



HFS Intake Policy and Procedures

Mandate:

Homes First Society develops and provides affordable, stable housing and support services to break the cycle of homelessness for people with the fewest housing options.

Placement Strategy:

Homes First's client placement strategy was developed after an in-depth review of building features, neighbourhoods, and client needs. Since that time, our strategy has basically represented an evolution in response to changing trends.

All individuals housed by HFS must meet basic eligibility criteria:

1. Those who have demonstrated an inability to obtain/maintain housing elsewhere.
2. Must be 18 years or older.
3. Individuals able to live independently or with special supportive programs provided in partnership with Homes First.
4. Must have or be pursuing or be willing to pursue a source of income when moving into housing (i.e., social benefits).
5. Non-predatory.
6. Those with diagnosed/undiagnosed mental illness/addiction issues.
7. Individuals that may be isolated or marginalized or displaced or who have inadequate life skills.

Our general waiting list is made up of referrals from a variety of sources, including but not limited to:

- Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- Toronto Western Hospital
- St. Joseph Hospital
- CAMH
- Church groups
- City of Toronto
- COTA Health
- Good Neighbours Club
- North Support Services Multi-Disciplinary Access to Care and Housing (MATCH)
- Other shelters

- Regent Park Community Health Centre
- St. Michael's Hospital
- Sojourn House
- Streets to Homes
- Walk-ins (from word of mouth)

There are other agencies that refer individuals to specific housing options, which are noted on a site-by-site basis.

HFS also has a mechanism for internal transfer which enables us to support residents with changing needs. The *Social Housing Reform Act* mandates that our process prioritizes intake and internal transfers for any vacancy as follows: individuals fleeing violence, homelessness, and the over-housed (i.e., one person living in a two-bedroom unit). Of course, placement also takes into consideration site suitability.

Bellevue:

Bellevue has 28 bachelor and one-bedroom units housing single men and women. Residents deal with issues of mental health, physical challenges, and addictions.

Traditionally, Bellevue has been a low-turnover building and we have used it primarily within our internal transfer process for people seeking to move from our shelters and those seeking to move away from shared accommodation.

Our placement strategy is to house people at Bellevue who have some mental health issues whose needs are met by accommodating them in a small, close-knit community.

Bellevue is located in the Kensington Market area, which is an eclectic neighbourhood. The location of Bellevue in Kensington Market continues to provide the opportunity to be involved in the Kensington Solstice Parade. An annual community celebration in December, the parade has music, costumes, performances, and a public parade of lanterns. For the sixth year, residents and staff from several Homes First sites will be creating lanterns, decorating the building, and participating in the parade. Additionally, in the summer, the site plays host to a multi-site barbeque held in the old-fashioned lawn and garden.

Brandon:

Brandon has five individual private rooms with shared kitchens/bathrooms, and houses single males.

As a result of an increase in need to provide housing for males between 40 and 60 and inadequate funding for these two buildings, our placement strategy is to accept older clients who are slightly higher functioning and ideally have other support workers that can work collaboratively with us to maintain housing.

Huron:

Huron has shared accommodation for ten single men with histories of homelessness and dealing with issues of mental health and addictions.

Individuals from our general waiting list are interviewed, and then matched with Huron based on their ability and desire to live in a small-group setting.

Jarvis:

Jarvis House provides shared accommodation for 24 middle-aged and older men in six apartments, primarily referred by Seaton House. These individuals are generally not currently street involved, but have lengthy histories of homelessness as well as addictions and/or mental health issues.

Meegwetch:

Meegwetch is a complex consisting of townhouses and an apartment building. 14 families are housed in two-, three-, and four-bedroom townhouses. Fifty single adults and single parent families who have experienced the effects of poverty, addictions, and/or mental/physical health issues are housed in bachelor, one-, and two-bedroom apartments.

Meegwetch Apartment Building:

Traditionally, Meegwetch has been a low-turnover building and we have used it within our internal transfer process for people seeking to move primarily from Shuter and our shelters; our placement strategy for Meegwetch is to continue to do so in concert with the referrals from the CAMH program.

