

TITLE: INTAKE, ELIGIBILITY AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE - EMERGENCY RENT BANK	SECTION: ONTARIO WORKS
DATE: July 9, 2009	POLICY NO.: KDSB-OW-IV-29
APPROVED BY: Resolution No. 2009-85	REVISED:

POLICY STATEMENT:

To provide immediate assistance to low-income households that, due to an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, are in short-term arrears and facing eviction.

PROCEDURE:

- 1) Funding for Emergency Rent Bank (ERB) is provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and is administered by the Kenora District Services Board to best meet the needs of the Kenora District. Funds are to be used to provide assistance to clients under the following guidelines:
 - a) Eligibility for payment will be based on an application process.
 - b) Eligibility rules will be set but will not restrict application of a local discretion to achieve the intent of the policy.
 - c) Each application for funding will be reviewed on an individual basis, recommended by an "Intake Worker" or a "Case Manager" and approved by the Director or designate.
 - d) The review will take into consideration the applicants' needs and the potential for long-term housing during the review process.
 - e) Funds can only be used for payment of rental arrears. Maintenance charges are not considered arrears.
 - f) The maximum amount of funding is two (2) months of rent arrears. Funds will be provided to only one applicant per Household and be eligible no more than once every two years from the date of receipt by the applicant of the Program Funding.
 - g) Successful applicants will be requested to repay the funds awarded over a reasonable period of time. In extenuating circumstances, as identified by the Case Manager and upon their recommendation and the Director's approval, repayment may be waived and noted accordingly.
 - h) Where the applicant has repaid the loan in full within two years of the date of the applicant's receipt of the loan, the KDSB may after such repayment provide Program Funding to the applicant or another member of the applicant's Household, even though the two year period referred to in (f) may not have expired.
 - i) The funds payable for a successful applicant are to be made payable to the landlord but the cheque is sent to the applicant for delivery.
 - j) A letter will be sent to the client, advising him/her of the amount of assistance. The cheque made payable to the landlord will be attached. The landlord will be copied advising him that the KDSB has issued payment for arrears.
 - k) The funds may be allocated for administration costs to a maximum of 10% of the funds expended in any given year.

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- l) The ERB will be communicated to eligible applicants through the KDSB website, posters and general announcements in the media on an ongoing basis.

2) ELIGIBILITY

- a) Applicants must be a resident of the District of Kenora, sixteen (16) years or older, a Canadian Citizen, landed immigrant or have refugee claimant status with no outstanding deportation, departure or exclusion order.
- b) The Applicant must be in immediate danger of losing his or her residence due to unpaid rent.
- c) Applicant must demonstrate that housing is sustainable and habitable.
- d) Applicant must be of low to moderate income as indicated by the KDSB needs test.
- e) Applicants must demonstrate that arrears are temporary and not chronic, through a history of good rent paying habits, and their income to expenses must demonstrate the ability to sustain current rent payments plus a reasonable repayment schedule.
- f) Applicant(s) must be legal tenants residing in housing units that are safe, not hazardous to their health and covered by the TPA.
- g) Landlords have to be willing to keep the tenancy / customer in the future.
- h) Applicant(s) can use the ERP every two (2) years unless the previous funds have been repaid in full.
- i) The applicant's Household must not be receiving Rent-Geared-to-Income assistance.
- j) The applicant(s) must not be subject to any eviction proceedings for reasons other than rent arrears.
- k) The applicant(s) must provide a copy of an eviction notice, landlord application to the Ontario Rental Tribunal, or ORHT Eviction Order,
- l) The applicant(s) must indicate their intention to remain in their current accommodation for a further twelve (12) month period.
- m) The applicant(s) must agree to repay the funds within a period of twenty-four months, or longer upon reviewer's recommendation unless repayment is waived by the reviewers.
- n) Program Funding for each approved applicant shall not exceed two times the average market rent for the District of Kenora as set by the Ministry from time to time.
- o) Loan Repayment Funds received from applicants shall be used to assist clients who fall outside the eligibility criteria of the Emergency Rent Program and who are at risk of becoming homeless, for example in arrears 2.5 months on rent, maintenance charge added onto rent, other charges that have accumulated to make applicants ineligible for ERP but vulnerable to eviction.

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Ongoing ODSP Recipients

- a) Ongoing ODSP recipients may access this benefit through their Case Manager. All applicable Discretionary Benefits should be accessed prior to requesting funds from the EREAF.
- b) ODSP clients wishing to access EREAF must be referred by their ODSP Case Manager (Appendix "B"). The ODSP Case Manager will fax the referral to the appropriate OW office. The ODSP worker should make a note in the SDMT. The OW office will set up an appointment with the client within the forty-eight (48) hours to ascertain whether the client has accessed all other means under the ODSP Act and to complete the necessary paperwork. Once the applicant has been deemed eligible, the OW Intake Worker/Case Manager should make a note in the SDMT.
- c) The Intake Worker/Case Manager will complete the needs test (Appendix "A") and have the consent form signed, as well as the repayment agreement (Appendix C). The request and supporting documentation should be faxed to the KDSB office for approval and payment.

Ongoing OW Recipients

- a) Ongoing OW recipients may access this benefit through their local OW office.
- b) OW clients wishing to access ERB should contact their OW Case Manager. The OW Case Manager should fax the request and supporting documentation to the KDSB office for approval and payment. The OW Case Manager will make a note in the SDMT.

For all Others

- a) An applicant or their representative will normally make initial contact through the Ontario Works Office in their community.
- b) If it appears that the individual is eligible for Ontario Works Assistance, they should be advised and offered an appointment. Further, if a two-week emergency cheque is appropriate, it should be accessed first.
- c) A Needs Test for ERP will be completed to determine if the applicant's income and/or assets can cover the outstanding expense. The Needs Test is attached as Appendix A. SDMT may also be used to gather the information, when appropriate.
- d) The applicant will sign the application, the consent, and the agreement to repay and provide any requested verification.
- e) Successful applicants will be requested to repay the funds awarded over a reasonable period of time. In extenuating circumstances, as identified by the Case Manager and upon their recommendation and the Director's approval, repayment may be waived and noted accordingly.

3. APPROVAL PROCESS

- a) The local Case Manager will record the amount of assistance requested and to whom it is payable, review the eligible criteria and make a recommendation.
- b) On completion, the request will be forwarded to the Director or designate. A decision should be made within two days.

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- c) If the available monthly income as determined by the needs test is equal to or exceeds the sum of the Ontario Works budget, the applicant will be deemed ineligible.
- d) If the available asset level is equal to or exceeds the amount requested, the applicant will be deemed ineligible.
- e) Maximum amounts that apply for determining monthly budgets and expenses are listed on the Application Form.
- f) The KDSB will keep a file of all applications for ERP.
- g) OW offices will be notified when funds are no longer available.
- h) The Director or designate may ask the Case Manager to assist the applicant with a case plan including determining options and negotiating with landlords/energy companies.
- i) The Director or designate will review.

4. PROCESSING PAYMENTS

- a) If approved, the payment will be processed by the KDSB OW support clerk. Documentation of each request will be maintained at the KDSB. Appendix D shows a sample log.
- b) A manual cheque will be requested and charged to Emergency Rent Bank 59100-5RB-00-0
- c) A note should also be created under category **Intake: Details: Emergency Shelter Fund**.
- d) Repayments should be made to the:

Kenora District Services Board
Dryden, Ontario