are allocated suitable accommodation that corresponds with family size as per the National Occupancy Standards, as follows:
- A maximum of two persons per bedroom.
  - Household members, living as part of a married or common-law couple share a bedroom with their spouse or common-law partner.
  - Single parents, of any age, have a separate bedroom.
  - Household members aged 18 or over have a separate bedroom - except those living as part of a married or common-law couple.
    - For the purposes of staff housing eligibility, this only applies to household members aged 18 or older who are dependent on the employee, as per the definition in this policy.
  - Household members under 18 years old of the same sex share a bedroom - except single parents and those living as part of a married or common-law couple.
  - Household members under 5 years old of the opposite sex share a bedroom if doing so would reduce the number of required bedrooms.
- c) If an employee refuses (all of) the allocated housing unit(s), the application will be put on a waiting list, maintained and monitored by the GN Staff Housing Allocation Committee until a unit becomes available.
- d) If the appropriate size of accommodation is unavailable, an employee will be offered alternate and/or shared housing according to availability. Payment of rent will be made in accordance with the procedures set out in section 2 (Base Rent) of the GN Staff Housing Procedures Manual.
- e) Employees will be placed on a waiting list, maintained and monitored by the GN Staff Housing Allocation Committee, until appropriate accommodations become available in the following situations:
- i. Suitable accommodations cannot be found;
  - ii. The employee is *over/under accommodated*;
  - iii. The employee requests a move of convenience; or,
  - iv. Employees living outside of GN Staff Housing requesting Staff Housing allocation.
- f) If an employee is requesting a move due to health and safety concerns, the request will be reviewed on a priority basis by the GN Staff Housing Allocation Committee.

Appeals concerning the assignment of units may be made according to procedures set forth in Appendix II (Appeals Committee) of this Policy.

GN Employees on a Leave of Absence

- a) The GN Staff Housing Allocation Committee will consider requests to reserve staff housing accommodations during a leave of absence on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Staff Housing Procedures Manual.

Employees who remain in staff housing during extended periods of leave, must make the necessary arrangements with the NHC for payment of rent.

**3. Rental Rates**

This section sets out the current rental rates for GN staff housing. Rental rates may change periodically with approval from the Financial Management Board.

Further details related to rent calculation and adjustments can be found in the accompanying Procedures Manual.

The methodology for establishing rental rates are intended to ensure that rates:

- Are fair, transparent and easy to understand
  - Encourage development of a private sector housing market in Nunavut.
- a) The rent structure for the GN Staff Housing portfolio is built around base rents which are calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Base Rent} = \text{Rentable Area (m}^2\text{)} \times \text{Base Rate}$$

**CURRENT BASE RATES**

Size (M <sup>2</sup> )	Emerging Markets		All Others	
	Reg	Apt	Reg	Apt
<69	16.10	16.90	14.80	15.40
70-99	16.10	14.40	14.80	13.10
100-129	14.30	13.30	13.10	12.20
>130	11.70	13.30	10.70	12.20



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Examples of base rates for typical units in emerging markets can be found below. Please note that these sample rates are for demonstration purposes only, as unit sizes vary.

BEDROOMS	AVERAGE SQ M	AVERAGE UNFURNISHED RATE
Bachelor	35	\$563.50
1	58	\$933.80
2	82	\$1,320.20
3	106	\$1,515.80
4	147	\$1,719.90

**Note:** Base rents are adjusted based on the utilities and furniture which may or may not be included in the rent.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- The Department of Human Resources shall conduct periodic internal reviews of the staff housing policy.
- The results of these reviews may be raised as topics of discussion at the Deputy Ministers' Committee meetings, subject to the discretion of the Chair.

### PREROGATIVE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take actions regarding staff accommodation, outside the provisions of this Policy.

### SUNSET

This policy will be effective from the date of signature until April 1, 2024.

## **Appendix I - Allocation Committee**

### **PURPOSE**

Appendix I contains the Terms of Reference for the GN Staff Housing Allocation Committee.

### **GOAL**

The goal of the Committee is:

***To fairly and transparently allocate staff housing using established criteria, and departmental priorities.***

### **PRINCIPLES**

The Committee will strive to reach its stated goal while upholding the principles outlined in the GN Staff Housing Policy.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The GN Staff Housing Allocation Committee is an Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) level committee, formed at the direction of the Deputy Ministers' Committee (DMC).

Members include:

- ADM level permanent representatives from the Departments of Human Resources, Finance, Environment, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Culture and Heritage, Community and Government Services, Justice, Education, Health, Family Services, Economic Development and Transportation, and from the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and Nunavut Arctic College.

Committee members cannot delegate this responsibility, unless the representative is at the ADM level or higher. Alternate representatives must be approved in advance by the Deputy Minister of Human Resources.

### **CHAIR**

The Department of Human Resources, as the department responsible for GN employee recruitment and retention, will take the lead role on the Committee. The Assistant Deputy Minister - Operations from the Department of Human Resources will act as Chair of the Committee.

In cases where the Committee is unable to reach consensus on a given item, or at the discretion of the Chair, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Human Resources reserves final authority over Committee decisions.

## **POLICY AND SUPPORT**

The Department of Human Resources, through the staffing division, will provide a secretariat function to the Committee. The secretariat function will coordinate and compile all appropriate meeting material in coordination with the NHC.

## **MEETINGS**

The Committee will meet bi-weekly, or as called by the Chair, and will be responsible for the following activities:

- a) Allocate GN staff housing to positions, as requested by departments, that are ready to be advertised.
- b) Review requests from existing employees, in the following situations:
  - i. When suitable accommodations cannot be found;
  - ii. The employee is over/under accommodated;
  - iii. The employee requests a move of convenience; or
  - iv. Employees living outside of GN Staff Housing are requesting Staff Housing allocation.
- c) Any other duties as directed by DMC

The Department of Human Resources will be responsible for recording minutes at each meeting, to be circulated to Committee members for review and comment at or before the next scheduled meeting.

