

Frequently Asked Questions
Canada – NL Housing Benefit

Q: What is the Canada – NL Housing Benefit?

A: The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Benefit is intended to provide a portable housing benefit to assist in improving housing affordability for residents in severe core housing need. For those that qualify, monthly funding assistance will be provided to assist with the cost of rent.

Q: What does “portable housing benefit” mean?

A: The portable housing benefit supports the objective of self-determination which is a key goal of the National Housing Strategy. In relation to housing, this means that the individual or family can decide where they want to live within certain parameters. Traditionally, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) would provide specific addresses of where someone can live under its programming based on when, where, and what home became available, but with portability, the client/tenant can decide where they want to live. If the client maintains good standing with their landlord and should decide to move, the rental benefit would transfer with them, to support their rent in their new home, provided the new home meets NL Housing’s inspection requirements to ensure the new location meets fire and life safety standards.

Q: How much funding will be allocated to this program?

A: The total funding that will be allocated to the program is \$74.4 million. The funding increases over the next 7 years (2021-22 through 2027-28). It is a 50%/50% cost-shared program between the Federal and Provincial Governments. NLHC will be utilizing its existing rent supplement program to meet the cost matching requirements. As a result, the traditional rent supplement program will convert to the Canada – NL Housing Benefit program as rental agreements expire with landlords from 2023 through 2026.

Q: How many households will be served with the new program?

A: NLHC is estimating that by March 2028 over 2,600 households would have benefited from the program. This includes serving new, unique households and the transfer of traditional rent supplements to the Canada – NL Housing Benefit program.

Q: How will NLHC ensure that the properties rented under this program meet fire and life safety standards?

A: NLHC will continue with its current policy of requiring rental homes to be inspected before the home can be occupied.

Q: How will I find a home? Will there be any assistance?

A: Once approved for the Canada – NL Housing Benefit program, clients may find a home through any method available to them, such as local listings online (facebook, kijiji etc.) or contacting local landlords or property management firms. NLHC will also provide a list of properties whose owners have expressed interest in the Canada – NL Housing Benefit program, and their rental

property match your rental criteria. The home you choose may need to be inspected and approved by NLHC prior to move-in.

Q: Is the assistance benefit paid to the client/tenant or landlord?

A: The benefit will be paid directly to the client/tenant who is responsible for paying their rent to their landlord. The rental agreement will be between the client/tenant and landlord. With client/tenant consent, NLHC can pay the rental assistance amount directly to the landlord.

Q: How do you apply for the program?

A: Applications for housing can be found at this website link [Rental Housing Program - Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation \(nlhc.nl.ca\)](http://nlhc.nl.ca). There is no separate application for this program. Applicants apply for the Rental Housing Program and assistance may be in the form of an NLHC rental unit or the Canada – NL Housing Benefit Program. Client preference cannot be guaranteed.

Q: How are you selected for the program?

A: Selections for housing are based on the date the application is received and NLHC's prioritized waitlist codes and will be offered based upon availability. Assistance may be in the form of an NLHC rental unit or the Canada – NL Housing Benefit program, client preference cannot be guaranteed.

Q: Who is eligible for the program?

A: The Canada – NL Housing Benefit is intended to serve households in the greatest need. Eligibility for the program is based on gross income. If your total household gross income is less than or equal to \$32,500 (\$65,000 in Labrador West and the North Coast of Labrador) you may be eligible. These are the same income thresholds used to determine eligibility for other NLHC programs. For more information on eligibility, you may visit the Rental Housing Program on our website: [Rental Housing Program - Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation \(nlhc.nl.ca\)](http://nlhc.nl.ca).

Q: How much funding assistance will be provided monthly?

A: The amount of assistance provided for qualifying applicants will vary from household to household based on the income the household earns. NL Housing will calculate the monthly assistance amount based on information received in the application process. The amount of benefit paid will be the difference or gap between the rent-geared-to-income calculation (25% of net income) which determines the amount of rent the tenant can pay and the lower of actual rent paid or the average market rent in the community as set by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rental Market Survey.

Example 1: John and Jane Doe have a net income of \$20,000. They have identified a 2-bedroom apartment to rent in St. John's at a cost of \$820 per month. The CMHC market survey rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in St. John's is \$974.

John and Jane Doe would receive a monthly Canada – NL Housing benefit of \$403.33. This is calculated in the following manner:

1. $\$20,000 / 12 \text{ months} * 25\% = \416.00 (this is the amount John and Jane Doe will contribute towards rent based on their income)
2. $\$820 \text{ (rent)} - \$416.00 = \$404.00$ (Canada – NL Housing Benefit monthly amount)

Example 2: Susan has a net income of \$25,000. She is renting a 1-bedroom apartment in Corner Brook at a total cost of \$1,000 per month. The CMHC market survey rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Corner Brook is \$643.

Susan would receive a monthly Canada – NL Housing Benefit of \$122.12 per month. This is calculated in the following manner:

1. $\$25,000 / 12 \text{ months} * 25\% = \520.00 (this is the amount Susan will contribute towards rent based on her income)
2. $\$643 \text{ (CMHC rental market survey)} - \$520.00 = \$123.00$ (Canada – NL Housing benefit monthly amount).

Q: I'm being converted from the Rent Supplement Program into the Canada – NL Housing Benefit program, what does this mean for me?

A: To meet Federal and Provincial cost sharing requirements, NLHC will be converting existing clients from the Rent Supplement program to the Canada – NL Housing Benefit program. What changes will I experience and how will this affect me?

- Your rental subsidy will be based on the higher of the Rent Supplement or the Canada – NL Housing Benefit parameters noted above. This means that unless there are changes to your income or household composition upon conversion, the subsidy should remain at similar rates or increase when switched to the Canada – NL Housing Benefit program.
- Your heat subsidy will remain the same upon conversion.
- Your subsidy is now portable and will transfer with you, should you wish to move.

These conversion rules apply only until you exercise portability. Should you choose to move, the rental and heating subsidies will revert to standard Canada – NL Housing Benefit program parameters. Please consult with your assigned Housing Officer for more information.

Q: Am I required to notify NLHC prior to moving to a new rental unit?

A: Yes, you must have a transfer approved and new unit inspected prior to moving.