



THE MULTIFAITH HOUSING INITIATIVE

INTERNAL TRANSFER POLICY

Passed by the Board of Directors on August 14, 2014

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI) to permit households receiving an internal subsidy or paying market rent to transfer in cases where the tenants are overhoused or underhoused, or in the case of special needs that fall under the category of a duty to accommodate, when appropriate units become available. MHI will respond to all transfer requests in a fair, consistent and financially responsible manner.

Households receiving a subsidy through the City of Ottawa are not considered under this policy and are not permitted an internal transfer. This includes the Rent Supplement Program and BMR program. These households may apply to be placed on the City of Ottawa's centralized waiting list if they meet the criteria.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline under what circumstances a tenant may apply for an internal unit transfer
- give priority to tenants who qualify as special priority, who are overhoused in accordance with the service manager's eligibility rule regarding occupancy standards or who urgently need a different unit on health or related grounds;
- balance the needs of the non-profit's tenants with the needs of people hoping to move into MHI for the first time; and
- recognize MHI's limited financial and human resources

Scope

This policy applies to all MHI's staff and property management responsible for monitoring and facilitating the movement of tenants within the portfolio and to all tenants.

DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATION

Code-related: A matter related to MHI's obligations under the *Human Rights Code, 1990*. This may include requests for a transfer to a special needs modified unit.

Designated staff: The staff person(s) or contracted property management person who has been designated to complete a particular action or requirement.

Good standing: A household that:

- has not been given an eviction notice;
 - does not owe arrears or any other money to MHI (unless financial hardship has made this household a "priority move");
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- has paid its rent on time for the last six months;
- has no history of damage to the unit, disturbing neighbours or harassing staff.

HSA: *The Housing Services Act, 2011*

Overhoused household: See schedule attached to this policy.

Priority moves: Households that have an urgent need to move due to health concerns or significant change in financial or family circumstances. Examples of urgent needs include:

- Tenants needing to escape abuse but who have not lived with or been sponsored by the abuser and so do not qualify for special priority status, including tenants being threatened or harassed. The Tenant Administration Manager will establish the level of documentation required to substantiate the abuse.
- A household whose request has been deemed code related by MHI.
- A household member has a medical condition or permanent disability, and their current unit meets one of the following:
 - is inaccessible
 - substantially aggravates the condition
 - prevents or substantially increases the cost of treatment
 - (a completed *Medical Confirmation for Internal Transfer* required)

RGI: The tenant's rent-geared-to-income subsidy. Subsidy program administered by the City of Ottawa

BMR: Below market rent program administered by the City of Ottawa.

Internal Subsidy: Internal subsidy through MHI whereby rents are subsidized to up to 80% of average market rents for the area.

Special priority: Status that is granted to a member of an applicant or tenant household, aged 16 years of age or older, who meets the criteria outlined in section 54 of Ontario Regulation 367/11.

Underhoused households: Households that have more than two household members per bedroom or who have opposite-sex household members, who are not spouses, sharing bedrooms.

PROCEDURE

1.0 Eligibility for internal transfer

- Households that are required to transfer because they are overhoused in accordance with the City of Ottawa eligibility rule regarding occupancy standards, and have been granted special priority designation, or require Code-related accommodation are not required to meet MHI's eligibility criteria. Staff may, at their discretion, waive MHI's eligibility criteria for priority transfers.
- Each transfer may necessitate a preparation/repair of the originally vacated unit and an additional preparation/repair of the unit subsequently vacated by the tenant who transferred. Aside from special priority, over housed or Code-related transfers, the number of transfers can be capped in the event MHI is unable to complete the necessary repairs due to financial or human resource limitations.

2.0 Request for internal transfer (RGI)

- A household requesting an internal transfer must complete an *Internal Transfer Request* form which must include a clear explanation on the justification for the transfer. The form must be submitted to the management office.
- A household that is applying for an internal transfer as a special priority household or as a result of a Code-protected disability must inform the Tenant Administration Manager that they are seeking this status.

3.0 Ranking on internal waiting list

- MHI's internal waiting lists will be comprised of multiple subsidiary lists. Each subsidiary list will be ranked by priority relative to other lists and the households on each list will also be ranked.

