Eligibility & Assessment CGA

**Operations South Australia**

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# Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the eligibility, assessment and selection process for CGA properties and support services are clearly articulated and defined.

CGA will select tenants from the Community Housing Customer Register (CHCR) in line with the Community Partnership and Growth Eligibility Policy guidelines.

# Scope

Common Ground Adelaide (CGA) aims to be open and transparent in its selection and assessment of housing offer decisions.

Common Ground provides a real solution to homelessness. We exist to end an individual's experience of homelessness. We are different because we do not offer temporary accommodation.

We end their homelessness by offering a permanent home with support for as long as it takes to heal from their past and never return to a homeless lifestyle again.

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| **Organisation** | **Abbreviation** | **ACN** |
| Housing Choices South Australia Limited | HSCAL | 122 807 130 |

# Scheduled Review

The Property & Compliance Manager is responsible for implementing and maintaining this policy.

The State Manager SA is responsible for ensuring compliance with the policy and for managing instances of non-compliance.

# Policy Statement

# Eligibility

## ELIGIBILITY for Community Housing

All customers must be registered for Community Housing on the CHCR

* Subject to suitability, meet National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) eligibility criteria
* Subject to suitability, meet Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP) eligibility criteria.

May include youth or people who have been under the Guardianship of the Minister (GOM), people exiting prison, students, artists, low/moderate income workers, ageing (not requiring aged care or daily care/nursing care services).

## Registration Process

All customers must complete a Registration of Interest (ROI) for Community Housing form and will be registered on the Community Housing Customer Register (CHCR).

CGA will ensure that all prospective, new and existing tenants are registered on the CHCR. All new registrants will be sourced directly from the CHCR.

Eligible customers are required to register their interest in Community Housing using the standard Registration of Interest Form or the Community Housing Customer Register National Affordability Housing Scheme form.

CGA will ensure that all required documentation (identification and income details) are supplied, current and kept on file.

CGA will shortlist, select and allocate registrants from the CHCR on the basis of Category of Need, unless

an otherwise negotiated general exemption has been granted by the state funding provider, or there is a requirement for sensitive tenant placement due to tenancy mix or other considerations.

## Community Housing Eligibility Criteria

All interested registrants must meet the State Government Eligibility criteria, as outlined in the Community Housing Eligibility Policy and Procedures.

To be eligible for a property with CGA registrants must meet both:

* The State Government Eligibility criteria outlined in the Community Housing Eligibility Policy and Procedures, consisting of the **Base Criteria** and the appropriate combination of Additional Criteria (i.e. Income, Assets and Needs Tests); AND
* The CGA Eligibility Criteria Individuals' ability to agree by the rules of living in a CGA owned and managed premises.

Where applicable: The Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP) criteria, properties must meet eligibility as above under section a, in addition to specific program requirements.

### Base Eligibility Criteria

To pass the Base Eligibility Criteria the Principal Registrant is required to:

* Be living in South Australia
* have an income paid directly to you
* not own or partly own any property or real estate
* meet any of the specific criteria required by the individual public and community housing providers you have selected.

The household must also:

* meet the public and community housing income and asset limits or have a need that can't be met by any other type of housing.

For more information: <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/housing-property-and-land/housing/public-and-community-housing/register-public-housing/registering-for-public-housing>

# Housing Needs Assessments

## Purpose of Housing Needs Assessments

A Housing Needs Assessment is a series of questions designed to help assess the nature and urgency of a Registrant's, or a member of the Registrant's household, housing requirements.

Where information on a Registration of Interest Form identifies that the Registrant may have special housing needs, they will be offered the opportunity to have their circumstances formally assessed in order to determine the nature and urgency of their housing requirements. A Housing Needs Assessment may also be required to confirm a Category of Need. Identified needs will be recorded on the Housing Needs Report Form (accessible from [www.sa.gov.au/communityhousing](http://www.sa.gov.au/communityhousing)).

