

PURPOSE

Evolve Housing Vic Limited (EHVL) introduced the Tenant Employment Support Scheme (TESS) to encourage a Tenant or any other person in the household who is 18 or older, into paid employment whether they are starting work for the first time or re-entering the workforce after a break.

POLICY REFERENCE	VHS010.1
POLICY OWNER	General Manager, Resident Services
APPROVED BY	Evolve Housing Ltd CEO
APPROVAL DATE	1 Mar 2022
REVIEW DATE	1 Mar 2025

TENANT EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SCHEME POLICY

1. SCOPE

This policy applies to any Resident of an EHVL social housing property who is 18 years of age or older.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

EHVL is committed to supporting Residents who are starting work for the first time or re-entering the workforce after a break. EHVL offers a Tenant Employment Support Scheme (TESS) which is designed to encourage and financially assist these individuals.

TESS is only available to a Tenant or any other person in the household (ie a Resident) who is 18 or older. A Resident commencing employment is entitled to a grace period of up to twenty six (26) weeks without their rental subsidy being adjusted based on the new income level.

The maximum adjustment period is 26 weeks during a 12 month period (1 July to 30 June) regardless of who within the household commences employment. TESS can be given in several short grace periods during a financial year where the employment starts and ends, or the Resident who is eligible for the Scheme changes.

This document outlines EHVL's policy for determining eligibility and approving applications to the Tenant Employment Support Scheme.

2.1 Eligibility guidelines for TESS

A rental subsidy is based on the combined income of all household members. When a household member starts to receive income after commencing employment, the rental subsidy must be reassessed. However EHVL's Tenant Employment Support Scheme offers a grace period of up to twenty six (26) weeks during a financial year, before the rental subsidy is adjusted to take into account the Resident's new income.

TESS support can only be provided if the following eligibility criteria are met:

- The TESS applicant is a Resident who is 18 years of age or older.
- The TESS applicant completes an Application for Rental Subsidy Form and provides evidence of their income (even if their income details are provided through CCeS – the electronic Centrelink Income Confirmation service)
- The required documentation is submitted to EHVL within 28 days of the Resident starting paid employment, which includes casual, part-time, full-time or seasonal work, or self-employment
- A rental subsidy is already being received by the Tenant

- The TESS applicant did not have wages as a source of income before they started the job (ie they were not already in paid employment)
- The increase in household income is not due to the TESS applicant moving from one type of employment to another, including for example, moving from part-time to full-time work
- The TESS applicant is not receiving a statutory benefit or allowance which would make them ineligible for TESS support.

2.2 TESS approval

If approved, the TESS applicant will be eligible for a grace period of up to 26 weeks within a financial year, before EHVL adjusts their rent to take into account the change in household income due to the applicant starting a paying job.

EHVL will advise the TESS applicant in writing of the outcome of their TESS application. If approved, the existing rent amount will remain unchanged for a period of up to twenty six weeks (ie the TESS support period).

At the conclusion of the TESS support period, the Tenant's rent will be reassessed based on the amount of the new household income. EHVL will advise the Tenant in writing of their new rent amount and the effective date.

EHVL will consider taking action if an individual is observed to be working outside the scope of this policy.

2.3 Review of decision and opportunity to Appeal

If a Resident disagrees with a decision EHVL has made that they believe may affect their tenancy, they should first discuss their concerns with a Housing Manager. If the Resident continues to be dissatisfied after speaking with a Housing Manager, they have the right to lodge an Appeal which will be assessed in accordance with the EHVL Appeals Policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

- Appeal - a disagreement by a Resident with a decision made by EHVL that affects their tenancy, and which the Resident has requested be reviewed
- Centrelink Confirmation eServices (CCeS) -Income Confirmation - CCeS is an electronic service that allows you to authorise Centrelink to provide or confirm your Centrelink details, including your income, directly to/with us.
- Partner – the person an individual is married to, or in a registered or de facto relationship with, as defined from time to time by Centrelink.
- Resident – a person who resides on a permanent basis in a social housing property which is owned or managed by EHVL under a Residential Tenancy Agreement (includes a Tenant)
- Tenant - a person who signs the Residential Tenancy Agreement with EHVL and who has certain rights and obligations under that Agreement. (A Tenant is also a Resident.)

4. RELATED RESOURCES

- EHVL Appeals Policy
- EHVL Application for Rental Subsidy Form
- EHVL Rent (Social Housing) Policy
- Residential Tenancy Agreement
- www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink

This policy is subject to change from time to time at the discretion of EHVL. Any approvals required under this policy will be granted in accordance with the Evolve Housing group Delegations of Authority Policy. If you have any specific questions regarding this policy, please contact EHVL on 1800 693 865 or email your enquiry to myevolve@evolvehousing.com.au.

5. VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	Date Approved	Author	Key Changes
1.0	1/03/2022	GAL	Policy adopted