

Rentstart – Helping people rent privately



July 2008

Fact Sheet



It is illegal for an officer of Housing NSW to ask for money or favours or other benefits of any kind in exchange for helping you with your housing needs.

It is also illegal for you or anyone else to offer money or favours or other benefits of any kind to an officer of Housing NSW in exchange for helping you. If you have any information regarding this, please contact Housing NSW's Business Assurance Unit on 1800 806 206. Housing NSW may refuse the provision of further housing services to anyone who has engaged or sought to engage in corrupt or illegal conduct.

What is Rentstart?

The Rentstart scheme provides financial assistance to eligible clients to move to other accommodation in the private rental market. You must find the accommodation yourself at a rental you can afford to pay.

There are three levels of assistance that can be provided under the Rentstart scheme:

1. Rentstart Standard can provide 75% of the bond (usually three weeks rent for an unfurnished property). This is the standard assistance for Rentstart. Key money or a security deposit can be provided for low cost accommodation, such as caravan parks, boarding houses and hostels where the accommodation is likely to be sustainable for at least 12 months.
2. Rentstart-Plus can provide the Standard assistance plus two weeks advance rent. Up to 100% of bond assistance may be approved in special circumstances where clients are without financial resources and are unable to contribute to their own establishment costs.
3. Rentstart-Tenancy Assistance can provide up to four weeks for rental arrears to secure an existing tenancy. This form of assistance cannot be provided more than once in a 12 month period. Only two weeks rental arrears can be provided where a client has received four weeks rental arrears in the previous two year period.

Who is not eligible for Rentstart Standard?

- Clients who are moving into, or between, public housing or community housing
- Clients who have made a declaration on the Application for Rentstart that is proven to be false. They are excluded from assistance for a two year period
- Clients who have been assisted with a bond in the last 12 months and the Housing NSW Rentstart contribution has not been returned at the end of the

tenancy. If there is no special reason for the tenancy to be terminated by the client, future bond assistance will be limited to 50% of the bond.

Please tick the boxes which meet your circumstances

Am I eligible for Rentstart assistance?

To be eligible for Rentstart you must meet all public housing eligibility criteria. This includes the following:

- meet the income eligibility criteria. Table 1 on page 2 sets out these limits
- be an Australian citizen, have permanent residency status, hold a Temporary Protection Visa or be an asylum seeker who has lodged an application for permanent residency
- be a resident of New South Wales
- generally be over 18 years of age.

In addition you must:

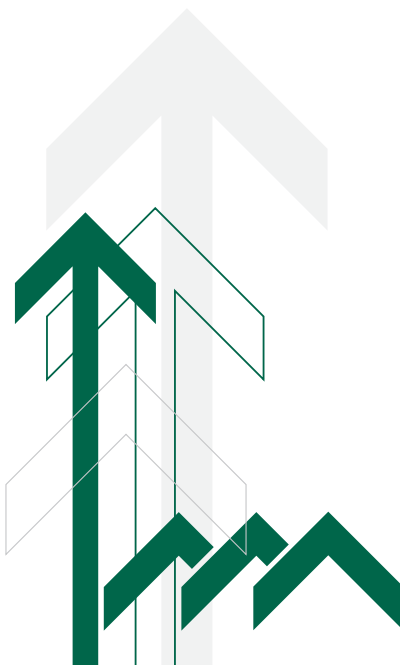
- have less than \$1,000 in savings
- be able to show that you will be able to afford the private rental
- not be a current property owner
- intend to remain in the particular location for up to 12 months.

What are the income limits?

For information on Housing NSW current limits refer to the *Income Eligibility Limits* fact sheet which is available from a Client Service Officer at your local Housing NSW office or the Housing NSW website.

What happens if I have expenses due to a disability, medical condition or injury?