Attached to the Housing Needs Report Form must be appropriate documentation to verify the identified needs. A final copy of the Housing Needs Report should be retained in the Tenancy File and/or attached to the customer registration on the Community Housing Customer Register.

When conducting a Housing Needs Assessment, the Community Housing provider will ensure that the Registrant's needs have been verified; however, where the Registrant requires an urgent assessment (e.g. a domestic violence situation), an assessment may be conducted whilst verification is being sought.

### Who Undertakes a Housing Needs Assessment?

The Housing Needs Assessment is undertaken by the Community Housing Organisation receiving the Registration of Interest Form, or by an external agency, where this arrangement is in place.

## When is a Housing Needs Assessment required?

### Association Housing Registrants

Housing Associations are required to allocate housing on the basis of Category of Need, with the following exemptions:

* There is an otherwise negotiated general exemption from this requirement that has been granted by CPG for the organisation in writing.
* There is a requirement for sensitive tenant placement due to tenancy mix or other considerations.

In order to confirm that Community Housing is the most appropriate housing option, it is recommended that a Housing Needs Assessment be undertaken as soon as possible following registration.

A review of the Category of Need assigned must also be undertaken at the point of any housing offer to verify the customer's identified housing needs remain current.

## The Components of the Housing Needs Assessment

The three components of the Housing Needs Assessment which must be recorded on the Housing Needs Report Form with appropriate verification attached are:

### Individual Needs Assessment

The individual needs of Registrants will be assessed against the following Needs Criteria:

* Homeless/At Risk
* Barriers to Accessing Private Housing
* Automatic Entry Criteria for Category 2.

For Definitions please refer to Community Housing Eligibility Policy and Procedures.

### Accommodation History Assessment

The Registrant's accommodation history will be identified and assessed including:

* Current accommodation, including how long the Registrant can stay and/or why the accommodation is unsuitable; and
* Previous accommodation where the Registrant has lived over the last 3 years including reasons why the Registrant has left.

### Housing Options Assessment

The reasons why a Registrant has been unable to access or maintain other housing options that they have tried to access (such as private rental) will be recorded.

It is expected that Community Housing Organisations provide registrants with access to appropriate information relating to the full range of housing services and assistance available to them, which may be appropriate to their needs.

### Assessing the Needs of Victims of Fires, Floods and Other Disasters

Victims of fire, flood or other disasters are to be interviewed as part of the Housing Needs Assessment where this has not been carried out by an external support agency.

Where the victim owns or is buying the home, or is a private rental tenant, confirmation of either ownership or tenancy of the damaged/destroyed property is required.

Information on the extent of damage to the property and personal belongings must be obtained (and confirmed through inspection by the housing provider and/or checking with the Fire Brigade, Police, or other appropriate agency), together with an estimate of the time required for reconstruction/renovation and re- occupation.

For property owners, details of insurance cover and in particular, whether or not the policies include compensation for accommodation costs must be ascertained and verified directly with the insurance company.

Any relevant medical or social problems existing before or resulting from the disaster must also be taken into consideration.

Prior to approving a flood/fire/disaster victim for Category 1, all other accommodation alternatives including the following must be considered:

* Private sector rental (particularly if accommodation costs are covered by insurance);
* Family assistance;
* Emergency or other short-term housing options.

## Assessing the Needs of Registrants Being Released from Prison

Prisoners may register their interest in Community Housing while in prison.

Registrations of Interest from prisoners who satisfy Basic eligibility criteria will be accepted and registered without proof of income or identity and approved for Category 3. Prisoners may be assessed for a higher Category up to 3 months immediately prior to their release, subject to written confirmation from the prison of the prisoner's release date.

An interview is not required to be undertaken by the housing provider if a completed Housing Needs Report Form is provided to Housing SA by the referring agency or support worker. The housing provider will liaise with the referring agency/support worker if additional information or clarification is required.

Prior to approving a customer being released from prison for Category 1 or 2, the following other accommodation options must be considered:

* Private rental sector (including Housing SA's Private Rental Assistance Program)
* Family assistance
* Emergency or other short-term housing options.

