

# PROGRAM POLICY: PROGRAM RESPONSE TO CHANGING HOUSING NEEDS

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Drafted by	Program Development Coordinator	Approved by Board on	30 March 2021
Responsible Person	Program Director	Scheduled review date	30 March 2026

## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to set out CEHL's and co-ops' obligations to respond to a Program Participant's changing housing needs.

## 2. POLICY CONTEXT

The CEHL Co-operative Housing Program (the Program) aspires to provide a range of housing options to allocate to co-ops in order for them to provide safe, secure and long-term housing that meets a wide range of their members' current and long-term future needs. The Program delivers this defined range of housing types and sets the parameters for property allocations to member co-ops, to enable them to meet their members' needs, based on the future planning undertaken by member co-ops.

In undertaking future planning, co-ops will identify their desired housing profile, reflecting their goal statement, and consistent with the range of properties in the portfolio (Program Range). Co-ops will seek to use their housing profile to cater for their members' changing needs over time. Where a member has identified an immediate or short-term changing need, the co-op must confirm whether the desired housing response is within the Program Range and decide whether they agree to incorporate the changing need into their future planning.

The Program will plan and manage the Program Property Portfolio to address the current and future housing needs of member Co-ops, based on their Co-op plans, recognising and reinforcing the Co-op focus of the CEHL Housing Program.

The Program acknowledges the Program obligation owed to Program Participants, both co-op members and direct renters. Where a vacancy arises the documented changing needs of Program Participants are assessed to determine whether they can be met by this vacancy.

In meeting the changing needs of these Program Participants, the Program must balance the future needs of co-ops and Program viability, with the changing needs of the Program Participants.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES

### 3.1 STATEMENT

- a. CEHL will provide clear advice to co-ops on the range of properties in the portfolio and the process for the allocation of properties to co-ops, based on the co-op's stated goals and future planning.

- b. Co-ops will make best use of their current property allocation and inform CEHL of their desired housing profile based on their future planning.
- c. CEHL will seek to provide co-ops with property allocations that enable them to meet the changing housing needs of their members or facilitate access to housing outside the Program for members whose needs are not able to be met within the Program.
- d. CEHL will maintain a list of Program Participants whose changing needs cannot adequately be addressed through co-op planning. When an unallocated vacancy arises, CEHL will test whether the vacancy may meet the need of a Program Participant on this list and will determine allocation priority based on considerations of the impact and urgency of the need and Program viability.

### 3.2 PRINCIPLES

- a. A co-op will:
  - i. undertake regular future planning to identify its members' long-term housing needs, consistent with its desired housing profile.
  - ii. maintain a register of internal tenancy transfer requests that includes the kind of housing required and the anticipated timing of the need.
  - iii. use the register to prioritise any needs-based transfers when vacancies occur, in particular where a member's needs are changing or are about to change, such that their current accommodation is likely to become inappropriate.
  - iv. register any Program Participant whose needs have not been met on the CEHL changing needs list.
- b. CEHL will:
  - i. ensure that future planning undertaken by co-ops informs the Program real estate and asset strategies and property allocations process
  - ii. maintain a list of Program Participants whose changing needs cannot be adequately addressed through co-op planning, including any required relocations
  - iii. provide a process to test changing needs on the register against possible vacancies. In testing whether a vacancy can meet this changing need the Program will consider:
    - Whether the property will enable the required relocation of a household whose current property is or will become uninhabitable in the near future
    - The impacts on the Program Participant of being inappropriately housed such as:
      - health or safety of occupants due to issues such as disability or family violence.
      - overcrowding or inappropriate bedroom use in terms of age and gender of occupants
- c. prioritise allocation to a co-op where a co-op member's and a direct renter's changing needs are equivalent.

- d. Where the allocation process results in the property being allocated to meet the changed needs of co-op member, the property will be allocated to the relevant co-op, with the co-op handing one property back for each new property allocated. Any change in housing mix as a solution to changing needs of co-op members will maintain the current number of properties.
- e. CEHL will provide a process which enables Program Participants to register interest in transferring to an alternate co-op, and prioritise their referral, when a suitable vacancy occurs in a property allocated to an alternate co-op.
- f. Where a co-op is not currently able to meet a co-op member's changing housing needs but may be able to do so in the future, the co-op may request that CEHL approve the member to become an unhoused member until such time as a suitable Program offer becomes available.
- g. Where a Program Participant's changing housing needs means that they need to be temporarily or permanently housed outside the Program, CEHL will strive to facilitate the Program Participant's access to appropriate support and housing agencies where required.

## 4. SCOPE

- 4.1 This is Program Policy. It applies to all residential tenancies managed by CEHL or its member co-ops.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 A Program Participant is:

- a. an individual or joint member of a Member Co-op with a property lease from the CEHL Program property portfolio or a CEHL approved temporary housing arrangement; or
- b. a person who is not a member of a Member Co-op but entered the Program through a CEHL approved referral process, with a property lease from the CEHL Program property portfolio within VicWide or a CEHL approved temporary housing arrangement.

- 5.2 For all definitions relating to this policy, please refer to the Program Glossary.

## 6. LEGAL AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 This policy incorporates guidance provided by:

- a. [Performance Standards and evidence guidelines](#)
- b. [Residential Tenancies Act 1997](#)
- c. [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)