The Committee Secretariat will coordinate with the Department of Human Resources to compile, for the Committee, an updated positions list, which will include all requests for staff housing and the status of the various competitions where housing was assigned. The Committee Secretariat will coordinate with the NHC to compile, for the Committee, an updated list of vacant staff housing units in each community.

The Secretariat will work with both parties to make a recommendation for a reasonable ratio of active competitions versus vacant housing units to be held in each community.

## **ALLOCATION DECISION MAKING**

### Allocation of Staff Housing

In its decision making related to housing allocation, the Committee will prioritize positions using the job categories identified in the GN Staff Housing Policy and Procedures Manual.

In the interest of maintaining GN operations, and meeting departmental Inuit employment goals and objectives, Deputy Ministers of each represented department or agency may choose to further prioritize position allocations with a departmental ranking outside of the identified categories. The Deputy Minister would present such requests to the Allocation Committee, through their respective ADM.

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For example, a position identified as category 3 in the Staff Housing Policy, may be a departmental priority that deserves special consideration by the Committee.

### Employee Requested Moves

Any term or indeterminate GN employee currently living in GN staff housing, requesting a move of convenience must submit a request to the Committee Secretariat through the Department of Human Resources.

The Committee Secretariat will maintain a complete list of all employee requested moves (moves of convenience), which will be reviewed by the Committee regularly.

### Employees on a Leave of Absence

The Committee will consider requests to reserve staff housing for an employee during a leave of absence on a case-by-case basis, and with written documentation from the supporting department.

## **BUDGET**

There is no budget attached to the Allocation Committee.

## **REPORTING**

The Department of Human Resources will be responsible for providing regular updates from the Committee to DMC, including copies of meeting minutes, as requested.

Should the Committee wish to forward recommendations and/or a formal report to DMC, it will do so through the Deputy Minister of the Department of Human Resources.

## **APPEALS**

An employee or department wishing to appeal a decision of the Allocation Committee may do so through the GN Staff Housing Appeals Committee, as outlined in Appendix II of the GN Staff Housing Policy.

All appeals must be submitted in a formal letter addressed to the Deputy Minister of Human Resources and must contain information related to the nature of the appeal.

GN employees may appeal their eligibility for Staff Housing by submitting a supporting letter to the Deputy Minister of Human Resources from their respective Deputy Minister. The Appeals Committee will only consider individual appeals that are sponsored and supported by the employee's Deputy Head.

Employees should also submit other supporting documents to the Department of Human Resources, including, but not limited to; current financial information, other supporting letters, and detailed information regarding their current housing situation.

The appellant will be informed of a decision by the Committee in writing.

## **TERM**

The Committee is ongoing, subject to the conditions of monitoring and evaluation.

## **Appendix II - Appeals Committee**

### **PURPOSE**

Appendix II contains the Terms of Reference for the GN Staff Housing Appeals Committee.

### **GOAL**

The goal of the Committee is:

***To review any written appeals made with regard to the Staff Housing Policy, and, to make final, case-by-case decisions based on those reviews.***

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Committee are as follows:

- a) To ensure that established staff housing allocation criteria are applied fairly, consistently and transparently, while exercising flexibility in situations where extenuating or emergency situations may require exceptions to the GN Staff Housing Policy and/or Procedures Manual;
- b) To make recommendations for revised criteria, as appropriate, to the Allocation Committee;
- c) To provide a forum in which written appeals may be heard and considered impartially.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The GN Staff Housing Appeals Committee is a Deputy Ministerial level committee.

Members include:

- Deputy Heads of Human Resources, Culture and Heritage, and Justice;
- The President of the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC); and,
- Representatives from other GN departments, as appropriate and at the invitation of the Chair.

### **CHAIR**

The Department of Human Resources, as the department responsible for GN employee recruitment and retention, will take the lead role on the Committee. The Deputy Minister of Human Resources will be the Chair.

## **POLICY AND SUPPORT**

The Department of Human Resources will give policy and organizational support to the Committee.

## **APPEALS**

An employee wishing to appeal the application of the GN Staff Housing Policy and/or Procedures Manual, or a decision made by the GN Staff Housing Allocation Committee, must do so through the Deputy Head of their employing department.

Appeals from individuals will only be heard by the Committee if they are supported by the Deputy Head of the appellant's department.

## **MEETINGS**

In the event of a written appeal, or an appeal forwarded from the Allocation Committee, the Chair will convene a Committee meeting and invite a member from the appellant's employing department to sit temporarily on the Appeals Committee.

The Department of Human Resources will be responsible for recording minutes at each meeting, which will be circulated to Committee members for review and comment.

## **BUDGET**

There is no budget attached to the Appeals Committee.

## **REPORTING**

Should the Committee wish to forward recommendations regarding the GN staff Housing Policy or Procedures documents, and/or a formal report to DMC, it will do so through the Deputy Minister of the Department of Human Resources.

## **EXCEPTIONS**

The Appeals Committee has the discretion to make exceptions to the GN Staff Housing Policy and Procedures Manual, when it is deemed appropriate. Exceptions will be based on extenuating circumstances or emergency situations. Any exceptions must be documented in the committee minutes, and will be made within the spirit and intent of the Guiding Principles of the Staff Housing Policy.

## **TERM**

The Committee is ongoing, subject to the conditions of monitoring and evaluation.