



# Youth Housing Navigation Supports

## SERVICE PROVIDER INFORMATION PACKAGE



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## OVERVIEW

There are four stages when applying for Youth Housing Navigation Supports, all of which have been created to establish a low barrier provision to youth in need of housing support services. Please note these four stages below.



### Application & Eligibility

Access to the Youth Housing Navigator Program begins with an initial application. The application is open to all young people who meet the criteria listed below:

- Youth between the ages of 16-30 years' old
- Living in Toronto and GTA (Metro Toronto, Inner suburbs of Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke)
- Homeless or precariously housed (Housed but often struggling or unable to meet the daily necessities of life; such as food and clothing security, energy costs, child care and other expenses that contribute to and effect health and well-being – Defined by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012)

All applications will be completed online and submitted by email to the navigator for review @ Will McCarty: [wmccarty@woodgreen.org](mailto:wmccarty@woodgreen.org)

### Assessment Process

Every application will be reviewed by the team based on program capacity. Please note that we do not currently hold waitlists so if you apply and there is no availability at the point of application, we will offer alternative suggestions but you will need to reapply to the YHN program as space becomes available.

Once we have received and reviewed an application, the navigator will set up a meeting with the prospective client to conduct a screening assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to better understand level of need, urgency and whether the young person is eligible for subsidy-based support. In rare instances, we may find that an individual is not a good fit for the program, at



which point we will assist in supporting the young person to identify better options more suitable for their particular circumstances.

## Reasons for Redirecting a Referral

There are times when receiving a referral or completing an assessment that the program comes to the determination that we are not a good fit for the needs of the individual seeking support. Although this is not an exhaustive list of reasons, this section provides a couple examples that are common to our program.

The most common reason for redirecting a referral is what we call a “discharge referral”. These are referrals where a hospital, emergency shelter or even prison try to draw on the resources of the program to prevent institutional discharges into homelessness on a short runway. Unfortunately, the YHN program does not have access to housing stock, making the program a bad fit for someone who requires immediate access to housing with very limited planning time.

This example segways nicely into our second example, which deals with a lack of income to secure and sustain housing. Individuals applying for the YHN program must have an existing source of income in order to identify, secure and sustain housing. The program does offer subsidy-support, but this support must be coupled with the young persons’ own income revenue.

If the young person is being discharged from hospital, emergency shelter or prison with limited or no income, and has 30 days or more before being released, the program will make discretionary intakes with the explicit understanding that these are navigation-based supports only, with referral and attachment being the primary focus. These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

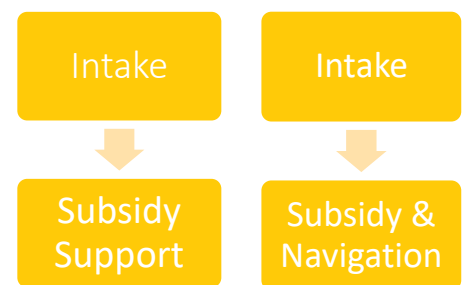
## Intake Process

Once an assessment is complete, the navigator meets with the team to assess level of need and determine intake and caseload capacity. It is important during this time that the young person and the referral source have provided enough information to assist the team in making an informed decision.

## Choosing a Stream

Choosing a stream depends on the needs of the applicant. Typically, subsidy-only-based-support is accessed by clients who are:

1. Already housed but experiencing some precarity
2. Working or receiving consistent, dependable income
3. Require minimal support staying on track; and
4. Require stabilizing increase to existing income to support education/employment pursuits on a short timeline





Clients seeking subsidy and navigation support are typically:

1. Street homeless, couch surfing or marginally housed with severe precarity
2. May or may not be working or in school
3. Require significant support to access needed supports and services to get on track
4. Require stabilizing income in order to secure housing while goal setting

There may be times when an intake begins with navigation support and includes subsidy partial way into programming and there may also be times when it does not. Decisions about what stream best suits the need will be based both on program capacity and funding.

## **Basic Expectations**

Regardless of which stream is chosen, every young person receiving support from the YHN program will be expected to engage the navigator in a Service Plan. The point of creating a service plan is to establish a sense of purpose, a destination with clearly defined goals.

### Employment and Financial Independence

All clients are expected to be actively looking for work during the entirety of the contract period. Each service plan related employment may look different based on the needs and circumstances of the individual, but it is expected that clients receiving support are actively pursuing employment goals, with a view toward financial security and relative independence.

### Regular and Consistent Engagement

For youth receiving subsidy and navigation support, the expectation is that we are meeting virtually or in person a minimum of once every 2 weeks to follow up on service plans, to ensure that youth are accessing needed resources and supports and are moving toward longer-term stability. For youth receiving subsidy support only, the expectation is that they are meeting virtually or in person at minimum once a month to ensure that we are staying on track related to self-identified goals and overall stability.

