



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Social housing



HOUSING ASSESSMENT
AROMATAWAI WHARE NOHO

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Who can get social housing?

Social housing is provided for people who are most in need of housing for the duration of their need.

To get social housing you must:

- be aged 16 years or over
- meet the income and asset test
- have a serious and immediate housing need
- be ordinarily resident in New Zealand, **and**
- be a New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident in New Zealand. If you have been a permanent resident in New Zealand for less than two years you may qualify if you are getting a main benefit.

If you're not a New Zealand citizen or a permanent resident you may qualify if you're getting an emergency benefit under special circumstances (for example, you're applying for residency and must stay in New Zealand).

You may also need to show us that you've been looking for a place to live, but haven't been able to find one that meets your needs.

If you have a partner, their situation will also be considered in your application.

How to apply for social housing

The first step is to talk with us about your housing needs. We'll discuss your situation and look at the best way to help you.

If this includes social housing, we'll arrange an assessment interview for you.

Call Work and Income on **0800 559 009** or Senior Services on **0800 552 002**.

What you'll need to apply

We'll need information to confirm your identity.

If we don't already have the following information, you may be asked to bring it to the interview.

- Proof of **who you are**, for example, your birth certificate, passport or driver licence.
- Proof of your **income** for up to four weeks before your application, for example, wages, holiday pay and any other income.
- Proof of your **assets and their value**.
- Full **birth certificates** for each **dependent child** in your care.
- At least three areas where you're willing to live.
- Show that you've been looking for a place to live, but haven't been able to find one that meets your needs.

We may ask you to bring the same information about other members of your household who are moving with you.

Assessment interview

If you're referred for an assessment, the interview will take about an hour.

We'll discuss your situation and the type of housing you need.

If you can't come to an interview, we may be able to talk with you over the phone.

You need to tell us about you and your family's housing needs, your current living situation and the areas you want to live in (you need to give us at least three areas) so you can be matched to a suitable property.

A suitable property for you is one that meets your housing needs as agreed during this assessment.

If you're assessed as qualifying for social housing you'll go on the social housing register.

While you're on the social housing register

While waiting for social housing, it's important to keep looking for other options like rental properties in the private market. Talk to us to find out how we can help you with this.

What you have to do

- Look at other housing options.
- Let us know straight away about any changes in your or your family's circumstances (see page 8 for examples). This is important so that we can continue to match you with suitable properties.
- Take the first suitable social housing property you're offered. Turning down a suitable property without a good reason may mean your housing need isn't serious enough, and you may be taken off the social housing register. If you reapply for social housing within 13 weeks, your decision to turn down a suitable property will be part of our assessment of your need for social housing.
- If you're in serious need of housing please contact us so that we can review your situation.

You can read more about what happens when you decline a suitable property at:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/property-offer

What we'll do

- Pass your details to housing providers as housing becomes available.
- Review your need for social housing if your circumstances change.
- Give you information about other housing options.

What the housing providers will do

- Contact you when a suitable property becomes available.
- Invite you to view the property.
- Have you sign a tenancy agreement.

You need to keep in touch

While you're waiting for social housing, or if you're already living in a social house, you must let us know straight away about any changes in your circumstances or your family's circumstances.

If you don't let us know, you might not be able to get housing that best meets your needs, or you may no longer be eligible for social housing.

Here are some examples of what you need to tell us about. Changes to your:

- address and phone number
- income or financial circumstances
- family or household.

We may also contact you to talk about your circumstances. It's important that you answer our calls or letters, or we may think that you no longer need social housing and cancel your application.

Getting the right house

Social housing is provided by Housing New Zealand and a number of community housing providers.

When a suitable house becomes available, the housing provider will contact you and invite you to have a look at the property.

If the property meets your needs you'll sign a tenancy agreement with the housing provider who'll become your landlord.

Income-related rent

If you get a social housing property you may pay an income-related rent. Your rent will be based on your income and the income of other tenants living in the property.

The rent is also based on your circumstances, such as any children you have or if you have a partner.

You need to let us know straight away about any changes in circumstances that might affect the amount of rent you pay. This includes changes in circumstances for both you and your partner, and of other tenants in your house and their partners.

To let us know about a change in circumstances, call Work and Income on **0800 559 009** or Senior Services on **0800 552 002**.

What if you don't qualify?

If you don't qualify for social housing, we'll help you with getting the information you need to find a place to live.

For more information on finding the right house for you please visit our website www.housing.msd.govt.nz

What you need to tell us while in social housing

Social housing is available to people who need it most, for the duration of their need.

If you're living in a social housing property it's important that you tell us about any changes to your, your family's and your partner's circumstances as this can affect how much rent you pay, your continued eligibility for social housing, or the type of housing you're living in.

This could include changes to your:

- income or financial circumstances
- contact details
- family or household.

You also need to confirm your circumstances with us when we ask you to, for example when we send you a letter or a form, or call you. You need to do this even if your circumstances haven't changed.

More information

For more information on finding a house:

www.housing.msd.govt.nz

For more information on the social housing programme:

www.socialhousing.govt.nz

If you have any questions, call us on one of these numbers:

Work and Income: 0800 559 009

Senior Services: 0800 552 002

or visit your nearest Work and Income service centre or Community Link.

If you're deaf, hearing-impaired or find it hard to communicate by phone:

Deaf Link free-fax: 0800 621 621

Telephone typewriter (TTY): 0800 111 113

Text: 029 286 7170

Email: MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz