

Government Employee Housing Eligibility

Policy

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1. Policy statement

To be eligible for Government Employee Housing (GEH), employees must meet qualifying criteria. An employee's eligibility will be jointly determined by the employee's agency and the Northern Territory Government Employee Housing Office (NTGEHO).

2. Purpose

This document identifies the general criteria against which the NTGEHO assesses initial and continuing eligibility for GEH.

3. Scope

This policy specifies general eligibility criteria for GEH, unless an exemption is specified.

All applicants and GEH tenants will be subject to the eligibility criteria listed below when applying for GEH or when transferring to another GEH dwelling.

These criteria are also applied to determine continuing eligibility for existing GEH tenants annually.

4. Policy detail

The determination of an employee's eligibility for GEH accommodation is the responsibility of each Northern Territory Government (NTG) agency or approved non-government organisation. The decision to provide a housing benefit is made by the employing agency's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or approved delegate. This decision will be made in accordance with the provisions in this policy.

The eligibility criteria identified below applies to all forms of GEH – except where specified.

4.1. Employee eligibility

An employee must:

- be engaged on an ongoing or fixed period basis pursuant to s 29(3)(a) or (b), whichever is applicable, of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993*; and
- be engaged in an eligible position (exception: although not working in an eligible position, the employee has been identified as possessing particular skills/knowledge or experience in their role as an employee which is determined, by the employing agency's CEO, to be of critical importance to long-term stability and advancement of the local community).

NTGEHO acknowledges the different eligibility of each employee and will seek to allocate to available housing stock in a triage based way. Specific consideration will be provided to engaging the Regional Coordination Committees as required.

4.2. Eligible position

A position may be deemed an eligible position by the employing agency's CEO where the position is assessed as being of critical and/or strategic importance to an agency's operations in the remote location with regard to:

- the position's relative importance for the social, infrastructure, health, education and security needs of the community or any other priority foreseen by Government;

- whether the position requires a skilled employee to perform the duties as demonstrated by the qualifications (essential or desirable) or experience requirements contained in the position description;
- the long term needs of the remote location in relation to the service or function to which the position is associated; and
- if relevant, there is evidence of recruitment and retention issues related to the position (i.e. the position is hard to recruit to for various reasons).

The assessment will be based on the significance of the of the position's strategic importance to an agency's operations and the skill requirements to perform the role, not a position's level or salary.

4.3. Property Ownership

An employee is ineligible for GEH if the employee or their spouse/partner owns, at the time of commencing employment in the remote location or at any time during the period of occupation, residential property within a 50 kilometre radius of their work location.

If a residential property is purchased by an employee or their spouse/partner within the 50 kilometre radius of their employment location, the employee is ineligible for GEH.

5. Decision making and amendments

The CEO (Housing) may delegate a power or function under the *Housing Act 1982* or other Act. Delegated officers may make decisions on behalf of the CEO (Housing) in line with the Housing Delegations and the Department's Financial Management Delegations.

A discretionary decision may be made outside general application of policy if it supports the policy intent, will prevent an employee or agency from being unfairly disadvantaged, and is in line with the Department's delegations and legislative obligations.

6. Review of the policy

If at any time the legislative, operating or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy shall be reviewed and amended accordingly in agreement with the Commissioner for Public Employment. The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment will ensure the policy meets legislative requirements.

7. Legislative basis and related resources

7.1. Legislation

Housing Act 1982

Residential Tenancies Act 1999

Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993

Commissioner for Public Employment Determination 8 of 2015

7.2. Policies

Government Employee Housing Operational Policy Overview

Allocation policy

Entitlement policy

Rents and Rental Concessions policy