

Dear Special Priority Applicant:

The District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board Housing Programs gives special priority, for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing, to eligible applicants whose personal safety or whose family's safety is at risk because of abuse by a partner/spouse or other family member with whom they live or to victims or survivors of human trafficking. You have indicated that you or someone in your household lives in or recently moved from such an abusive relationship or is currently a victim or survivor of human trafficking.

The supply of RGI housing in the District of Parry Sound is limited, and the demand is great. There is a wait list of families and individuals in need of RGI subsidy, some of whom have been waiting years to be offered housing. Special Priority Status allows applicants to move ahead of other applicants on the wait list. Housing staff must ensure that Special Priority is reserved for those who are truly in need and meet the criteria.

Initial eligibility for RGI housing is determined from the applicant's **Rent-Geared-to-Income Application**. This must be completed prior to seeking Special Priority status.

After eligibility for RGI subsidy is confirmed, the application for Special Priority Status consists of the following three documents:

1. **Application for Special Priority Status:** To be completed by the applicant and submitted to Housing Programs. (Copy attached);
2. **Verification Declaration:** To be completed by a verifier who is a community service provider and is knowledgeable about the applicant's situation of abuse. Refer to section entitled **Who can be a Verifier** on the document **Special Priority Information** for the list of people who can complete this form for an applicant. (Copy attached);
3. **Letter of Verification:** To be completed by the verifier. Please refer to section entitled **Information for the Verifier** on the document **Special Priority Information** for further details. (Copy attached).
An applicant may consent to the early destruction of the special priority verification letter by completing the form **Consent for Early Destruction of Special Priority Verification Letter**. (Copy attached).

Once the three documents, outlined above, have been submitted to Housing Programs, your eligibility for Special Priority will be assessed. You will be notified in writing of the decision.

Please note that if you are granted Special Priority Status, you will have the right to one (1) Offer of Accommodation refusals. After that, you will be placed on the Centralized Wait List according to your chronological date of application.

If you have any questions about this process or the forms, please contact this office at 705-746-7777 or 1-800-461-4464.

Sincerely,

Housing Programs - District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board

April 2021

Application for Special Priority Status

Name of person applying for Special Priority:

Full name: _____ Alternate name _____

A. Declaration

1. I am applying for Special Priority because: (check one)

- I am being abused by a member of my household, or
- A member of my household is being abused by another household member, or
- I am being abused by my sponsor (under the *Immigration Act*).
- I am a victim or survivor of human trafficking.

2. Check one and complete as indicated:

- I am currently living with the abuser. I have lived with the abuser since _____ (mmyyyy).
- I am not currently living with the abuser. I did live with the abuser from _____ (mmyyyy) to _____ (mmyyyy).
- I have never lived with the abuser.
- I do not have any previous Community Housing evictions

3. Name(s) of abuser(s): _____

4. Check any relevant documentation that you can provide or can be obtained:

- Court Order(s)
- Police Report(s)
- Incident Report(s)

5. Check the box that applies to you:

- I have previous Community Housing evictions
- I do not have previous Community Housing evictions

6. I intend to live permanently apart from the abusing individual. Yes No

 (Signature) _____ (Date)

B. Consent to Release Information

I hereby consent to the disclosure of information to the Housing Programs department to verify the validity and accuracy of the statements I have made above and my eligibility for special priority status.

Name of applicant: _____ Signature: _____

C. How to contact me safely:

Mailing address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Fax number: _____ Email address: _____

Personal information contained on this form is collected by Housing Programs pursuant to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Housing Services Act*. The information will be used to determine eligibility for the special priority household category in rent-g geared-o-income housing in the District of Parry Sound. Inquiries relating to this collection should be directed to the Human Resource Manager, District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board, 1 Beechwood Drive, Parry Sound, ON P2A 1J2. 705-746-7777.

District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board - Housing Programs

Consent for Early Destruction of Special Priority Verification Letter

- 1) In accordance with regulations made pursuant to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (R.S.O. 1990, c F.31), personal information collected by Local Housing Corporations for the purpose of accessing rent-geared-to-income housing is to be maintained in Local Housing Corporation files for a minimum of one year.
2) Section 5(1) of Ontario Regulation 460 made under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, allows for earlier destruction of personal information if consent is given by the individual to whom the information relates.
3) In signing this form, the applicant gives consent for the destruction of the Letter of Verification which is required to determine eligibility for rent-geared-to-income housing under the Housing Services Act's Special Priority Policy for applicants who are abused or are victims or survivors of human trafficking.
4) Destruction of the Letter of Verification is to occur upon:
- The applicant taking possession of a unit of housing; or,
- The cancellation of the application; or,
- The placement of the applicant on the regular housing waiting list.

