

**Housing First Temporary Support Fund Policy (HFTSF)  
January 1, 2013 – March 31, 2013**

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**Purpose**

The Housing First Temporary Support Fund (HFTSF) is a temporary bridge fund put in place for the three month period January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013 to provide a response to the elimination of the benefit known as Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB). The Housing First Temporary Support Fund is intended to assist recipients of Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) in establishing a new principal residence, or to prevent eviction or the discontinuance of utilities or heating in an existing residence.

**Amount**

The amount of the HFTSF payable is up to a maximum of \$1,000 for recipients with one or more dependent children; or up to a maximum of \$500 where there are no dependent children.

**Criteria**

Each applicant's request for the HFTSF is reviewed on its own merit. HFTSF is provided only where needs have been identified and where no other funds are available. This includes ensuring that individuals are receiving their full entitlement of benefits through OW and ODSP. Applicants who have accessed the former Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit through OW or ODSP in the 24 month period prior to the request for the HFSTF will not be eligible for the HFTSF.

The approved amount is based on verifiable costs necessary to establish a permanent residence in the community, to maintain an existing residence or to maintain utilities.

Costs must be visually verified and documented.

The HFTSF may be paid in separate amounts provided it covers only one "start up" event and does not exceed the maximum amounts of \$1,000 for recipients with one or more dependent children in a 24-month period; or up to a maximum of \$500 where there are no dependent children in a 24-month period.

The applicant must complete required consents to release information to allow The Salvation Army to contact OW and/or ODSP, the landlord and any other agencies or businesses to verify information provided by the applicant. The Salvation Army, Housing Support Services staff will contact OW and/or ODSP to verify that the applicant has not received CSUMB in the previous 24 months.

**Establishing a New Principal Residence****Eligibility Criteria**

In the case of establishing a new principal residence, HFTSF may be provided if:

- the applicant is a resident of London and will be establishing a new principal residence in London;
- the Manager is satisfied that the applicant will need financial assistance to establish the new principal residence that is affordable to the circumstances of the individual; and
- the applicant meets one of the following criteria:
  - is being discharged from an institution that provided for their basic needs and shelter;
  - has satisfied the Manager that it would be harmful to their health or welfare to remain in their current residence; or
  - has been evicted from their current residence.

**Allowable Start-up Situations**

In start-up situations, the need for the applicant to leave their residence is clearly identified and documented, and a reasonable plan to move into a new residence is in place.

The start-up event must occur within one month from the date of application for assistance or the establishment of a new principal residence. HFTSF covers a move into boarding, rental accommodation or rent-to-own, and does not cover a move into an emergency shelter or supported housing such as a group home.

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The benefit is provided for:

- victims of family violence;
- individuals and families experiencing homelessness;
- persons who reside in uninhabitable premises (where the uninhabitable conditions are not clearly evident, verification is sought from a third party, e.g., a building or health inspector or physician);
- persons leaving a residence due to:
  - incapacity or death of a supporting care-giver/family member(s);
  - overcrowding within the premises;
  - documented need for children and sole-support parents to relocate;
  - eviction from the premises;
  - a move to more affordable accommodations, where the applicant or recipient was experiencing undue hardship because of extreme shelter costs.
- persons being discharged from institutions such as:
  - correctional facilities;
  - hospitals;
  - emergency shelter;
  - long-term care homes;
  - special care homes; or
  - interval and transition homes.

**Allowable Start-up Costs**

Allowable costs of establishing a new residence in the community include:

- fuel and hydro deposits set up through a direct payment to the utility provider;
- last month's rent deposit set up through a direct payment to the landlord; and
- moving and transportation to the home of the recipient paid directly to the company providing the service.

**Maintaining an Existing Residence**

**Eligibility Criteria**

In the case of maintaining an existing residence, HFTSF may be provided if:

- the applicant will be remaining in their current residence;
- the Manager is satisfied that the applicant will need financial assistance to remain in their current residence; and
- the applicant meets one of the following criteria:
  - has received an eviction notice and has satisfied the Manager that, if a payment is made, they will not be evicted, and continuing payments for rent are set up through a direct payment to the verified landlord.
  - has had a utility or the heating to the current residence cut off and has satisfied the Manager that if a payment is made the service will be reconnected and there is a cost sharing plan in place through the Salvation Army Housing Support Services under programs such as the Heat and Warmth Program (THAW) and/or Ontario's Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP); and a pay direct is in place for continued regular payments to the utility provider; or
  - has received a notice that a utility or the heating to the current residence will be cut off and has satisfied the Manager that if a payment is made the service will not be discontinued and there is a cost sharing plan in place through the Salvation Army Housing Support Services under programs such as THAW and/or LEAP; and a pay direct is in place for continued regular payments to the utility provider.

Utilities include water and sewage, rental of furnaces and water heaters, and hook-up or reconnection charges for a utility. Heating is considered separate from utilities.

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**Expenses Not Eligible under the Temporary Housing First Support Fund**

- moving and relocation costs to move out of London or to move to London;
- clothing;
- household supplies including linens and pots and pans; and
- furniture.

**General**

Information sharing with any agency/business/landlord requires a consent to release information form to be signed by the applicant and witnessed by the Salvation Army, Housing Support Services staff. The applicant will be informed of the information being collected in signing the consent to release information and the purpose for the collection of the information. The consent will be faxed to OW and/or ODSP, and any agency/business/landlord before any information sharing can occur. Each consent to release information is specific to the agency information will be collected from.

Exceptions to this policy can be considered under circumstances deemed extraordinary, at the discretion of the Managing Director, Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services, or designate.