3.1 Internal Waiting Lists

- MHI's internal waiting lists for households will be ranked as follows. The households waiting on each list will be added to the list and ranked according to the criteria of each list.
 - i. Households with Special Priority designation**
 - Special priority households will be ranked chronologically by the date they applied for special priority designation.
 - ii. RGI households that are overhoused in accordance with the occupancy standards**
 - The Tenant Administration Manager will follow the City of Ottawa procedure for handling overhoused and underhoused households.
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iii. Priority Moves

- Priority applicants will be offered units in order of their application date for a transfer.

iv. Underhoused households

- Underhoused households will be ranked chronologically in the order they applied for a larger unit.
- When notice is given for a unit, the first appropriately sized household on the highest ranked list will be offered the unit. The unit will be offered to each appropriately sized household on a list before being offered to appropriately sized households on the next, lower priority, waiting list.

3.2 Internal waiting list - special needs modified units

- Households requesting a transfer to a special needs or modified unit will be referred to the Tenant Administration Manager, who will determine whether or not to grant such designation in accordance with the City of Ottawa rules. The tenant will be advised of the result of the assessment in writing.

4.0 Completing an internal transfer

- Tenants must complete a satisfactory internal transfer inspection of their unit.
- Tenants must complete and return an Internal Transfer Offer form to the MHI office within 24 hours of the internal transfer offer.
- Tenants must complete an Internal Transfer Agreement form and all requirements outlined in the agreement before obtaining occupancy of a new unit.

4.1 Maintaining eligibility for internal transfer

- Households must meet the following criteria in order to maintain their eligibility for an internal transfer:
 - the tenants are in good standing
 - there are no arrears
 - no late payments within the last 6 months
 - no substantiated complaints from neighbours or staff; or complaints from neighbours or staff that resulted in a LTB Notice being served to the household
 - no damage (beyond regular wear and tear) to the tenant's unit was found in a unit inspection
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- Prior to showing the unit to the next household on the internal waiting lists, the Tenant Administration Manager will assess whether or not the household continues to meet the criteria for an internal transfer.
- Households with special priority designation, who are overhoused in accordance with the service manager eligibility rule regarding occupancy standards, or who are requesting a transfer based on *Code-grounds* are not required to meet these eligibility criteria.

4.2 Offering a unit

- The Tenant Administration Manager will offer a unit being vacated to households on the internal transfer list in the order they appear on the waiting list.
- A household will have 24 hours to decide whether to accept the unit.
- Units may be offered “as is.” MHI will ensure the unit meets our maintenance and safety standards and that all electrical and plumbing fixtures are in good working order. However, MHI may choose not to paint the unit, do minor patching, or make changes to the unit to prepare for move.
- Once the internal transfer has been approved, the transferring tenant will be required to sign an *Internal Transfer Agreement* to confirm their responsibilities and the details of the move. Further, the tenant may be required to sign a new lease.

4.3 Swaps

- Staff will identify possible swaps of households in MHI’s internal transfer list. Swaps will preferably be made between overhoused tenant households and under housed tenant households on the internal transfer list. Swaps are a means to address households’ occupancy needs and to achieve more effective utilization of the housing stock.
- Swaps will be conditional on acceptance of the unit in the condition it is in at the time of the swap (“as is”). However, this condition does not preclude MHI doing maintenance that would be done in any event (leaking taps, repairs to electrical components, etc.). Both tenants involved in the Swap must sign an *As Is Agreement*.

4.4 Internal Transfer Fees

- Tenants may be required to pay an internal transfer fee up to \$350 to cover the administrative and maintenance costs associated with preparing a unit for a move. This cost will be outlined in the *Internal Transfer Agreement Form*.
 - Tenants will be held responsible for charges due to vacancy loss for overholding a unit.
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5.0 Review of decisions

- Households can request a review of the following decisions under the HSA:
 - size of unit the household is eligible for
 - type of unit the household is eligible for
 - MHI shall follow the process outlined in the *Review of Decision Policy*.
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Attachment 1: Occupancy Standards

The smallest unit a household is eligible for is a unit that has one bedroom for any two members of the household, and an additional bedroom if the household has an odd number of members.