I _____ authorize that the verification letter(s) provided on my behalf to Parry Sound DSSAB Housing Programs to satisfy the requirements for accessing housing under the Special Priority Policy for applicants who are abused, be destroyed in accordance with paragraph 4 above.

Signature of Applicant | Date

Personal information contained on this form is collected by the District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board – Housing Programs pursuant to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Housing Services Act. The information will be used to determine eligibility for the special priority household category in rent-geared-to-income housing in the District of Parry Sound. Inquiries relating to this collection should be directed to the Human Resource Manager, District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board, 1 Beechwood Drive, Parry Sound, ON P2A 1J2. 705-746-7777.

District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board - Housing Programs

**Special Priority Applicant
Consent to Disclose and Verify Information**

1. I, _____
(Full name of applicant)

Consent to the collection, disclosure, transmittal and release of information to an authorized representative of Parry Sound DSSAB Housing Programs for the purpose of verifying information and establishing eligibility as a **Special Priority (SPP) Applicant** for RGI housing.

2. I further consent to information being exchanged with an Ontario Works delivery agent, or the Ministry of Community and Social Services, or the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, the government of any other province or territory, a ministry or department of any of the foregoing, or any agency or party for the purpose of verifying information and establishing eligibility as a Special Priority (SPP) Applicant for subsidized housing.
3. I further consent to information being exchanged with other Parry Sound DSSAB departments including Children's Services, Esprit Place Family Resource Centre, and Ontario Works for the purpose of verifying information and establishing eligibility as a Special Priority (SPP) Applicant for RGI housing.
4. I further consent to information being exchanged with medical practitioners and law enforcement agencies for the purpose of verifying information and establishing eligibility as a Special Priority (SPP) Applicant for RGI housing.
5. I further consent to information being exchanged with landlords and utility companies for the purpose of verifying information and establishing eligibility as a Special Priority (SPP) Applicant for RGI housing.
6. I understand that the enquiries may take the form of electronic data exchange.

I have read or had read to me and understand the consent set out above.

Signature of Applicant

Witness

Date

Personal information contained on this form is collected by the District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board – Housing Programs pursuant to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Housing Services Act*. The information will be used to determine eligibility for the special priority household category in rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) housing in the District of Parry Sound. Inquiries relating to this collection should be directed to the Human Resource Manager, District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board, 1 Beechwood Drive, 2nd Floor, Parry Sound, ON P2A 1J2. 705-746-7777.

Special Priority Verification Declaration

Name of Applicant: _____

Verification completed by:

Name	Position & Organization		
Address			
Telephone	E-mail	Fax	

- I have reviewed the information about the verification process and indicators of abuse necessary to access RGI income housing under the Special Priority Policy for applicants who are abused or are a victim or survivor of human trafficking. The applicant (named above) to whom I have provided services/assistance and whose experience of abuse I am aware of should be given special priority for RGI housing.

- I have attached a Letter of Verification providing information about the applicant's situation.

- I am aware of my responsibilities in providing verification information and declare that the information I have provided is an accurate account of the applicant's situation.

Verifier Signature	Date
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To be completed by Applicant

I, (name) _____, hereby authorize and consent to:

- a) The completion of this form and its submission to Parry Sound DSSAB Housing Programs.
- b) The disclosure to Parry Sound DSSAB Housing Programs of any additional information that may be requested to clarify the information contained on this form.

Applicant Signature	Date
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For Office Use Only

Priority Status Assigned	
Yes Date:	Date verification received:
No Date:	Reason:

Housing Offered:

Address	Date	Accepted	Declined	Reason
Application placed on a regular wait list - date		Application cancelled – date:		
Verification letter destroyed - date:		Completed by:		

Personal information contained in this form is collected by Parry Sound DSSAB Housing Programs pursuant to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Housing Services Act*. The information will be used in the administration of the special priority household category in rent-geared-to-income housing in the District of Parry Sound. Inquiries relating to this collection should be directed to Human Resource Manager, District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board, 1 Beechwood Drive, Parry Sound, ON P2A 1J2, 705-746-7777.

District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board - Housing Programs

Special Priority Verification Information

This document provides information about the verification process required for those applying for the Special Priority category with the Parry Sound District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) Housing Programs.

