

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL	
Section: H. Ontario Works	Effective Date: Feb. 1, 2013
Topic: 7B Discretionary Benefits	Replaces: November 2009
Subject: 7B.13 Last Month's Rent	
Policy No. H.7B.13	Page 1 of 3

POLICY

Authority **OW Act: Sec. 2, 5 and 10**
OW Directives: Dir. 7.7

Participants in receipt of Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Supports Program may be eligible for a Last Month's Rent Benefit, as required by the landlord in writing. This benefit will be issued to eligible participants who are at risk of becoming homeless, or are currently in a homelessness situation (i.e. being evicted, forced to move due to shelter conditions, moving out of a hostel and establishing permanent residence, etc.).

The maximum amount of Last Month's Rent Benefit is equal to the participant's maximum monthly shelter allowance; however, if the request is for greater than the maximum shelter allowance and there are extenuating circumstances, the case may be referred to the Supervisor for consideration.

1. The participant must first **exhaust all other community resources, including in-house programs such as the Healthy Communities Fund** to qualify for the Last Month's Rent Benefit.
2. In instances where the participant is unable to negotiate a payment schedule / agreement with the landlord, a Last Month's Rent benefit may be issued as a Discretionary Benefit. If the participant is facing eviction or is at risk of becoming homeless, the Last Month's Rent benefit may be used if no other option exists, to help reduce homelessness.

PROCEDURE

Process for Last Month's Rent Benefit

The participant must provide written verification for the requirement of last month's rent from the landlord and must provide verification of the need for this benefit (i.e. eviction notice, verification that they are residing in a shelter).

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Subject: 7B.13 Last Month's Rent	
Policy No. H.7B.13	Page 2 of 3

The Case Manager must complete the Discretionary Benefits form and copy this information into the Social Assistance Computer System notes.

- a) The Case Manager will forward the completed request for approval.
- b) Once approved the request will be returned to the Case Manager confirming the issuance of the letter of guarantee. The Supervisor will put a note in the Social Assistance Computer System that the item was approved.

A letter of guarantee will be issued to the landlord stating that should an **active** Ontario Works or ODSP participant **default** on rent by vacating the premises without proper notice and not paying the rent, the last month's rent will be paid in accordance with terms and conditions set out in this policy.

In a shared accommodation situation, the letter of guarantee will be for the amount of the participant's share.

The letter is authorized for twelve months from the month of issue, for the original address only. No substitutes will be allowed. It is incumbent upon the Tenant and the landlord to come up with an arrangement prior to the expiry of the twelve months in order to cover the last month's rent. (i.e. Additional amount per month over 12 months)

The maximum amount is based on the benefit unit's maximum monthly shelter allowance; however, if the request is greater than maximum monthly shelter allowance and there are extenuating circumstances, the case may be referred to the supervisor for consideration.

When issuing this letter, the participant will be advised of the following:

1. The participant is responsible to make arrangements with the landlord to pay last month's rent prior to the expiry of the Last Month's Rent letter. They should be encouraged to make equal monthly payments.
2. That proper notice is given to a landlord, e.g. a letter to the landlord at least 60 days before the last day of the final month of tenancy. If this is done our letter of guarantee will not need to be actioned.

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Section: H. Ontario Works	Effective Date: Feb. 1, 2013
Topic: 7B Discretionary Benefits	Replaces: November 2009
Subject: 7B.13 Last Month's Rent	
Policy No. H.7B.13	Page 3 of 3

ISSUING LETTER OF GUARANTEE

1. Case Manager establishes participant's share of rent that is to be indicated on letter of guarantee.
2. When the landlord has tried, and is unable to rent premises, issue amount specified in letter.
3. Payment is at the end of the said month. The letter is issued for twelve (12) months from the month of issue, for the original address only. No substitutes will be allowed.
4. Case Manager requests payment to the landlord. If Last Month Rent letter is invalid, Case Manager advises landlord via a letter that the last month's rent will not be honored.

Note: Landlord / Tenant Arrangements

If the landlord and tenant mutually agree to terminate the rental agreement waiving the 60 day notice, the payment of the Last Month's Rent Letter will not be honored.