

Understanding the Housing Need Categories

Housing providers know that they need to have a fair and consistent process for selecting applicants for available units. Recognizing that not all providers use the same criteria, The Housing Registry database offers members three sorting options when running an "Application Match". The options are time waiting, based on application date; a point score, based on income rent and other factors related to the applicant's current living circumstances; or categories of housing need, as outlined below.

A	Applicants facing a severe risk to health and/or safety, such as homelessness (including homeless due to a crisis such as fire or flood), or the need to be near ongoing medical treatment for a serious medical condition.
B	Applicants with serious health/medical/social needs, such as risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic abuse and time-limited housing, living in severely inadequate housing, or transitioning to a more independent living situation.
C	Applicants whose housing need is moderate compared with the two previous categories, such as living in temporary or inadequate accommodation.
D	Applicants with a specialized housing need or low-housing need, such as living in marginally crowded housing.
E	Applicants for the low-end market units or market units managed by Housing Registry members or applicants who are currently adequately housed and paying less than 30 per cent of household income towards rent.

Eligible applicants are placed in category C, D or E based on the information provided with their application. Applicants who wish to receive additional consideration due to homelessness, fleeing domestic violence or abuse, or a serious health condition affected by their current housing may elect to have a Supplemental Application Form completed by a third-party verifier. Once a valid Supplemental Application Form is received the applicant may be placed in category A or B. Within each category applicants can be sorted by application date or point score.

Many housing providers elect to use the housing need categories as they better identify housing needs and allow providers to target units to applicants with specific housing needs. More information on the housing need categories and the Supplemental Application Form are available online at <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance>.

Meet your 2014 Housing Registry Council

The first council meeting was held at BC Housing's offices on March 17. Once a year in March the council has a face-to-face all-day meeting. During this meeting council sets priorities for the coming year and establishes subcommittees to work on each priority.

Dana Hill, Chair – CMHA for the Kootenays

Jennifer Walsh – New Chelsea Housing Society

Steve Hoock, Vice Chair – Affordable Housing Society

Jaye Treit – Progressive Housing Society

Doug Creba – Nanaimo Affordable Housing

Coretta Peets – Victoria Cool Aid Society

Darren Kitchen – Co-operative Housing Federation of BC

Yvonne Blair – Greater Victoria Housing Society

Deanna Fowler – Capital Region Housing Corporation

Erin Smandych – BC Housing

Jag Klair – Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation

Rhonda Forster – BC Housing – Administrative support to the council

Online Application - Update

The online application just celebrated its first anniversary. Online applications have a higher rate of completion, which is beneficial to both the applicants who do not need to be contacted to provide the missing information as well as The Housing Registry and its members as online applications can be processed at about twice the rate as paper applications.

Housing provider members are encouraged to direct applicants to the online application. Applicants who do not have a computer at home can access one for free at their local library. If you have a website that provides information on how to apply to The Housing Registry, the council would appreciate it if you included a link to the online form <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance>.

Next Council meeting - June 19, 2014

If you have a topic that you would like the council to discuss, please send it by email at thehousingregistry@bchousing.org, or contact council Chair Dana Hill at dhill@cmhakootenays.org.