The referring agency or support worker is responsible for advising any changes in the prisoner's circumstances including a change in the prisoner's release date. Where there is a change of circumstances, the Category status will be reviewed. Where the prisoner's release date is delayed, the registration may be deferred (for further information see the *Community Housing Registration and Vacancy Management Policy and Procedures* on [www.sa.gov.au/communityhousing](http://www.sa.gov.au/communityhousing)).

## Where Ongoing Support is Required for a Successful Tenancy Outcome

Where the Housing Needs Assessment indicates the Registrant (or a member of their household) requires extensive and/or ongoing support from health, welfare or other support organisations or professional individuals to maintain a successful tenancy outcome, the organisation undertaking the Assessment will check that any support services required are available in the housing location indicated by the Registrant on their Registration of Interest Form.

If the required services are not available in the preferred locations, a more suitable location should be recommended and area preferences on the customer Registration adjusted accordingly and updated within the Community Housing Customer Register.

# Outcome of the Housing Needs Assessments

Upon completion of the Housing Needs Assessment (or upon verification of an assessment provided by an external support agency), the housing provider/agency will assign a Need Category to the Registrant.

## Assignment to Category 1

Registrants placed in Category 1 are deemed to be in urgent housing need with long term barriers to accessing or maintaining private housing options.

Where a member of the Registrant Household meets:

* At least one of the Homeless/At Risk needs criteria AND
* At least one access barrier to private housing AND
* The Accommodation History and/or Housing Options assessments indicate that one or more members of the household have a housing need for which private housing is unsuitable in the long term;

Then the Registrant/Registrant Household is deemed to have Category 1 needs.

Where the household member with the Category 1 needs is not a member of the Principal Household, the Registrant Household will only be eligible for Category 1 if the member is able to show that they normally reside with the Principal Household, i.e. they:

* have an ongoing history of residency with the Principal Household (12 months or more immediately prior to the date the Registration was submitted), OR
* are related to a member of the Principal Household, OR
* were directed or requested to reside with a member of the Principal Household (e.g. bail conditions, carer relationships etc), OR
* can show that they are currently registered by Centrelink at the same address as a member of the Principal Household.

Where the household member with the Category 1 needs does not normally reside with the Principal Household, they could lodge their own Registration, provided they are assessed as being capable of maintaining an independent tenancy.

## Assignment to Category 2

Registrants placed in Category 2 are not considered to be currently in urgent housing need but have long term barriers to accessing or maintaining private housing options.

To be placed in Category 2, the Registrant Household must either:

* Meet at least one access barrier to private housing AND
* The Accommodation History and/or Housing Options assessments must indicate that one or more members of the household have a housing need for which private housing is unsuitable in the long term.

**OR**

* Meet at least one of the following Category 2 automatic entry criteria:
  + Recipient of Disability Support Pension (DSP)
  + Recipient of Total and Permanently Incapacitated Pension (TPI)
  + Refugee in Australia for less than 2 years.

Registrants who meet automatic entry criteria for Category 2 are not required to undergo a Housing Needs Assessment unless it is considered that they may have a higher level of need i.e. Category 1 needs.

Where the household member with the Category 2 needs is not a member of the Principal Household, the Registrant Household will only be eligible for Category 2 if the member is able to show that they normally reside with the Principal Household, i.e. they:

* have an ongoing history of residency with the Principal Household (12 months or more immediately prior to the date the Registration was submitted), OR
* are related to a member of the Principal Household, OR
* were directed or requested to reside with a member of the Principal Household (e.g. bail conditions, carer relationships etc), OR
* can show that they are currently registered by Centrelink at the same address as a member of the Principal Household.

Where the household member with the Category 2 needs does not normally reside with the Principal Household, they could lodge their own Registration, provided they are assessed as being capable of maintaining an independent tenancy.

## Assignment to Category 3

Registrants are assigned to Category 3 if they are not considered to have urgent housing needs or long-term barriers to other housing options. In other words, if they do not meet Category 1 or 2 criteria, they will be assigned Category 3 status.