Through our funded partnership with CAMH, 15 individuals are supported in an integrated approach. These individuals were previously hospitalized in the CAMH Schizophrenia Program.

Meegwetch Townhouses:

The client placement strategy for the townhouses is contingent on the size of the townhouse.

The two-bedroom townhouses (and occasionally, three-bedroom townhouses) may be used for internal transfers for expanding families or family reunification who previously lived in a one-bedroom unit.

Vacancies within our three- and four-bedroom townhouses are primarily filled from our waiting list which, as described earlier, is filled from referrals from agencies across Toronto, as well as walk-ins. Additionally, the Children's Aid Society refers clients specifically to Meegwetch.

Northcote:

Northcote has 6 individual private rooms with shared kitchens/bathrooms, which houses single males.

As a result of an increase in need to provide housing for males between 40 and 60 and inadequate funding for these two buildings, our placement strategy is to accept older clients who are slightly higher functioning and ideally have other support workers that can work collaboratively with us to maintain housing.

Pleasant Manor:

Pleasant Manor contains 16 self-contained bachelors and one-bedroom units for single men and women who have had significant histories of homelessness. Many of the residents of Pleasant Manor were previously residents of StreetCity. Individuals at this building deal with various issues such as addiction and/or mental health.

Pleasant Manor has a very low turnover rate, and as noted above, it originally housed people from StreetCity. We have, and will continue to, use Pleasant Manor for internal transfer for people who have an extensive history of living in shelters and/or living on the street.

Sheila Miller:

The Sheila Miller building is comprised of 22 bachelor and one-bedroom units. When HFS took over the Sheila Miller building, the population that the building was intended to serve was women fleeing domestic abuse. Over time, the nature of the population has changed in that the women currently living there are no longer in crisis and cannot be considered the hardest to house.

Early in 2011, the Board approved making a change to this building's client placement strategy through attrition. This building is well-suited to the needs of other populations which are truly the hardest to house, such as mobility challenged people with other issues (e.g. alcoholism, mental health, behavioural); through attrition, the approved placement strategy for Sheila Miller is to house men or women with such challenges, primarily through our internal waiting list.

Shuter:

Shuter provides shared accommodation for 77 older, single men and women in 17 four- or five-bedroom apartments. Individuals deal with a variety of issues, including addiction, alcoholism, mental health, and aging. The majority are significantly street involved.

Shuter has a partnership with CAMH and Pilot Place for 18 units for individuals previously hospitalized with schizophrenia. In addition, Shuter has an understanding with Seaton House for 5 units for older, alcoholic males.

Our client placement strategy for Shuter is to continue to receive referrals from agencies that often deal with middle-aged and older clients, such as: Seaton House, hospital discharge planners (most often St. Michael's Hospital), shelters, Streets-to-Homes, Street Haven, and Regent Park Community Health Centre.

Very recently, a partnership with Inner City Health and St. Elizabeth's was developed to utilize one of the 4-bedroom units at Shuter for those individuals who are living on the streets or in Shelters who require palliative care. The 4-unit hospice serves as a transitional program.

Spadina Houses:

140 Spadina accommodates seven single men, most of whom have addiction issues. 164 Spadina is comprised of six units that currently houses high-functioning single women.

Because HFS does not receive any Social Housing or other type of funding for these properties, it is not constrained by any funding requirements, which gives HFS flexibility in long-term planning for housing different/diverse population groups. In the short- and mid-term, HFS will continue to place individuals at these sites who match the current population.

In the long-term, because of potential for flexibility for these sites, we may consider using these buildings for a different population. For example, early in 2011, these two buildings were considered by Toronto Central LHIN for dry-house/harm-reduction housing models.

Vaughan:

Vaughan contains twenty-nine units, one- and two-bedroom apartments housing single adults, single-parent families, and couples. Some individuals have stabilized and, if other housing were available, would be better served by moving on. In fact, we have been successful with helping many individuals do so.

