

# Priority Housing

## What is Priority Housing?

Priority housing is an option for social housing applicants who can prove an urgent need for priority status on the wait list.

Priority housing may reduce your wait time, depending on the type of home and location you require, however there is still a wait time. If you need crisis accommodation, please refer to “Where can I get immediate accommodation” at the end of this fact sheet or contact your local Housing office if you need assistance with a referral to non-government support services.

All priority housing applications must be submitted with supporting letter(s) or reports, which confirm your category of priority and support your urgent need for social housing.

## What is Social Housing?

Social Housing is an umbrella term for subsidised accommodation comprising public housing (where the CEO (Housing) is your landlord) and community housing (where a Community Housing Provider (CHP) is your landlord).

From 8 April 2024, CHPs began to manage social housing tenancies as part of a broader government strategy. For these properties CHPs will collect rent and conduct maintenance and repairs. This change is a key component of the Territory Government’s Community Housing Growth Strategy 2022-32, which aims to transfer up to 40% of urban public housing to community housing providers.

Regardless of which social housing landlord you have, social housing rent is calculated identically, using your household income to determine the amount of rent you pay. Rent is 25% of household income for eligible households.

Following your wait time you will be contacted by a social housing provider, either public housing staff, or a community housing provider.

## Who can apply?

If you are eligible for social housing and meet one of the categories below, you can apply for priority housing:

- Young person transitioning out of care;
- Homeless or risk of homelessness;
- Have a serious medical condition;
- Experience serious social problems;
- Experience domestic or family violence.

A Priority Housing application will not be accepted without additional documentation unless the application is submitted on the grounds of Domestic Family Violence. You may be asked to provide additional information at a later date when the application is being assessed.

Please refer your support to our fact sheet FS59 ‘Support Agencies and Health Professionals’ which explains the information we need them to include in their support letter or report.

## How do I apply?

<p><b>Step 1</b></p>	<p>Check your eligibility for social housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you meet the qualifying criteria for social housing? Refer to our fact sheet FS07 ‘Eligibility criteria for Social Housing’.</li> <li>• If you’re not eligible you cannot submit a priority application form.</li> <li>• <b>If you are eligible, please go to Step 2.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 2</b></p>	<p>Complete the application form and obtain your supporting documentation, letters and/or reports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are having difficulty completing the Application for social housing, you may be able to ask a family member, friend, or support agency to assist you.</li> <li>• Part B must be completed if you’re applying for priority.</li> <li>• Obtain supporting documents written by a third party, such as a treating doctor/specialist, or support agency. Refer to our fact sheet FS59 ‘Support Agencies and Health Professionals’</li> <li>• Gather all other documents required, listed on the ‘Application for Social Housing’ form.</li> <li>• <b>When you have hard copy versions of these documents, please go to Step 3.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p>Submit your application and documentation at your local Housing office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit your local Housing office to submit your application form and documents, including your identification. Housing staff will complete a checklist to ensure you have provided the information we need to assess your application.</li> </ul>

## Assessment and Confirmation Letter

Your application for priority social housing will be assessed to confirm your eligibility for priority housing. If your application is approved, you will be sent a letter confirming approval.

If we require additional information regarding your circumstances, we will contact you to obtain the information we need. If the information is not provided within the deadline provided, your application may not be approved due to insufficient information.

If your application is not approved, your application will be reassessed by a manager, and you will be notified of the outcome.

## When will I be contacted?

If your priority housing application is approved, you will receive a letter and be placed on the social housing wait list with a priority status. After this, the next time you will hear from public housing or another social housing provider is for a wait list audit, a welfare check, or to organise your pre allocation meeting.

Applicants must remember to update their contact details and confirm their eligibility every 6 months. If a social housing provider cannot contact you, your application will be deferred until you contact us.

## How long until I am housed?

We are unable to give you a timeframe as wait times vary depending on the type of premises and location you require. When a social housing provider is able to house you, they will contact you to request copies of your tenancy references and to organise a pre-tenancy interview.

You will be required to provide 2 satisfactory tenancy references before an offer of housing is considered. Please ensure you are on track to provide these when requested to prevent a longer wait time.

## Where am I on the wait list?

There is one wait list consisting of all applicants who have submitted general applications, transfer applications and priority applications. Each application type will have its own set of wait times.

In the Northern Territory, one and 4 bedroom premises are in high demand, and they experience a slower turnover rate than other types, which results in a larger wait list and longer wait times for these properties.

Due to the complexity of managing the wait list and housing stock, applicants cannot be allocated a number on the wait list. For information about current estimated wait times for priority housing, please visit our website [www.tfhc@nt.gov.au](http://www.tfhc@nt.gov.au)

## Where can I get immediate accommodation?

If you require crisis, immediate short-term or medium-term accommodation, the Department can assist you by completing a referral form. We will need to sit down with you to complete an authorisation form, allowing us to share your information. We can send your referral to non-government accommodation organisations who will contact you directly. If we send a referral on your behalf, it is your responsibility to remain in contact with any organisation that contacts you.

Alternatively, the ShelterMe website offers an online directory with information about accommodation options and support services across the NT including:

- Crisis
- Short term
- Transitional
- Supported accommodation and other services.

Other options include applying for an interest free loan with the Department, called Private Rental Bond Assistance, to help you get into private rental accommodation that you source. You can also look in the Yellow Pages for hostels, boarding houses or motels in your area.

## Where can I find more information?

Contact your local Housing office or visit [nt.gov.au](http://nt.gov.au).

Greater Darwin (08) 8999 8814      Arnhem (08) 8987 0533

Central Australia (08) 8951 5344      Big Rivers (08) 8973 8513

Barkly (08) 8962 4497      Top End (08) 8995 5122