

TARGET POPULATIONS

DEFINITIONS FOR PRIORITIZATION

Authority

[Social Housing Accommodation Regulation](#)

Schedule A, Part 1, s. 3(E) - Housing Need Point-Scoring Standards

Intent

To increase the priority ranking for households facing an urgent need for social housing, the point scoring standards used to determine priority of need award additional points for specific target populations. Target populations will be self reported (applicants to identify belonging to a particular group) unless otherwise specified. The applicant may choose not to disclose this information. The following definitions for each target population are provided for consideration and reference. It is important to note that many of these definitions are consistently evolving and changing over time.

1. Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Peoples is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. It includes First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. First Nations includes Status and non-status people. A person may be included in more than one of these three specific groups. A person may be included in more than one of these three specific groups. Allowing people to self-identify for the purposes of accessing affordable housing is recommended.

2. People with disabilities

The Alberta Human Rights Act provides the following definitions for the two main types of disabilities that may affect individuals:

- A “**physical disability**” means any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limited the generality of the foregoing, includes epilepsy, paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, and physical reliance on a guide dog, service dog, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device; and
- A “**developmental disability**” means any of various conditions (such as autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, or blindness,) that usually become apparent during childhood and are marked by delayed development or function limitations especially in learning, language, communication, cognition, behavior, socialization or mobility.

- The **federal Accessible Canada Act** defines disability as “any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.”
- The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** states that “persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, or intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

3. Individuals fleeing violence, including those leaving second stage shelters*

Individuals may be fleeing several types of violence, including, but not limited to the following:

- **Domestic violence:** actual or threatened use of force in an intimate partner relationship that may include a single act of violence, or a number of acts forming a pattern of abuse. This may include physical abuse; sexual abuse; criminal harassment (stalking); threats to harm children, other family members, pets; property damage; exerting control over movements, communications, finances; and emotional or psychological abuse.
- **Family violence:** abuse of power within relationships of family, trust or dependency that endangers the survival, security or well-being of another person. It can include many forms of abuse including spousal or partner abuse, elder abuse and neglect, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, abuse of persons with disabilities, witnessing abuse of others in the family. Family violence may include some or all of the following behaviours: physical abuse, psychological abuse, criminal harassment/stalking, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, etc.
- **Human trafficking:** recruitment, transportation, transfer, holding, concealing, harbouring or receipt of a person by means of (i) the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud or deception, (ii) repeated provision of a controlled substance, (iii) the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or (iv) the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of taking advantage of or exploiting that person.
- Second stage shelters provide programming and accommodations for mothers with children who have experienced family violence and require support to begin or resume independent living.

4. People at risk of homelessness or transitioning out of homelessness supports*

- People at risk of homelessness includes those who have sudden unemployment, evictions, discontinuation of transitional supports, and breakdown in family relations, etc.
- Homelessness supports include participation in Housing First programming, which places people experiencing homelessness into housing and provides wrap-around supports such as addictions treatment, mental health services, employment skills training, and rent support to address their unique and complex needs.

5. People dealing with mental health and addiction*

- Mental health is the state of your psychological and emotional well-being, a necessary resource for overall health. Poor mental health can lead to mental and physical illness. Mental illness is the reduced ability of a person to function effectively over a prolonged period of time. Some of the many forms of mental illness include mood disorders (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder), anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders, eating disorders (e.g., anorexia, bulimia), etc.
- Addiction is a chronic disease that involves complex interactions between the brain, genetics, the environment, and someone's life experiences. Addiction refers to the problematic use of a substance. The harms of substance use can range from mild (e.g. feeling hungover, being late for work) to severe (e.g. homelessness, disease). Addiction may refer to a substance dependence (e.g. alcohol addiction) or a psychological dependency/behavioural addiction. A person may also become dependant upon a particular kind of stimulation or activity (drugs, gambling, etc.).

*** In order to grant points on these grounds for definitions 3-5, which are to be counted toward prioritization into social housing, the information must be confirmed by social services agencies. Agencies must also confirm that the household is able to safely live independently in social housing accommodation.**

6. Youth exiting government care

- Upon exiting government programs for children under 18 (e.g., foster care), youth benefit from continued access to financial supports from the government of Alberta up until the day before they turn 22, through the new Transition to Adulthood Program.
- Other supports through the program extend to participants aged 18-24 (help finding work, mental health and addiction supports, mentoring opportunities, life skills, social and emotional transitional supports).

7. Veterans

- A veteran is any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who successfully underwent basic training (per Veterans Affairs Canada).

8. Recent immigrants & refugees

- An immigrant is a person who has been permitted by immigration authorities to live in Canada permanently. Recent immigrants are permanent residents who have moved to Canada from other countries and have landed in the five preceding years (per Statistics Canada).
- Refugees are people who have fled their countries for fear of persecution and are unable to return home. Refugees are individuals sponsored by the Government of Canada, or individuals who have applied for refugee or immigration status and for whom private sponsorship has broken down. The Government of Canada defines a refugee landed in Canada as a permanent resident who applied for and received permanent resident status in Canada after their refugee claim was accepted.

9. Racialized Groups

- Racialization is the process through which groups come to be socially constructed as races, based on characteristics such as ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture, politics. Visible minority refers to “persons...who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”, as defined in the Employment Equity Act. Diverse individuals who self-identify as a member of a racialized group (person of colour or visible minority) can be prioritized into social housing.

10. People who identify with diverse concepts of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (LGBTQ2S+ people)

- **The acronym LGBTQ2S+** combines concepts of sexual orientation, as well as gender identity and expression. Individuals may identify as lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, genderqueer, two-spirit, or other (such as intersex, asexual, etc.).
- **The term lesbian** typically refers to a woman who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women.
- **The term gay** refers to a person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of their same sex or gender identity. Traditionally this identity was reserved for men, but it has been adopted by people of all gender identities.
- **The term bisexual/biromantic** refers to a person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to two or more genders.
- **The term transgender** refers to those whose gender is different than the sex assigned at birth.
- **The term genderqueer** (also non-binary), refers to a person whose gender identity does not align with a binary understanding of gender such as a man or woman. It is a gender identity which may include man and woman, androgynous, fluid, multiple, no gender, or a different gender outside of the “woman-man” spectrum.
- **The term two-spirit** is used by some Indigenous people whose gender, spiritual identity and/or sexual orientation includes both male and female spirits.

The information included in this resource was adapted for use by Heartland Housing Foundation employees and references the following:

Management Body Handbook | Seniors, Community and Social Services

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