Vaughan vacancies are mainly filled by internal transfers and COTA Health, although they have also been filled through our waiting list.

Through attrition, Homes First continues to increase the diversity of the residents of this building, yet recognizing that the building is very suitable for small families.

Wales:

Wales is comprised of five units (one bachelor, three one-bedrooms, and a two-bedroom unit) housing single men and women who are considered victims of torture and are from foreign countries.

HFS client placement strategy for Wales is to continue to accept referrals from the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, Amnesty International, and other agencies that assist immigrants from troubled countries.

Application Process:

Homes First Society's applications can be downloaded from our website at: <https://homesfirst.on.ca/how-to-apply-for-housing> or by request from any of Homes First Society's locations.

Applications can be faxed or brought in person to any of our sites. Once an application is received, it gets uploaded to our master waiting list. The application master waiting list is updated on a monthly basis in the order they are received. The applications are filed in chronological order and clients are interviewed pending an available unit on a needs assessment basis.

We ensure there is a contact number on the application from either the individual who had completed the application or the referral agency. Homes First Society supervisors or managers will determine eligibility for housing with Homes First Society, RGI, and are responsible for the maintenance of the waiting list.

Intake Strategy:

1. When the Intensive Case Management Worker (ICMW) receives notification from a tenant that they are moving out (N9, N11, or hand-written notice) they will notify their respective Supervisor of the vacancy and the expected date the unit will be vacated.
2. When the Landlord Tenant Board notifies HFS of an eviction date, abandonment or date to call the sheriff the ICMW will forward vacancy dates to their supervisor.
3. When the unit is vacant, the Property Management Department has a maximum of four (4) weeks to complete the rollover. The Supervisor has an additional two (2) weeks to fill the vacancy.
4. The ICMW will forward a complete set of old keys for the unit to the Property Management office at 90 Shuter Street, 1st Floor.
5. The building maintenance worker will change the locks.
6. Property Management will pass on a full set of new keys to the Supervisor when the unit has been rolled over.
7. When a vacancy occurs, the Supervisor will review the Homes First Society Internal Transfer waiting list to see if there are any suitable internal candidates. As per the *Social Housing Act*, we offer the unit to the highest ranked household in order of priority.
8. If there are no suitable internal candidates, the Supervisor, in conjunction with the site ICMW, will contact suitable external applicants from our Master Waiting List to set up an appointment time to come in for an interview.
9. The Supervisor will conduct the interview with the applicant.

10. After the interview, the Supervisor together with the ICMW will decide if the applicant is suitable or not for supportive housing at the site.

Intake Procedure:

1. The Supervisor will arrange a time for the applicant to return to sign their lease. At this time the applicant MUST provide proof of income, drug eligibility card (OWA and ODSP recipients only) citizenship status, immigration documents, birth certificate, SIN, and Health Card.
2. The TSS will review and sign the lease with the applicant and give the tenant their keys.
3. Site staff will then have the successful applicant return to review and sign any rules, guest policies and other relevant forms.
4. Site staff will contact the new tenant at moving to do housing orientation and set an appointment to identify support through Case Management.
5. The Supervisor will inform the Property and Finance Departments that the vacancy has been filled.

Supervisor Responsibilities:

1. All applications for housing are to be forwarded to the Assistant Housing Manager. (Strachan House keeps a separate waiting list.)
2. The Assistant Housing Manager receives applications and reviews them for suitability.
3. Applicants seeking supportive housing, as per information on application, will be put on a waiting list.
4. The Assistant Housing Manager will assign applicants to the sites most appropriate to their support needs; i.e. applicants seeking shared accommodations would be put on the Shuter/rooming houses waiting list, families on the Vaughan, Sheila Miller, and Meegwetch waiting list, refugee claimants or victims of torture on the Wales waiting list, etc.

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- Created on June 11, 2015.
 - Updated and approved by HFS Management Team on June 25, 2019.
 - This Policy applies to all Homes First housing.