

CANADA MANITOBA HOUSING BENEFIT

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Canada-Manitoba Housing Benefit (CMHB) is a portable shelter benefit paid to eligible households in core housing need. The benefit will be cost matched by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Manitoba and delivered by the province. The benefit will reduce or eliminate housing need in vulnerable populations through affordability support. Initially, the benefit will target three vulnerable populations: youth who are currently transitioning out of the child welfare system or have transitioned out within the last 12 months, individuals at risk of homelessness or who are homeless, and persons with addictions and mental health.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

To support independence, provide safe and stable housing with a goal to improve outcomes for individuals at risk of homelessness or are experiencing homelessness by providing a benefit that addresses affordability gaps in housing costs.

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

- Support transition to independence by aiding eligible applicants in or out of the workforce.
- Each benefit supports access to safe and stable housing.
- Each benefit provided enables individuals who access the program to have a more affordable home.

ELIGIBILITY

POLICY

To be eligible for the CMHB homelessness stream, applicants must:

- complete a program application;
- be receiving **Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) or non-EIA Rent Assist;**
- be in core housing need due to affordability.
- be connected to a housing support program **at the time of application.**

- be a Canadian Citizen, permanent resident of Canada or refugee claimant.
- live in private rental accommodation; and
- have a tenancy agreement.

To continue to be eligible for benefits, recipients must report all changes that may impact eligibility such as;

- changes in household size;
- address changes/moves;
- changes in rent; and
- changes in income.

EXCEPTIONS

Applicants will be considered if:

- They are permanent residents in the Family Class (see definition of Permanent Resident) for whom sponsorship has broken down or ended and EIA support has been granted.

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/l-2.5/page-1.html#h-2>

Application

Information provided on an application assists in determining program eligibility and gathers the information required to comply with federal program funding.

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/federal-community-housing-initiative>

BENEFIT CALCULATION

The payable benefit will be the difference between the rent and the applicant's EIA or non-EIA Rent Assist up to a maximum of \$250.00 per month.

For people who are 65+ we will use the disability income limit for non-EIA Rent Assist which is currently \$25,280.

Roommates will have benefits calculated and paid individually based on the total rent for the unit, less total household rent supports (if applicable) to a maximum benefit of \$250.00 per month.

If anyone is receiving non-EIA Rent Assist, the calculation is:

CMHB = Rent – (30% of income + non-EIA Rent Assist), up to \$250

Benefits will be reviewed annually or at the discretion of the delivery agent.

RATIONALE

Benefits are targeted toward individuals who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless and are connected to a community housing support program at the time of application. The benefit in this stream will be portable within Manitoba. The benefit will cover the difference between rent paid in the private market and the person's Rent Assist benefit, up to a maximum of \$250.00 per month. **The full Rent Assist benefit will be applied first to determine the eligible benefit amount.**

BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Benefits will be paid by direct deposit or mailed directly to one of the following:

- the eligible benefit recipient.
- at the consent of the eligible recipient, the landlord/owner of the rental property in which the recipient resides; or
- to a Public Trustee.

TERMINATION OF BENEFITS

Benefits will be terminated when a participant:

- Has gained access to subsidized housing;
- Is no longer paying rent;
- Does not report changes as stated in Eligibility Policy; or
- Moves out of Manitoba

Application for benefits re-submitted by a previous recipient that are received within 24 months of the original application date will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

DEATH

When a recipient dies, the benefit will be paid for the month in which the tenant has died.

EXCEPTION

The benefit will be paid for the month following the change in the recipient's circumstances if the family is required to pay rent for an additional month.

The benefit will be paid for the month following the change in the recipient's circumstances if their roommate is required to pay rent for an additional month and is receiving the CMHB.

Supporting Policies and Related Procedures

1. CMHB Policy Manual
2. EIA Income Eligibility Guideline

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eia/#:~:text=Eligibility,on%20your%20income%20and%20assets.>

Supporting Documents and Links

1. CMHB Application Form
2. EIA Rent Form
3. Rent Assist Rate Information https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eia/rent_assist.html
4. Participant's Tenancing Information (See Appendix A)

Effective JULY 1, 2021, End Homelessness Winnipeg (EHW) is responsible for the intake and processing of "new" CMHB applications for housing support programs in the community. EHW is also responsible to process all the reinstatement and annual renewals of applications.

All procedures below impact eligibility or ongoing eligibility for receiving CMHB benefit.

"Grandfathered-in"¹ Housing First Program Participants – Application Procedure

1. Grandfathered-in participants will receive a letter of confirmation from Manitoba Housing of their approval to continue receiving the CMHB past June 30, 2021.

Note:¹ At Home/Chez Soi Project participants and Reaching Home Funded Housing First Program participants who were receiving Emergency Housing Fund (EHF) prior.

