Rent supplement at Old Grace Housing Co-operative

Manitoba Housing has allotted Old Grace Housing Co-operative a number of Rent Supplement spots. The province subsidizes the difference between the approved market rental rate charged by the landlord and the rent-geared-to-income (RGI) paid by the qualifying tenant. The Manitoba Rent-Geared-to-Income formula requires tenants to pay no more than 30 percent of their income for housing charges. Manitoba Housing makes a monthly payment to OGHC for the difference between the approved market rent and the amount the tenant pays.

Rent Supplement is a program that is tied to the housing provider, not the tenant. That means if a household leaves the co-op, it does not take its right to rent supplement with it.

Thirteen Rent Supplement units are granted to us in a 20-year agreement with Manitoba Housing. The start date for this agreement is 2017. It is renewed in five-year terms. Manitoba Housing has guaranteed in writing that if the Rent Supplement agreement is not renewed after any five-year term expires, those households on Rent Supplement will continue to receive Rent Supplement if they live in the Co-op.

Four of the rent supplement spots are reserved for newcomer households in the four-bedroom units.

An eligible tenant must:

- have a total household income less than the Program Income Limits (PIL) set annually by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)
- be a permanent legal resident of Canada
- be 18 years of age or older, and
- not be in receipt of any other shelter allowance or rental subsidy program assistance;

When OGHC increases housing charges, Manitoba Housing reviews the increase to see that it is not above the rent control limit or the affordable housing limit. If it is not, then it increases its subsidy.

Members on Rent Supplement must re-apply annually, submitting information on the previous year's household income. At that time the amount of subsidy is reviewed and often adjusted up or down. Manitoba Housing may decide not to re-qualify a household for Rent Supplement: it might also reduce the amount of the subsidy. Reasons why a household might not re-qualify include the previous year's income above the limit, a change in family size, or failure to submit a full application.

When a Rent Supplement spot becomes vacant, either because a household no longer qualifies for rent supplement or because it has moved out, OGHC reassigns the rent supplement benefit to another household that qualifies for rent supplement.

The Co-op does this by advertising the availability of Rent Supplement to all members. Applicants must have incomes that meet the program qualifications as well as the occupancy requirements for Manitoba Housing and OGHC Occupancy Rules.

If more than one household applies, the Rent Supplement spot is awarded to the household that spends the greatest percentage of its total income on Old Grace Housing Co-op Housing charges. This will be determined by dividing the previous year's total housing charges for the unit the member is resident in by the household's total income, as reported on the previous year's Canada Revenue Agency notice of assessment. For rent spots to be assigned prior to June 30 of any year, the notice of assessment from two years prior will be used to determine need. For rent supplement spots to be assigned from June 30 onwards, the previous year's notice of assessment will be used to determine need.

The determination of need is to be made by the co-chairs of the Membership Committee, with a recommendation being then communicated to the Treasurer.

If there are no households in the co-op that qualify for Rent Supplement, priority for allocation of the next available affordable suite is given to Friends from our Wait List who have indicated they wish to be on our Wait List for rent supplemented housing.

This process is not followed in the case of the four newcomer households living in the four-bedroom units. When one of the newcomer households on rent supplement leaves, the rent supplement spot is offered to the incoming newcomer family as opposed to being offered to the general membership.