

CIRCULAR

Date: June 25, 2014

CIRCULAR NUMBER: EIA #2014-38h

Alternate Program(s):

To: Community Social Service Supervisors/Program Managers

Subject: Transition of EIA Participants/Applicants from Employment and Income Assistance to non-EIA Rent Assist

Reference: 2014-38i: Manitoba Rent Assist Implementation: Communicating Information to Field Staff
2013-04 – Policy Updates: Rewarding Work Health Plan
2009-01 – Get Started!
2008-35 Rewarding Work Health Plan

Type: Policy Replaces: N/A
 Procedure
 Rate
 Information Only
 Internal Only

Effective Date: July 1, 2014

EIA participants who receive Rent Assist while on EIA will not automatically continue to receive it when their EIA file closes. They must submit an application for non-EIA Rent Assist. More information on non-EIA Rent Assist, including how to apply and potential benefit levels (including the Rent Assist Estimator - available July 2014) can be found in *EIA Circular 2014-38g - Rent Assist Implementation: Households not on Employment and Income Assistance (EIA)* or on the new Rent Assist website at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/eia/rentassist/index.html>.

The Manitoba Assistance Act (formerly The Employment and Income Assistance Act) requires that staff take all possible steps to assist eligible participants transition to non-EIA Rent Assist. The following administrative measures have been implemented to meet this requirement, as well as help reduce the eligibility assessment waiting periods typically experienced by non-EIA Rent Assist applicants.

Note: the following are interim measures while the Department explores opportunities for more streamlined "portability" options for affected participants.

Participants whose EIA files are closing due to employment or sufficient financial resources

Staff are to immediately notify Provincial Services via the administrative process described below for those EIA participants whose files are set to close and who indicate that they will continue to live in eligible accommodation types (i.e. paying rent or board and room in the private market).

The *Rent Assist EIA Case Closure Notification Form* should be faxed or emailed to Provincial Services. The Notification Form provides Provincial Services with the participants' shelter type and case closure date. This information is used to open an application which will help expedite the non-EIA Rent Assist application/eligibility assessment process, as well as establish if participants are eligible for backdating of non-EIA Rent Assist benefits to the EIA case closure date.

Note: The Notification Form does not have to be forwarded in instances of case closure due to participants being added to another file (e.g. common-law) or leaving the province.

Staff should also provide transitioning participants with a copy of the non-EIA Rent Assist application form or direct them to the Rent Assist webpage to print off an application (see http://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/eia/pubs/rentassist_appform.pdf). Staff should encourage participants to submit the application form to Provincial Services as soon as possible.

If these notification-related processes are completed by staff and application forms completed fully and submitted as quickly as possible by participants, non-EIA Rent Assist waiting periods may be reduced to approximately 3 – 4 weeks (compared to current 6 – 8 weeks waiting period experienced by low-income Manitobans) and benefits can be back dated to the case closure date.

Participants whose EIA files are closed due to 'No Contact'

For participants whose cases auto-close (i.e. Flex cases), or who are manually closed due to no contact with staff, a general closure SAMIN letter is automatically sent. The letter has been updated to include information on non-EIA Rent Assist and advises participants to contact EIA staff to discuss if their circumstances may make them potentially eligible for transitional and low-income benefits including the Rewarding Work Health Plan, Get Started, Manitoba Child Benefit, etc.

Participants who contact their case workers within 45 days of case closure will be eligible for backdating of non-EIA Rent Assist benefits to the EIA file closure date (providing they also meet non-EIA Rent Assist financial and accommodation-type eligibility requirements). However, staff must still submit the Notification Form to Provincial Services in order to confirm that participants have made contact with staff within the 45 day transitional period and that preliminary assessments suggest that they are likely to be eligible for non-EIA Rent Assist.

Where participants contact staff beyond 45 days of EIA case closure, staff do not need to complete the Notification Form. Participants are simply to be advised to submit their own application for non-EIA Rent Assist as a low-income Manitoban.

EIA Applicants who are financially ineligible for EIA or who could potentially receive more financial supports through Rent Assist.

It is important to note that the above administrative/notification process may also apply at the point of application with EIA. There may be instances where applicants could potentially be eligible for more financial benefits through non-EIA Rent Assist than from regular income assistance.

New provisions within The Assistance Regulation (formerly The Employment and Income Assistance Regulation) will require applicants to apply for non-EIA Rent Assist if they are likely to be eligible for more benefits through that program when compared to what they would be potentially eligible for through EIA. However, where applicants are likely to be eligible for the same, or more benefits through EIA, enrolment with EIA should be considered providing all other eligibility conditions are met. These provisions apply solely to new applicants to EIA, and not to existing cases that are required to complete a new EIA application. The Rent Assist Estimator (available at www.gov.mb.ca/jec/eia/rentassist.estimator.html in early July 2014) may assist intake staff to determine if participants may be financially better off applying for non-EIA Rent Assist.

Where applicants are not to be enrolled with EIA, a copy of the non-EIA Rent Assist application should be given to the applicant. Staff should also notify Provincial Services (via the Notification Form) of the pending non-EIA Rent Assist application. Emergency assistance may be considered as required to support interim financial needs of these individuals until the non-EIA Rent Assist eligibility assessment process can be completed.