

Program Policy FAQ

What is Program Policy?

Program Policy sets the rules that all co-ops must abide by as members of the CEHL Housing Program. It provides a framework for decision-making within the Program, with a clear rationale and policy context.

Program Policy consolidates, updates and replaces what was previously contained in the Program Directives and other Program documents, and also reflects the regulatory environment in which the Program operates.

Program Policy is approved by the Board, based on the recommendation of the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), which is chaired by a member of the Board and comprises eight co-op members who have been nominated to represent their region.

Why is Program Policy important?

Together with the Program Principles, Program Policy provides the framework for decision-making within the Program. It ensures that there is a clear and consistent basis for decision-making across all member co-ops.

Who does Program Policy apply to?

Program Policy applies to all members of the CEHL Housing Program and all residential tenancies managed by CEHL or its member co-ops.

How does Program Policy differ from previous 'PAC Policy'?

The previous 'PAC Policy' often contained a mix of policy and procedure and was developed as a guide which co-ops could choose to adopt. Program Policy now sets the rules of the Program and is, therefore, mandatory. Guidance on how to practically implement Program Policy is now contained in procedures and best practice advice, which co-ops are free to adopt or else develop their own.

How is Program Policy developed?

Program Policy is developed in a range of ways.

Where there is an existing Program position (by way of a current directive, procedure or practice) that needs to be reviewed, clarified or formalised, Program Policy will be developed via the quarterly consultation cycle. This process gives co-ops six weeks to consider and provide feedback on the draft policies, after which PAC reviews the feedback, determines what amendments to the draft policies are required and makes recommendations for approval to the Board. Where PAC has chosen not to incorporate specific feedback, both the feedback and PAC's rationale for not incorporating it are reported to the Board.

For deeper policy topics, a standalone consultation process will be used. This will often involve the establishment of an advisory group and the running of workshops with co-ops and members.

If feedback on a particular draft policy developed through the quarterly consultation cycle indicates strong and diverse opinion amongst co-ops, PAC is able to recommend that a standalone engagement process to support its development be undertaken. Equally, the Board may determine that, based on the feedback received, further development and consultation with co-ops is required before a policy can be approved.

How do co-ops influence the development of Program Policy?

Given the significance of Program Policy to decision-making within the Program, it is vital that the views and opinions of co-ops are reflected in its development.

As part of the quarterly consultation cycle, co-ops are given six weeks to consider and provide feedback on the draft policies via the online survey. PAC determined that this timeframe struck a reasonable balance between providing co-ops with sufficient time to review and make comment on the draft policies and recognising that there are a number of policies that need to be revised and developed. The survey also allows co-ops to identify if they require further support to implement a particular policy, as well as suggest policy topics for future development.

How does Program Policy support the autonomy of co-ops?

Program Policy provides co-ops with a Board-endorsed framework that guides their decision-making, reflecting feedback received from co-ops, the Program Principles and any regulatory requirements.

Each co-op is able to determine how they will implement Program Policy, as long as this sits within the parameters set by the policy. PAC will develop procedures and best practice advice which co-ops may wish to use or adapt.