From 10 July 2006 if you or a household member has an enduring disability, medical condition or permanent injury that results in significant ongoing financial costs you may qualify for the Disability or Exceptional Disability Allowance. This means that any ongoing medical expenses may be considered when assessing your eligibility for Rentstart.



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What information do I need to provide to receive Rentstart?

When you apply for Rentstart assistance you will need to bring all of the following documents:

- proof of identity (such as a birth certificate, driver's licence, passport, healthcare card)
- proof of income for any member of your household who receives an income (such as a letter from Centrelink, wage slip, bank book or statement showing Centrelink payments)
- proof of current bank balance
- passport or current visa (if you are not an Australian citizen).

What assistance can I receive with Rentstart Standard?

If you are eligible for Rentstart Standard you will receive up to 75% of the bond. If you are moving into a caravan park, boarding house or hostel you can receive assistance with key money or a security deposit.

How can I be eligible for Rentstart-Plus?

To be eligible for Rentstart-Plus you need to show Housing NSW that you have difficulties with your present housing, such as the following:

- homeless or about to become homeless
- fleeing domestic violence
- being subjected to violence, harassment, or abuse
- residing in a refuge
- under 18 years and at risk
- have HIV/AIDS
- have a disability
- have just been released from jail
- are a refugee or asylum seeker.

What additional information do I need to provide to get Rentstart-Plus?

- medical certificates, letters of support from community organisations
- current rent receipt (if applicable)
- supporting letters or other documentation that confirms your current housing situation.

What assistance can I receive with Rentstart-Plus?

With Rentstart-Plus you will be eligible to receive Rentstart Standard. You may also be eligible for advance rent. The additional assistance you may receive will depend on your housing circumstances.

I am behind in my rent payments. Can you help?

You will need to provide proof of the rental arrears and evidence that if Housing NSW paid the arrears, you could continue to pay the rent. You need to provide the following documents:

- a copy of the Notice of Termination, or an order by the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal about your tenancy
- proof that you have tried to negotiate the repayment of the rent arrears with your landlord/agent
- evidence that you will be allowed to remain in the accommodation if you pay the arrears.

What do I do now I have completed this assessment sheet?

Based on your assessment of your entitlement, if you meet the criteria for Rentstart Standard you will be eligible for up to 75% of the bond or receive assistance for key money or a security deposit.

If you have ticked some of the boxes for the Rentstart-Plus you may be eligible for some additional assistance.



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Interpreter Services

If you have difficulty understanding English, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

The Translating and Interpreting Service will telephone Housing NSW for you at no cost.

If you are hearing impaired, please contact the TTY Service on 1800 628 310.

Arabic

خدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفهية المجانية
اتصل على الرقم 131 450

Chinese

免費的翻譯傳譯服務
致電 131 450

Russian

Служба бесплатного письменного и устного перевода
Позвоните по номеру 131 450

Spanish

Servicio Gratuito de Traducción e Interpretación
Llame al 131 450

Vietnamese

Dịch vụ Phiên dịch và Thông dịch Miễn phí
Điện thoại 131 450

If you have already found accommodation, you need the landlord/real estate agent to complete the attached form to provide Housing NSW with confirmation that they are prepared to rent you this accommodation.

Housing NSW is committed to paying Rentstart/Rentstart-Plus for services provided by ABN (Australian Business Number) registered companies, including real estate agents and landlords. You must obtain the company's ABN (if they have one) and include it with your application for Rentstart.

You then need to contact your local Housing NSW office to make arrangements for an interview. At that time your circumstances will be formally assessed and if you are eligible you will be provided with the assistance. Please bring this assessment sheet with you to the interview.

More information

For more information you can:

- visit your local office, Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm (closed public holidays and 8.30am - 1pm on Wednesdays). Office hours may vary in some locations.
- phone Housing NSW on **Freecall 1800 629 212**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- phone the Aboriginal Enquiry Line on Freecall 1800 355 740, Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm (excluding public holidays)
- go to the Housing NSW website www.housing.nsw.gov.au

