



April 21, 2017

Dear Stakeholder,

I am pleased to provide you with an update on the Province's Framework for a Portable Housing Benefit (PHB), an important component of Ontario's updated Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy.

Currently, Ontarians in need of housing assistance primarily rely on receiving rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance, and often have to live in specific housing units to receive this assistance. The proposed Framework would create the opportunity for Service Managers to use a portable housing benefit as an alternative option towards meeting their housing obligations using municipal resources. Households offered a portable housing benefit would have the option to accept the benefit or remain on the social housing wait list until a unit becomes available.

A PHB would provide a monthly subsidy to low-to-moderate income households to assist with housing costs. Unlike RGI, the PHB would be tied to the household itself, instead of a physical housing unit.

The PHB would have multiple benefits for recipients:

- It would give people on the social housing wait list a potential option to receive a portable benefit that would give them more flexibility and choice about where they live, perhaps closer to employment, child care, schools or family.
- It could help households who like where they are living but face affordability challenges to remain where they live.
- The calculation for the PHB would be simplified and reassessed annually using income tax information. As a result, recipients would have an incentive to earn income by moving to an annual benefit calculation, rather than experiencing an increased rent with every income change.

The PHB would also provide Service Managers with the opportunity to create more vibrant mixed-income communities due to a greater ability to diversify their housing portfolio.

We are currently seeking public feedback on proposed regulations that would establish the Portable Housing Benefit Framework within the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. More information on the details of the Portable Housing Benefit Framework may be found on the Regulatory Registry at the following address: <http://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=24065&language=en>. Comments may be submitted until June 5, 2017.

I look forward to receiving your feedback.

Sincerely,


Janet Hope
Assistant Deputy Minister