

## Columbus Estates of Chatham Inc.

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Internal Transfer Policy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Wayne Bushey, 519-351-8332
<b>Date Approved by Board of Directors:</b>	January 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2006
<b>Date Approved by General Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Date Certified:</b>	January 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2006

### **Reference:**

*Social Housing Reform Act 2000, 298/01, Sect 32-35.1*  
*Social Housing Reform Act 2000, 339/01, Sect 11, 14*

**Columbus Estates of Chatham Inc.** (Hereinafter simply referred to as "we", "us", or "ours" in this document)

### **Goals:**

The Transfer Policy applies to tenants who want to move from one unit to another unit within any of the housing complexes operated by Columbus Estates of Chatham Inc. (hereinafter simply referred to as "we", "us", or "our" in this policy). Households who wish to move into our housing organization from other social housing are considered as external applicants, and must apply through the centralized access system.

This policy is designed to:

1. Allow our tenants to move from one unit to another
2. Give priority to tenants who are overhoused, or urgently need a different unit
3. Give priority to tenants that are underhoused
4. Balance, the needs of our tenants with the needs of people hoping to move into Columbus Estates for the first time.

### **Eligibility:**

Any household in good standing may ask for a transfer after it has lived in a unit for at least one year from the date of possession. The "one year rule" will be waived if the household is "overhoused" or is considered as a "priority move"

A household is in good standing if:

1. it has not been given an eviction notice
2. it does not owe arrears or any other money to us (unless financial hardship has made this household a "priority move")
3. it has paid its rent on time for the last six months
4. it has no history of damage to the unit, disturbing the neighbours or harassing the staff
5. it has paid all utilities up to date
6. it has provided timely and up to date "Income and Asset Review" statements.

### **Applications:**

To transfer, tenants must complete an application form, and give it to the property manager.

The property manager will:

1. Confirm the household is eligible for a transfer, based on local occupancy standards for RGI households, and our occupancy standards for market rent households and other policies.

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2. add an eligible household to the waiting list, according to the policy below
3. inform the tenant of their decision

Tenants may appeal the property manager's decision. (See appeals, below) If the decision to deny a transfer is upheld, the tenant may not re-apply for a transfer on the same grounds for one year.

### **Internal Waiting List** **Priority Moves:**

Households with an urgent need to move are given priority over all other transfer applicants. Priority applicants will be offered units in order of their application date for a transfer

These urgent needs include:

1. Tenants needing to escape abuse, including being threatened or harassed by neighbours. The manager will establish the level of documentation required to substantiate the abuse. (This does not apply when one household splits to form two households. In that situation the departing household will use the centralized access system if they wish to do so.)
2. Financial hardship due to the loss of a partner, or a significant drop in income, that makes the market rent unaffordable.
3. A household member has a medical condition or permanent disability, and their current unit:
4. Is inaccessible, or
5. Substantially aggravates the condition, or
6. Prevents or substantially increases the cost of treatment (documentation needed).

Note: A separate waiting list is kept for wheelchair accessible units. Tenants who need a wheelchair accessible unit should ask to be placed on the "Special Needs waiting list."

### **Overhoused RGI tenants:**

An "overhoused" RGI household is a household living in a unit which is larger than the largest unit for which they qualify under occupancy standards set by the Service Manager (or the standards set out in Ontario Regulation 298/01). After Priority/Urgent need tenants overhoused tenants who are paying rent-geared-to-income will be given priority over other transfer applicants, in the order of the date they applied to move into Columbus Estates. This is a Provincial rule. It does not apply to market rent tenants. (No application form is required.)

A household is overhoused when it has more bedrooms than allowed by the municipal Service Manager's occupancy standards.

Tenants must report any change in household size to the property manager within **10 business days** of the change. The property manager will automatically add any overhoused households to the internal waiting list, and will tell the household in writing. If we do not have an appropriately sized unit for the household, as defined by the Service Manager's occupancy standards, the household will instead be placed on the central waiting list (the list for all social housing in the area).

Overhoused tenants may choose the location of the unit they would be willing to accept. However, if the tenant receives rent-geared-to-income subsidy, they will be placed on the central waiting list if they do not move into an appropriately sized unit within 12 months, or they refuse (2) units while they are on the internal transfer. If the tenants refuse a total of (3) three units while on both lists, they will lose their subsidy, and must pay market rent.

Tenants may ask for a review of the property manager's decision (see appeals below)

### **Underhoused households:**

Households who have more than two household members over the age of thirteen years old sharing a bedroom or who have opposite-sex household members, other than spouses sharing bedrooms or adult and child sharing a bedroom, will be placed on the waiting list after priority households and overhoused, in

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the order they applied for a larger unit.

### **Others:**

All other eligible applicants will be placed on the internal waiting list below priority, overhoused, and underhoused applicants, in the order they apply for a transfer.

Applicants on this list may alternate with applicants on the external list. Every second unit (that has not been taken by a priority or overhoused applicant) may be offered to applicants in this category.

Consideration will be given to increasing the priority of requests for transfer on compassionate grounds, where the household wishes to move because of a death of a family member.

### **Maintaining Eligibility:**

When a tenant reaches the top of the list, the property manager will confirm the household is still eligible for a transfer. Before offering a unit, the property manager will make sure:

1. there are no arrears
2. no late payments within the last six months
3. no complaints about disturbing neighbours or harassing staff
4. no damage to the tenant's unit was found in a unit inspection.

### **Offering a Unit:**

The property manager will offer a vacant unit to households on the internal transfer waiting list in the order they appear on the list.

The property manager may exercise discretion in the decision to offer a vacant unit to anyone on the internal transfer waiting list other than priority and overhoused transfer requests if the resources are not available to prepare the vacant units in a given month without incurring vacancy loss.

Tenants will have (24) twenty-four hours to decide whether to accept the unit.

A tenant (other than priority and overhoused tenants) who refuses two units will be removed from the internal transfer waiting list and placed on the external transfer waiting list.

Units may be offered "as is" we will ensure the unit meets our maintenance and safety standards, and that all electrical and plumbing fixtures are in good working order. But we may choose not to paint the unit, do minor patching, or make decorative changes to the unit.

A transfer fee in an amount not to exceed \$250.00 may be charged to and paid for by the household applying for the transfer.

### **Review of Decisions:**

Tenants can request a review of the property manager decision to declare the household to be overhoused (as required by provincial regulations).

Tenants may also appeal the property manager's decision to:

- refuse a transfer request
  - refuse to give priority status
1. To appeal the decision, the tenant must write to the property manager within 10 business days of receiving the written decision. This letter should explain why the tenant disagrees with the decision, and give any information that might affect the decision.
  2. Reviews will be handled following the Review Committee's normal procedure. All decisions of the Review Committee are final.
  3. If the tenant's appeal to transfer, or be given priority status, is not upheld, the applicant may not apply for a transfer on the same grounds for one year.