

POLICY/PROCEDURE: Allocation of Community Housing Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes the approach of CatholicCare NT (CCNT) to:

- eligibility for its Community Housing programs
- the prioritisation and allocation of vacant properties in its Community Housing portfolio; and
- successful and sustainable tenancies and communities through the considered matching of applicants to properties.

Background

CCNT is responsible, by agreement with CatholicCare NT Resources (CCNTR), to provide tenancy and property management services for CCNTR Community Housing stock. This includes the allocation of housing/housing vacancies to eligible tenants.

In discharging this duty, CCNT by agreement with CCNTR, will manage the eligibility and allocations process within the guidelines of this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all Community Housing properties owned by CCNTR and managed by CCNT.

This policy does not apply to:

- properties managed under the Employee Housing program
- properties managed by CCNTR on behalf of other property owners, where the owner retains responsibility for allocation of housing; and
- temporary or crisis accommodation.

Policy Statement

CCNT establishes eligibility criteria for its Community Housing to:

- fulfill its social mission
- ensure tenant selection is consistent with the Social and Affordable Housing income and asset eligibility criteria set by the Northern Territory Government
- ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress
- ensure Community Housing stock is targeted to those households most in need.

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To be considered for Community Housing with CCNT, prospective tenants must first meet income and asset eligibility criteria. CCNT applies the same income and assets eligibility threshold levels as the Northern Territory Government settings for social and affordable housing.

In addition to meeting the income and assets thresholds, prospective tenants must

- be residents of the Northern Territory
- be an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident
- have been unable to secure or sustain housing in the open market
- have connections to the community where our housing stock is located
- be able to live independently with wrap around support
- be over the age of 16.

CCNT will:

- only allocate Community Housing tenancies to eligible applicants
- communicate clearly to potential applicants' eligibility for Community Housing with CCNT; and
- comply with its contractual, legal, and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for Community Housing.

Approach to Allocation

CCNT, by agreement with CCNTR, is responsible for the allocation of Community Housing.

In discharging this duty, CCNT will allocate housing to eligible applicants in a manner which:

- is fair, transparent, and equitable
- relieves households from housing stress
- is in accordance with its contractual, legal, and regulatory obligations;
- supports the financial viability of CCNTR's Community Housing provision.
- targets those most in need; and
- is in line, with the Mission and service charter of the organisation.

CCNT is committed to promoting a successful and sustainable tenancy when matching applicants to its properties. Housing will be allocated in a way that:

- gives appropriate priority to households in need of housing assistance
- considers the health, safety, and support needs of applicants
- matches individual housing needs with available properties; and
- supports sustainable and harmonious communities.

Eligibility for Housing

All applicants with a current Northern Territory Public Housing application approval (upon verification) are assessed by CCNT to meet the initial eligibility requirements for Community Housing regarding income and asset thresholds, age and residency requirements.

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Applicants direct to the organisation who do not have an active public housing application will be assisted to complete an application and may, if eligible, be offered housing by CCNT.

Additional Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for housing with CCNT, an applicant must:

- Have no previous debt with CCNT or another registered housing agency that remains unpaid. Where there are debts, support can be offered to establish a repayment plan. Where a repayment plan is in place, the applicant will be considered for housing with CCNT.
- In line with the service charter, CCNT is committed to continuing to work with vulnerable families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, individuals with substance use and mental health challenges. As such, connections to community and the provision of supports local to the housing stock are additional requirements CCNT may apply when allocating tenancies.

Sourcing Applicants

CCNTR, by agreement, has assigned responsibility for the allocation of vacancies to CCNT.

CCNT will seek suitable applicants from both the Public Housing Wait List (NT) and from applications made direct to the organisation.

Other Legal Requirements

CCNT will ensure in making any allocation that it complies with any other legal requirements concerning eligibility for housing or allocation of housing that may be relevant.

Promoting Successful and Sustainable Tenancies

CCNT is committed to treating all applicants fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against any potential applicant.

CCNT will assess all applicants before making an offer of housing to determine suitability for a particular vacancy. Following assessment, if CCNT declines to offer an applicant housing, it will inform the applicant accordingly.

Matching Households to the Right House

In allocating housing, CCNT will match applicants to properties providing that an allocation:

- is the right size for the applicant's household
- is in an area consistent with the applicant's needs
- assists the applicant to access employment or any support services that they need
- makes the best use of housing stock
- encourages a sustainable tenancy

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- meets any expressed needs of the applicant so far as they are known, such as modifications for people with a physical disability or mobility impairment, availability of car parking or room for carers.

CCNT aims to ensure properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those applicants who need them, including:

- properties that are suitable for older people
- properties that have been built or modified to meet the needs of people with a disability
- properties on the ground floor,
- properties with level access; or
- properties with a yard/garden.

CCNT will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate any requirements where this is not already contained in their application.

Supporting Sustainable and Harmonious Communities

CCNT may, to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies for allocation in response to:

- a high concentration of Community Housing stock in a particular area
- a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic challenges in a particular area or building
- existing tenancy management issues (or a potential for them to develop)
- existing neighborhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
- a mismatch of supply and demand, making the property hard to let.

Legislation and Standards

This policy embeds CCNT obligations under: The National Community Housing Standards, and the National Regulatory Code.

Transparency and Accessibility

CCNT Community Housing eligibility and allocations process is made available to prospective tenants in our Eligibility and Allocation Fact Sheet.

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