2. Case Workers are responsible to input/enter grandfathered-in participants' tenancing information onto HIFIS and to be verified by EHW staff to ensure accuracy of information entered.
3. EHW staff is responsible for processing benefit payment to ensure participant continuous receipt of benefit.
4. Benefit payments are to be sent directly to any of the following: participant, landlord, or a public trustee.
5. Should any changes occur in the participant's tenancing information such as changes in the participant's income, rental rate, household size, and address, Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff of such changes as it could adversely affect participant's eligibility to continue receiving CMHB benefit if not reported.
6. Where a grandfathered-in participant returns to homelessness, Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff and make a request for stop payment of benefit. Should participant get re-housed in a market rental accommodation within 45 days from date of returning to homelessness and requires housing benefit support, participant with support from Case Worker is responsible to provide EHW staff with duly signed and completed EIA Rent Form and updated income information (Budget Sheet).
7. Housing Support Worker must update participant's information in HIFIS and to be verified by EHW staff.
8. EHW staff will move forward with re-instating participant's CMHB benefit. Housing Support Workers are encouraged to exercise open communication and collaboration with staff supporting a person's successful n any updates regarding participant's income and EIA Rent Assist rate. *(Participant's signed consent form must include EIA Case Coordinator and contact information)*

New Application Procedure

- 1) Participant with support from Housing Support Worker will complete and sign the CMHB application form.
- 2) Housing Support Worker will input all participant's information as required on the CMHB application including other tenancing information into HIFIS.

- 3) Housing Support Worker will upload participant's CMHB application form into HIFIS including all required supporting documentations (Lease Agreement, EIA Rent Form, Proof of Income-Option C print-out for the appropriate tax year, and other supporting documentation as may be required)
- 4) EHW will receive a message notification in HIFIS of an application that is in queue in the system.
- 5) EHW staff will review participant's application form to ensure CMHB program eligibility requirements are met and supporting documents required are provided. (See CMHB Eligibility Section)
- 6) EHW staff will review completeness of application and supporting documentations; identify missing information; edit/update participant's tenanting information as needed to ensure all required data and documentation are entered into HIFIS.
- 7) Where application is **approved**, send participant an Approval Letter and copy to Housing Support Worker, and proceed to Step 11.
- 8) Should the information/documentation provided be incomplete, place application on **pending status** until all missing information is received.
- 9) EHW staff is responsible to notify participant's Housing Support Worker via email of the status of application.
10. Where participant is assessed and deemed ineligible, send a letter of ineligibility directly to participant and copy the assigned Housing Support Worker. Housing Support Worker will place participant's application status on HIFIS as **ineligible**.
11. EHW staff will process approved CMHB application; indicate status of application in HIFIS as **approved** and prepare documents for cheque requisition and payment
12. EHW staff will review and facilitate payment to applicable recipient: participant, landlord, or a Public Trustee (as identified in the CMHB application form)
NOTE: Monthly CMH benefit payment should continue until application renewal date is due, except when a participant returns to homelessness at which time payment of benefit should be halted/stopped. Either Reinstatement Process or New Application Procedure should be followed whichever is applicable.
13. EHW is to release CMHB payment based on the method established by EHW Finance with the following recipients: participant, landlord, and to a Public Trustee.

Reinstatement Process of CMH Benefits

1. Where a participant is evicted (has returned to homelessness), CMHB must be stopped, and Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff and landlord

immediately. Where participant is re-housed in market rental accommodation or unit, Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff of client's re-housing situation. Where re-housing occurs within forty-five (45) days from the eviction date, and participant still requires benefits, Housing Support Worker must provide EHW staff with duly signed/dated EIA Rent Form and current Budget Sheet to process re-instatement of benefits.

2. Where application was cancelled at the request of the participant with supports from Housing Support Worker, under circumstances such as long-term incarceration, rehabilitation, placement in health care facility, among others, CMHB benefit must be stopped, and Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff and landlord immediately. Where participant is re-housed in market rental accommodation within six (6) consecutive months or longer from the date of cancellation, participant must re-apply. (See New Application Procedure). Set application review status to 12 months from update – annual renewal date.

Note: Where an application was cancelled for an immigrant sponsored under the FAMILY CLASS category (see link below for definition) and sponsorship has broken down and Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) has approved an application for support.

- Reinstatement application and Follow steps indicated on the New Application Procedure

<https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=323293&CVD=323294&CLV=0&MLV=4&D=1>

Application Updates and Annual Eligibility Procedure/Renewal Process

1. Send participant the CMHB Re-application Form along with Annual Renewal Letter, copy the Housing Support Worker (when still connected to housing supports) three to four months prior to CMHB renewal date and giving ten (10) business days to respond, if still requiring benefit.

- Where participant fails to respond within specified time, place participant's application in HIFIS as **cancelled**. A letter will be sent to participant and copy Housing Support Worker (where appropriate).
2. Where participant still requires benefit, participant reports changes on the re-application letter (contact information, current household composition, address changes/moves, changes in rent, changes in income, etc.)
 - Housing Support Worker must update participant's information in HIFIS based on the re-application form.
 - EHW staff must verify and confirm changes to confirm eligibility.
 3. Obtain current income information from participant's tax return Option C print-out of the appropriate tax year as required on CMHB application form.
 - Where there was no previous year's tax return information and proof of income was collected, confirm that participant has proper documentation. (See Acceptable Documentation as indicated on the CHMB application form).
 - Where a member of the household declares no income, and there is no previous year's tax return information, they must complete the Income Declaration section of the CMHB application form.
 4. Where participant fails to report any changes or provides inaccurate information stipulated under Eligibility Policy section above, application will be cancelled. EHW staff must send participant the appropriate cancellation letter and copy the Housing Support Worker (where appropriate).
 - Housing Support Worker must update HIFIS to **cancelled status**.

NOTE:

Where participant no longer requires supports from Housing program, benefits will continue until such time as the recipient is no longer eligible for the program (See Termination of Benefits Policy). This should be noted in HIFIS and reporting spreadsheet. EHW Staff should send a letter to participant stating participant's responsibilities and instructions on how to maintain benefit.