### Community/Home Settings

A significant aspect of our work is in community. Clients' should expect to meet with the navigator at least once a month (if not more) both in a community setting and, in their homes, rather than in an office setting. The navigator does not visit homes to inspect or interrogate client-privacy but to build deeper connection in a safe, familiar environment. It is important for clients to expect this request intermittently.

### Mandatory Seminars

All youth who request subsidy support will automatically be enrolled in a one-time mandatory housing seminar or workshop run by the program.

\*It is within the discretion of the program to withhold or terminate subsidy if these expectations are not being met.



## Subsidy Supports

Rental subsidy will be determined by the Youth Housing Navigator based on two core measures

1. The ratio of rent to income – clients accessing the rent subsidy must pay a minimum of 30% of their income toward rent and a maximum of 60% (discretion to augment this ratio lives with management)
2. The applicant household’s rent must not exceed the maximum rent for Toronto under the LICO. See table below for a breakdown of maximum rent payment based on the number of householders. Please note, these rental amounts must take into consideration utility fees. For example, if a client is renting a unit that is \$1550 + Hydro (\$~130/month), then the client may not qualify.

Number of Household Members	Maximum Rent (Including Utilities Cost)
1	\$1,413
2	\$1,588
3	\$2,410
4-5	\$2,571
6 or more	\$2,700

### Required Documentation and Proof of Income

In order to receive ongoing subsidy for housing support, clients must meet the basic documentation requirements for this provision. Applicants are responsible for providing:

1. Last notice of assessment or 3 months of payment stubs or 3 months of bank statements
2. Intent to Rent; and
3. Standard Ontario Lease Agreement or Occupancy Agreement
4. Monthly rent receipts (prior to payment schedule renewal) – *please be advised that the signature on the lease or occupancy agreement must match the signature on the rent receipt*

### Subsidy Programming and Direct Payment

Applicants approved for subsidy support will be required to sign a consent form allowing the program to set up payment between WoodGreen Community Services and the home owner, landlord or property manager who signed the initial lease and occupancy agreement. All payments will be made directly to the landlord.

### Subsidy Programming and Geographical Catchment

Eligible applicants will be required to live in Metropolitan Toronto or the inner suburbs of the GTA. The greater Toronto area for purposes of this program include Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough. Discretionary extensions to the program in areas such as Brampton, Mississauga



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and Markham will be made on a case-by-cases basis, both for those entering the program seeking housing in those areas or for those clients who were living in catchment but moved while in the program.

\*Please note: clients who move while collecting subsidy are required to immediately report their new address, along with the contact information for the new landlord and the required documentation for the new housing arrangement (*e.g. intent to rent, lease and/or occupancy agreement*). Failure to report address changes may result in misallocation of funds, delays in payment to the new landlord, all of which might jeopardize the stability of the new unit.

### **Renewal and Early Termination of Subsidy Support**

The Rental Support Payment Schedule clearly lays out the type, and timing of rental supports you have access to over the course of 3 months. After this time, you will have the opportunity to review the Payment Schedule with the Youth Housing Navigator to decide if ongoing financial support is required. Subsidy allocation and changes to the amount of subsidy will be reassessed every three months. Discussion regarding changes to the amount of subsidy will be based on changes in income earned. The housing navigator may during these periods of renewal request updated pay stubs or bank statements. Failure to provide required documentation at any point throughout the provision of subsidy may result in early termination of the supports contract. *Imminent termination of subsidy will be provided with a minimum of 60-days' notice.*

\*All supports contracts are valid for up to (1) one year or as late as March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, whichever comes first.

### **Graduation**

It is important to note that the housing navigation supports program is a housing program FIRST! Its primary purpose and function is to support the identification, securing and sustaining of youth housing. As a scope of practice, the job of the navigator outside of housing navigation and supports is to ensure that systems and services that might support the client to remain housed are explored, and where the program seeks to attach the client to those particular services. Clients who are not currently on program subsidy and have sustained their housing for three months or more will not exceed a graduation date more than 3 months after being housed. If there are additional needs that have not yet been met, these are captured in the graduation plan as outstanding referrals and supported by the YHN with warm transfers.

### **Windows for Making Referrals**

The program has space for roughly 30 youth at any given time. When a window opens, the manager or YHN will send out a broad email to referral partners letting them know that a space is open and how many referrals can be made. When those spaces fill, the window will close until there is more availability.



## Questions

If you have any questions regarding the program, please do not hesitate to contact either the Youth Housing Navigator (contact information at the top of the document) or the program manager at [ewexler@woodgreen.org](mailto:ewexler@woodgreen.org)