



Fact Sheet 4: Applying for a Transfer with ACT Public Housing After or During Domestic Violence

1. Overview

If you are a Housing ACT tenant and you need to move properties because you have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence, you can apply for a transfer. This factsheet provides information on the process of applying for a transfer.

2. How do I get a transfer?

The application process for a transfer is the same as the process for applying for housing as a new applicant. The same form is used for both new applications and applications to transfer properties. You can collect an Application Kit from Housing ACT or you can arrange for it to be sent to you by calling 133 427.

You will need to complete the application form and provide the required supporting documentation, which includes:

- Proof of identity
- Proof of income (copies of bank statements)
- Proof of residency
- Support letters and evidence about your circumstances (for example, medical evidence of a health condition, support letters from a domestic violence service, police reports, court orders, or letters from a support worker).

It is important that you provide reasons about why you need a transfer, and especially why your current property is unsuitable. The reasons, support letters and evidence you provide will determine how urgent Housing ACT thinks your need for a transfer is, and which waiting list they put you on.

Housing ACT will consider putting you on the priority list if you are experiencing domestic violence, especially if you have evidence that raises concerns about your safety.

3. What if I need crisis accommodation while I am waiting for a transfer?

If you need crisis accommodation while Housing ACT process your transfer application, Housing ACT can work with you and community service providers to organise accommodation. This can be done in a meeting with Housing ACT, you and appropriate community organisations such as the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS).

You can also contact domestic violence crisis providers on your own, or with the assistance of your support worker.

4. What if I have a debt with Housing ACT?

If you are experiencing domestic violence, having a debt with Housing ACT will NOT prevent you from getting transferred. However, to be put on the Priority Housing list, you may need to work with a tenancy support service to start repaying the debt or challenge the debt if you do not think it is owed. It is often a good idea to start repaying the debt even if you are seeking a review of it to ensure that the debt does not become a barrier to being housed. If you are in this situation, we recommend that you obtain some legal advice.

5. What evidence do I need to show that I am experiencing domestic violence?

Under Housing ACT's Domestic and Family Violence Policy, you need to provide:

ONE of the following documents:

- A current DVO from any Australian State or Territory
- A letter from
 - The police
 - Office for Children, Youth and Family Support
 - DVCS
 - Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
 - YWCA
 - A recognised domestic violence/homelessness shelter.

OR

TWO letters from a:

- Solicitor
- Community or government support worker
- Social worker
- Doctor
- Psychologist
- GP
- Drug and alcohol service.

6. What happens to my transfer application?

If your application is approved you will receive a letter from Housing ACT stating the area, number of bedrooms and needs category (or waiting list) of your application.

Transfer applications use the same three needs categories as new applications:

- **Priority Housing:** People with exceptional, urgent and critical needs.
- **High Needs Housing:** People with significant needs.
- **Standard Housing:** People with significant affordability issues in paying private rent.

A Housing ACT officer will go through your application to decide whether you should go on the High Needs or Standard List. You will be advised of the decision in writing.

If you have been put on the High Needs list, you should check with your assessing officer whether you are being considered for the Priority Housing list, and whether they want you to provide any additional information.

Once the Housing ACT Officer decides that you should be considered for the Priority List, they will send your application to a panel called the Multi-Disciplinary Panel (MDP), along with a recommendation about what they think should happen to your application. The MDP will decide whether to put you on the Priority List.

How long you will have to wait before Housing ACT offers you a property will depend on what your requirements are (such as which areas you have nominated and how many bedrooms you need). The Priority Housing list generally has the shortest waiting time, but it can still take a long time to be transferred.

Disclaimer

This factsheet contains general information available at the time of publication. It does not constitute legal advice. If you have a specific legal problem please contact Canberra Community Law's advice line on 02 6218 7900.

Canberra Community Law is entirely independent of Housing ACT. All assistance is free.