



National Affordable Housing Consortium Victoria

Financial Hardship & Temporary Absence Policy

Policy Statement

NAHCV establishes Financial Hardship and Temporary Absence guidelines for long-term social housing to fulfil its social mission and to ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from rental stress. Accordingly, NAHCV is committed to:

- Treating tenants who are experiencing financial hardship with sensitivity
- Dealing with each situation on a case by case basis
- Helping tenant who are currently experiencing, or may experience, financial hardship and/or temporary absence from their home.

Purpose

This policy establishes the approach NAHCV takes to assist tenants who are experiencing financial hardship or who are temporarily absent from their property.

Scope

This policy applies to all tenants residing in long-term Targeted and Non-Targeted Social Housing properties owned or managed by NAHCV.

Financial Hardship

Financial hardship occurs when a tenant or household member is unable to pay rent without affecting their ability to meet basic living needs due to unexpected changes in income caused by, but not limited to, one or more of the following factors:

- Loss or significant reduction of the households primary income
- Spousal separation or divorce
- Other significant and unexpected financial circumstances

Temporary Absence

A temporary absence is when a tenant is required to be absent from their property and pay for temporary accommodation such as a nursing home, respite, rehabilitation, prison or remand for a period greater than three (3) weeks and up to a maximum of thirteen (13) weeks.

Applying for a Rent Reduction

NAHCV assists tenants by offering a reduction in rent in specific circumstances. To apply for a reduced rent, the tenant must complete a Rent Reduction Application Form and supply documents which verify:

- The loss or significant reduction of the households primary income that impacts on a tenants ability to pay rent; and/or
- The date the tenant entered the temporary accommodation, the length of stay and estimated date of return, and confirm that they are paying a fee for accommodation costs (for example respite, rehabilitation & nursing homes).

NAHCV will assess the application and inform the tenant of the outcome in writing. If approved, NAHCV will reduce the weekly amount owed to NAHCV to be 25% of the total charge payable.

For Example, if a tenant's total charge payable to NAHCV is \$269.80 per week, the rent will reduce to \$67.45 per week. Approval to grant a rent reduction will be decided on a case by case basis by the Chief Operating Officer.

Human Rights Considerations



In deciding what action to take, NAHCV employees must give proper consideration to the relevant human rights in accordance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 s38(1) (the Charter). This consideration should include the potential impact the proposed action they are undertaking through this policy may have on the person's (and their household's) rights under the Charter.

Transparency and Accessibility

This procedure will be available on the NAHCV website www.nahc.org.au/NAHCV

NAHCV may from time to time implement changes to this policy. The revised policy will apply to all tenancies on and from the date of the change. All tenants will be advised in writing of the changes and if/how it will affect their tenancy.

Relevant Legislation

- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- Victorian Housing Registrar Performance Standard 1 (Tenant and housing services)
- Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS

Related Policies and Procedures

- NAHCV Rent setting and Rental subsidy procedure
- NAHCV Rent Arrears & Debt Recovery policy
- NAHCV Ending a Tenancy Policy
- NAHCV Complaints and Appeals Policy

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Policy Approval and Review Details		
Policy Creation Date & Version	16/01/2020	Version: 1.0
Policy Owner	Position: COO	Business Unit: Operations
Policy Approved by	Chief Operating Officer	
Date Approved	14 September 2021	
Policy Reference Number	VIC-NAHCV016	Policy Review Date: Sept 2023