# CGA Eligibility Criteria

All potential tenants will participate in an Intake and Assessment interview. Generally, these interviews are conducted by a Case Worker and a Tenancy representative.

Interview process will explore the registrant's financial status (affordability, ability to pay rent), previous housing experiences, ability to live independently and maintain the home to a reasonable standard and ability to live in a cohesive community environment.

Those registrants seeking supportive housing, will be assessed based on need, willingness to engage in the supportive housing program and where required - suitability to live in high density housing environment.

Registrants will be selected based on their suitability for a vacant dwelling and existing community mix which promotes good neighbour relations.

Potential tenants seeking NRAS housing (no support, affordable housing only) will be managed by the Property Manager, who will be responsible for ensuring base eligibility requirements are met.

If a registrant does not meet the CGA eligibility criteria, the Team Leader- Support will notify the registrant. This registrant will still be registered on the CHCR.

For Registrants applying for housing under the Common Ground Port Augusta program they must also be a resident of Port Augusta for a minimum of three months. This can be waivered under exceptional circumstances.

## Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP) Criteria

* CGA manages 5 properties within the NBESP program-
* 2 x generic properties where further eligibility criteria does not apply
* 2 x Mental Health properties- program information can be found at: <https://www.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/23165/ProceduresMentalHealthSupportedHousing-Approved-2010-09-17.pdf>
* 1 x Homelessness property- program information can be found at: <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/housing-property-and-land/housing/emergency-shelter-and-homelessness/homelessness-services-providers/homelessness-supportive-housing-program>

The Mental Health and Homelessness properties have support packages attached to the properties, and this support is provided by external agencies determined and set by the State Government.

# Definitions

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| General Tenancy | Persons who meet the SAHA Base Eligibility Criteria and the income, assets and/or needs test as defined in the Community Housing Eligibility Policy. (CHCR Category 1 registrants) |
| Supported Tenancy | Persons who meet the income, assets and/or needs test AND have an approved package of support as defined in the Community housing Eligibility Policy. (CHCR Category 1+ registrants) |
| Affordable Tenancy | Persons who meet the SAHA Base Eligibility Criteria and the prescribed income tests as defined in the Community Housing Eligibility Policy. (CHCR Category 1, 2, 3 registrants) |
| General Rent | Is assessed for General Tenancy household types at a rate of 30% of gross non CRA income and all CRA Income available to that household. Also known as a reduced rent. |
| Supported Rent | Is applied for Supported Tenancy households at a rate of 25% of gross non CRA income and all CRA income available to that household. Also known as a reduced rent. |
| Affordable Rent NRAS | Is assessed for Affordable Tenancy household types at the Maximum Rent level. Affordability will be determined at a rate of no more than 40% of gross income. |
| Market Rent | Independent valuation carried out by a licensed real estate agent to determine the rent payable in the wider rental market for similar housing in similar locations. |
| Maximum Rent | Is the maximum rent payable by a tenant set at 74.9% of the Market Rent. |
| Minimum Rent | Where a household occupant chooses to or is in receipt of an income less than what that household occupant is entitled to from Centrelink a rent based on the current rate of Austudy/Abstudy applicable to the household occupant's circumstances will be used as the basis of rent assessment. |

# Allocation Process

Please refer to the CGA Allocations Policy for allocations information.

# Assessments

CGA will access registrants from the CHCR based on their category of need.