The largest unit a household is eligible for is a household comprising the following:

Household Composition

- One bedroom for any two members of the household who are spouses of each other.
- One bedroom for each additional member of the household.
- One bedroom if either of the spouses has a disability or medical condition requiring a separate bedroom (if requested by the household).
- One bedroom if a room is required to store equipment required by a household member because of a disability or medical condition (if requested by the household).
- One bedroom if a room is required to accommodate an individual, who is not a household member, who provides support services to a member because of a disability or medical condition (if requested by the household).
- One bedroom if a household member is pregnant (if requested by the household).
- One bedroom (if requested by the household), if a household member has joint custody of a child who is not a member of the household, and:
 - the member is required to provide accommodation for the child; and
 - the bedroom is required to accommodate the child.
- One bedroom (if requested by the household), if a household member has visiting rights with a child who is not a member of the household, and:
 - a condition of the visiting rights is that the member provide accommodation for the child when the child stays overnight;
 - the child will stay overnight with the member frequently; and
 - the bedroom is required to accommodate the child.
- An additional bedroom(s) if the housing provider is satisfied that extenuating circumstances exist.

Students living away from household must be a child of a household member, and:

- must be in full time attendance at a recognized educational institution (does not live with the household while in attendance);
 - lives with the household while not attending the educational institution; and
 - is dependent, in whole or in part, on the household for financial support.
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Attachment 2: Internal Transfer Request Form

Name of applicant(s): _____

Internal Transfer address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Other household members

1. Name	Relationship to applicant	Birthdate
2. Name	Relationship to applicant	Birthdate
3. Name	Relationship to applicant	Birthdate
4. Name	Relationship to applicant	Birthdate

Length of time in present accommodation _____

Reasons for wishing to transfer

- I am living with abuse.
- My current rent is unaffordable.
- I have a medical condition or disability and my current unit does not accommodate my needs (i.e. it is inaccessible, or the unit aggravates the condition, or prevents or substantially increases the cost of treatment). *Please include a doctor's letter, describing your condition, and how a different unit would improve the situation.*
- My unit is too small
- Other reason:

Type and size of unit needed: _____

Signature

Date

Attachment 3: Internal Transfer Offer Form

Name of applicant(s): _____

Date of offer: _____

Present address: _____

Vacant Unit: _____ Size: _____

Please consider this your official internal transfer offer.

According to our records, you are on the internal transfer list for the following reason [insert reason].

Unit [insert address] has become available for [insert date] and according to our records and meets the terms of your households needs.

Please notify the office of your acceptance/refusal of Unit # _____, on or before _____ by returning the bottom portion of this form to the co-op office.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to make arrangements to view the available unit, please contact the office by phone at (613)748-1062 or by e-mail at betterlivingcoop@bellnet.ca.

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Tenant Name: _____ Unit #: _____

I, _____, acknowledge that we have been offered an internal move to unit [insert address] for occupancy [insert date]. I have read the internal transfer policy and understand that refusing three offers of internal transfers may result in the need to reapply for an internal transfer.

Please mark clearly.

I accept the offer of internal transfer to unit [insert address here].

I refuse the offer of internal transfer to unit [insert address here].

Signature

Date

Attachment 4: Internal Transfer Agreement Form & “As Is Agreement”

Name of applicant(s): _____

Internal transfer to [address]: _____

Date of Occupancy: _____

I, _____, understand the following:

- An inspection of [insert address applicant is moving from] on [insert date]. The following maintenance items are the tenants responsibility and must be completed before an internal transfer is granted:
- An internal transfer fee of [\$ insert amount] is required for the following administrative or maintenance reasons:
- The unit is being offered “as is.” MHI will ensure the unit meets maintenance and safety standards and that all electrical and plumbing fixtures are in good working order. This includes:
- MHI may choose not to paint the unit. This includes:
 - Painting and patching,
 - Upgrades and unit maintenance.
 - Other
- I understand that I will be financially responsible for charges due to overholding a unit.
- I am required to sign a new lease.

Signature

Date
