



The Canada Manitoba Housing Benefit

Standard Procedure Manual

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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 concerns.

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 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.

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 \$350.00 per month.

For people who are 65+ we will use the disability income limit for non-EIA Rent Assist which is currently \$25,280. Applicants may be eligible to receive an **additional \$72.00** per month maximum **toward utilities**.

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 \$350.00 per month.

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

CMHB = Rent – (30% of income + non-EIA Rent Assist), up to \$350.00.

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. 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 \$350.00 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 UNLESS the recipients do not have a bank account or in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**. If the benefit does not go directly to the recipient, cheques may be mailed directly as follows:

- to the eligible benefit recipient – only if no bank account OR in exceptional circumstances.
- at the consent of the eligible recipient, to 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 recipient:

- 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.
- Changes to recipients' EIA rates

DEATH

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

EXCEPTION

If the family is required to pay rent for an additional month, the benefit will be paid for the month following the recipient's death.

If their roommate is required to pay rent for an additional month and is receiving the CMHB, the benefit will be paid for the month following the recipient's death.

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 https://endhomelessnesswinnipeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/CMHB_Homelessness_ApplicationForm_FINAL_ENG-1.pdf
2. EIA Rent Form
3. Rent Assist Rate Information https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eia/rent_assist.html
4. Recipients/Applicants 's Tenancing Information (Lease)

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

Application Process for Recipients with Housing Support Workers

1. **Housing Support Workers** are responsible to input/enter tenancing information into HIFIS which is verified by EHW staff to ensure accuracy of information entered. Ie. Lease, EIA rental form and up to date budgeting letter
2. Housing Support Worker is to email EHW staff to inform them that the information has been inputted into HIFIS.
3. EHW staff will review completeness of application and supporting documentations; identify missing information; edit/update recipient's tenancing information as needed to ensure all required data and documentation are entered into HIFIS If there are any missing documents, EHW staff will inform the Housing Support Worker or the recipient directly through email or phone call. (The application will be on hold until all documents are received by EHW staff.)
4. Once an application is approved, an Approval Letter is sent to the recipient with a copy to the Housing Support Worker (if required)

5. Where recipient is assessed and deemed ineligible, send a letter of ineligibility directly to recipient and copy the Housing Support Worker (if required). EHW staff will place recipient's application status in HIFIS as ineligible.
6. EHW staff will process approved CMHB application within 10 business days; indicate status of application in HIFIS as approved and prepare documents for direct deposit or, in exceptional circumstances, a cheque requisition.
7. EHW staff will review and facilitate payment to applicable person: recipient, landlord, or a Public Trustee (as identified in the CMHB application form)
8. NOTE: Monthly CMH benefit payment should continue until **application renewal date** is due, except when a recipient 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.
9. EHW staff is responsible for processing benefit payment to ensure recipient receives continuous receipt of benefit.
10. Should any changes occur in the recipient's 's tenancing information such as changes in the income, rental rate, household size, and address, the Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff as the changes may affect the recipient's eligibility for CMHB.
11. Where a recipient returns to homelessness, the Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff and make a request for stop payment of benefit. If the recipient gets re-housed in a market rental accommodation within 90 days from date of returning to homelessness and requires housing benefit support, the recipient (with support from a Housing Support Worker) is responsible to provide EHW with a duly signed and completed EIA Rent Form or new lease and updated income information (Budget Sheet).
12. Housing Support Worker must update recipients' information in HIFIS which is then verified by EHW staff.
13. EHW staff will move forward with reinstating recipient's housing benefit.
14. Housing Support Workers are encouraged to exercise open communication and collaboration with EHW and/or EIA staff in any updates regarding recipients' income and EIA Rent Assist rate.

Reinstatement Process of CMHB with Housing Support Worker

1. If a recipient is evicted (has returned to homelessness), CMHB must be stopped, and the Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff and the landlord immediately. When a recipient is re-housed in market rental unit, the Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff of recipient's re-housing situation. Where re-housing occurs within ninety (90) days from the eviction date, and recipient still requires benefits, the Housing Support Worker must provide EHW staff with duly signed/dated EIA Rent Form or lease, current Budget Sheet to process re-instatement of benefits.
2. Where an application was cancelled at the request of the recipient with supports from a Housing Support Worker, under circumstances such as long-term incarceration, rehabilitation, placement in health care facility, among others, CMHB benefit must be stopped, and the Housing Support Worker must notify EHW staff and the landlord immediately. Where the individual is re-housed in market rental accommodation after ninety (90) days of the cancellation date, they must reapply, and the annual renewal date will be adjusted to reflect the date on the new application. Set application review status to 12 months from update – annual renewal date.

NOTE:

If the recipient no longer requires support from a 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 must send a letter or email to the recipient stating the recipient's responsibilities and instructions on how to maintain benefit.

Application Process for Recipients with no Housing Support Worker

1. Applicants will complete and sign the CMHB application form and provide all documentation required IE. Lease, budget letter, EIA rental form (if applicable)
2. Applicants can email, mail or drop the application form off in person.

3. EHW staff will review completeness of application and ensure supporting documents are included in the application; identify missing information; and inform the applicant of any missing documents within 2 Business days
4. EHW staff will process approved CMHB application; indicate status of application in HIFIS as approved and prepare documents for direct deposit or, in exceptional circumstances, a cheque requisition.
5. EHW staff will review and facilitate payment to applicable person: recipient, landlord, or a Public Trustee (as identified in the CMHB application form)
6. Once an application is approved, send the recipient an Approval letter within 10 business days.
7. Where the recipient is assessed and deemed ineligible, send a letter of ineligibility directly to the recipient stating the reason/s why within 10 business days

Reinstatement Process for Recipient with no Housing Support Worker

If a recipient is evicted (has returned to homelessness), CMHB must be stopped, and the recipient must notify EHW staff. When a recipient is re-housed in market rental unit, the recipient must notify EHW staff of re-housing situation. Where re-housing occurs within ninety (90) days from the eviction date, and recipient still requires benefits, the recipient must provide EHW staff with duly signed/dated EIA Rent Form or lease, current Budget letter to process re-instatement of benefits. Where the individual is re-housed in market rental accommodation after ninety (90) days of the cancellation date, they must reapply, and the annual renewal date will be adjusted to reflect the date on the new application. Set application review status to 12 months from update – annual renewal date.

Application Updates and Annual Eligibility Procedure/Renewal Process

1. Send recipient the CMHB Re-application Form along with Annual Renewal Letter, with a copy to the Housing Support Worker (if applicable) three months prior to CMHB renewal date and giving ninety (90) days to respond, if still requiring benefit.
 - Where recipient fails to respond within the ninety (90) days, the application will be cancelled on the anniversary date and be changed to cancelled in HIFIS.

EHW staff will send a cancellation letter to the recipient with a copy to the Housing Support Worker (if applicable).

2. If the recipient still requires CMHB, they are to report any changes as indicated in the re-application letter (contact information, current household composition, address changes/moves, changes in rent, changes in income, etc.).
 - Housing Support Worker must update recipient's information in HIFIS based on the re-application form.
 - EHW staff must verify and confirm changes to confirm eligibility.

Non-EIA Rent Assist

1. Complete the Income Declaration section of the CMHB application form.
2. If recipient fails to report any changes or provides inaccurate information stipulated under Eligibility Policy section above, application will be cancelled. EHW staff must send recipient the appropriate cancellation letter and copy the Housing Support Worker (if applicable)
 - or EHW staff must update HIFIS to **cancelled status**.