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| --- | --- |
| Category 1 | Registrants placed in Category 1 are deemed to be in urgent housing need with long term barriers to accessing or maintaining private housing options. |
| Category 2 | Registrants placed in Category 2 are not considered to be currently in urgent housing need but have long term barriers to accessing or maintaining private housing options. |
| Category 3 | Registrants are assigned to Category 3 if they are not considered to have urgent housing needs or long-term barriers to other housing options. In other words, if they do not meet Category 1 or 2 criteria, they will be assigned Category 3 status. |

# References:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| legislation & Standards | Related INternal documents |
| * NRSCH 1: Tenant and Housing Services1: The community housing provider is fair, transparent and responsive in delivering housing assistance to tenants, residents and other clients * NRSCH 1: Tenant and Housing Services1c: Setting and meeting relevant housing service standards. |  |

## Glossary

[add terms specific to this policy/delete section if not appropriate]



**English:**

If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call **Housing Choices Australia** on **1300 312 447**. Our business hours are **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

You can also visit the TIS National website for translated information about the service TIS National provides. Visit: www.tisnational.gov.au

**Arabic:**

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مترجم، يرجى الاتصال ﺒ TIS الوطنية على الرقم 131 450 وأطلب منهم الاتصال ﺒ   
**Housing Choices Australia** على هاتف رقم **1300 312 447**. ساعات العمل الخاصة بنا   
**9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

يمكنك أيضا زيارة موقع TIS الوطنية للحصول على معلومات حول الخدمات التي تقدمها TIS الوطنية. قم بزيارة: www.tisnational.gov.au

**Farsi (alt Persian):**

اگر به مترجم نیاز دارید، لطفا با شماره تلفن تیس نشنال131 450 تماس بگیرید و از آنها بخواهید با   
**Housing Choices Australia** به شماره **1300 312 447** تماس بگیرند. ساعت کاری ما **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday** است.

شما همچنین می توانید به وب سایت تیس نشنال برای اطلاعات در مورد خدماتی که تیس نشنال فراهم می کند مراجعه کنید. به www.tisnational.gov.au

**Vietnamese:**

Nếu quý vị cần thông dịch viên, xin hãy gọi cho Dịch vụ Thông Phiên dịch Quốc gia (TIS Quốc gia) theo số 131 450và yêu cầu họ gọi cho **Housing Choices Australia** theo số **1300 312 447**. Giờ làm việc của chúng tôi là **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

Quý vị cũng có thể vào thăm trang mạng của TIS Quốc gia để có thông tin về các dịch vụ mà TIS Quốc gia cung cấp. Hãy vào thăm www.tisnational.gov.au

**Somali:**

Haddii aad u baahan tahay turjumaan, fadlan ka wac TIS National taleefanka 131 450 waxaad ka codsataa inay kuu wacaan **Housing Choices Australia** iyo **1300 312 447**. Saacadaha Shaqadu waa **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

Waxaad kaloo booqan kartaa website-ka TIS National ee macluumaadka turjuman oo ku saabsan adeegga TIS National ay bixiso. Ka eeg: www.tisnational.gov.au

**Simplified Chinese:**

如果您需要口译员，请拨打TIS National 的电话131 450，请他们打电话给**Housing Choices Australia**，电话号码： **1300 312 447**。我们的营业 时间是 **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**。

你也可以访问TIS National 的网站，了解TIS National提供的服务。网址： www.tisnational.gov.au

**Traditional Chinese:**

若你需要口譯員，請撥打TIS National電話131 450並請他們轉接 **Housing Choices Australia** 的電話 **1300 312 447**。我們的工作時間是 **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**。

你也可以瀏覽TIS National 網站瞭解TIS National 的服務資訊，網址：www.tisnational.gov.au

**Spanish:**

Si necesita un intérprete, por favor llame a TIS National en el 131 450ypida que lo comuniquen con **Housing Choices Australia** en el **1300 312 447**. Nuestro horario de oficina es **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

También puede visitar el sitio web de TIS National para obtener información acerca de los servicios que provee TIS National. Visite www.tisnational.gov.au

**Italian:**

Se hai bisogno di un interprete, telefona a TIS National al numero 131 450 e chiedi di chiamare **Housing Choices Australia** al **1300 312 447**. I nostri orari d’ufficio sono **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

Puoi visitare anche il sito web TIS National per informazioni tradotte sul servizio che TIS National fornisce. Visita il sito: www.tisnational.gov.au

**For other languages, access to an interpreter is available by contacting Housing Choices Australia on 1300 312 447.**