Special Priority status gives priority access to rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing for applicants **whose personal safety or whose family's safety** is at risk because of abuse by a partner/spouse or other family member with whom they live or who are victims or survivors of human trafficking. The applicant (or applicant's family member(s)) must have experienced an incident or series of incidents where **their safety is/has been at risk**. The Special Priority category is to enable the applicant household to separate permanently from the abuser. Due to the urgency of the situation, the applicant is not subject to the regular tenant selection procedure and the application is processed as quickly as possible.

The supply of RGI housing in the District of Parry Sound is limited and the demand is great. There is a wait list of families and individuals in serious need of RGI housing; some who have waited years to be offered housing. The Special Priority status allows eligible applicants to move ahead of other applicants on the wait list for housing. Verifiers and Housing staff must ensure that Special Priority is reserved for those who are truly in need and meet the criteria.

Special Priority status can be assigned once eligibility has been determined and the abuse has been verified by a community service provider who is assisting or providing services to the applicant and is knowledgeable about the applicant's situation of abuse. The confidentiality of this report will be retained in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*.

VERIFICATION PROCESS

An applicant for Special Priority must have a verifier complete a **Verification Declaration** form and a **Letter of Verification**.

A. **Who can be a Verifier?**

This form may be completed by a: doctor, registered nurse, registered practical nurse, lawyer, law enforcement officer, a minister of religion authorized under Provincial law to perform marriages, teacher, guidance counsellor, registered early childhood educator, indigenous Elder, Indigenous Traditional Person or Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, member of the College of Midwives of Ontario, aboriginal person who provides traditional midwifery services, psychotherapist, registered psychotherapist or registered mental health therapist, registered social worker, registered social service worker, a person employed by an agency or organization that provides social support services in the community (the record must be signed by the person who prepared the record and by a person who has authority to bind the agency or organization), a person who is familiar with the abuse if the record is administered by a commissioner for taking affidavits, housing provider or member of Housing Programs.

B. Information for the Verifier:

The applicant for whom you have received this form has applied for RGI housing and may be eligible for Special Priority status because of abuse. The Special Priority provision is reserved for individuals whose situation corresponds to the definition of human trafficking, abuse and indicators of abuse described below.

A verifier must submit:

1. A completed **Verification Declaration** form. (Attached)
2. A **Letter of Verification**.

The **Letter of Verification** must include the following information:

- Descriptions of applicant's experience of abuse which led applicant to seek your services or assistance. Reference should be made to "Indicators of Abuse" described below.
- Relationship of applicant to abuser and applicant's current living situation.
- Any further information related to applicant's situation and safety needs which would assist the application (e.g., unit location with respect to access to support services or proximity to abuser).

Note: Once the applicant has been housed, the Letter of Verification is destroyed. The Verification Declaration form is retained by the Parry Sound DSSAB Housing Programs.

Definition of Human Trafficking

One or more incidents of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of an individual by improper means, including force, abduction, fraud, coercion, deception, and repeated provision of a controlled substance, for an illegal purpose, including sexual exploitation or forced labour.

Definition of Abuse

An incident of physical or sexual violence, or words/actions/gestures that threaten one's person, children, family or property.

Indicators of Abuse

Individual perceptions about what situations constitute "abuse" may vary. For the purposes of this policy, verifiers are to refer to the following list of indicators in assessing the applicant's situation of abuse that is considered to warrant Special Priority status.

1. A record of physical injuries caused by the abuser.
2. Police intervention at the home when the applicant was at risk due to the abuser's behaviour. This may have resulted in legal action, e.g. peace bond or charges against abuser.
3. The use of force/coercion to make applicant engage in sexual activity against applicant's will.

4. Words or actions or gestures that threaten the applicant, applicant's children or family. For example:
 - Threats of physical harm to applicant, applicant's children, or family, for not doing what the abuser demands.
 - Destruction of personal property or cherished possessions or pets.
 - Threats to remove or hide children and prevent access to them.
 - Control of the applicant's activities (e.g., deprives applicant of sleep, prevents applicant from doing certain activities, limits access to finances, isolates applicant from family and friends).
 - Threatens to withdraw immigration sponsorship arrangements or have applicant deported.
 - Use of force to make applicant perform degrading acts (e.g. licking the floor) or terrorizes applicant (e.g. driving recklessly, brandishing weapons).
5. Recurring contact with emergency shelters, police, health and/or social services workers from which a history of serious incidents of abuse by the abuser can be determined.
6. Applicant lives in fear for personal safety and/or the safety of applicant's family as a result of the abuser's behaviour.