

Reasons for Decision:

Order #AP1617-0533

The appellant appealed that the application for Rent Assist benefits was denied.

The appellant applied for Rent Assist on <date removed>. Eligibility was calculated based on household size. The appellant's income from the appellant's 2015 income tax return was used in the calculation. This amount was <amount removed> which is in excess of the cut-off. Therefore the program advised the appellant that the appellant was not eligible for benefits at this time.

The appellant stated at the hearing that when the appellant had previously applied for Rent Assist the appellant's current income was used to calculate eligibility. The appellant is currently attending school full-time and collecting Employment Insurance benefits until school is completed. The appellant's spouse is not currently working. The appellant stated that their current income is significantly lower than it was in 2015 and they need the rent assist now while the appellant is going to school, but may not need it after July 2, 2017 as the appellant should be working at that time.

The program representative explained that the Rent Assist Program underwent significant changes effective December 1, 2015. One of the legislative changes that was made was that applications are based on either the prior year's income, or two years prior depending on if the application is received before or after July 1. The program no longer has the ability to assess eligibility based on current income, even in circumstances when income has dropped significantly.

After carefully considering the written and verbal information the Board has determined that the appellant's eligibility for the Rent Assist Program has been calculated in accordance with the Regulation. The Regulation is very specific in how the formula is to be calculated. The Regulation does not allow for increases based on either the amount of rent actually paid or the amount of household income that is currently being earned. Therefore the decision of the Director has been confirmed.

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