

REFUGEE RESPONSE TEAM

Thompson Okanagan & Kootenays

Housing Assessment Best Practices

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Best practices for Re-settlement agencies searching for permanent housing for refugees

When a family or individual is scheduled to arrive in the community through a Refugee Program, compile the following information in advance. This information can be shared with landlords and property managers as needed.

- Family size
- Rental budget
- Ages of children
- Special considerations - such as accessibility
- Due to confidentiality, do not give information regarding the country of origin of the family or individual

Landlords who have previously rented to newcomers and are open to continuing this relationship are familiar with the unique housing process for new arrivals and understand the needs of these families. It is important to develop positive relationships with landlords and property managers as they can alert you to rentals coming available on the market. It is also ideal to sign up to receive daily alerts from community message boards and property management groups.

The rental budget for families and individuals is usually under the market price of rents in the community, so this limits the home options you have to work with.

When communicating with landlords, give only the necessary information about the family:

- Family size and age of the children
- Rental budget
- Move in date requested
- Families are eligible to receive support from Settlement Agencies, including English language classes, employment search interpretation, and translation, and many other areas

Typical questions from landlords could include:

- Where is the family from?
 - Confidentiality is important, but if it is necessary, provide this information
- How will they pay their rent?
 - Families arriving through Government Assisted Refugee Program receive a monthly income from the federal government for 1 year and often begin working within months of their arrival

- What happens after the 1 year of funding ends?
 - If families are not financially self-sufficient they are eligible to apply for Income Assistance
- Does the family speak English?
 - Translation and language supports may be available to ease communication between the landlord and family

Set up an appointment to view the home as soon as possible. Use the attached Housing Assessment Tool to vet the property and determine its suitability for the participants' needs. Submit an application if suitable.

If the landlord approves the rental application, set up a time for the family to meet with the landlord and sign the lease.

Settlement agencies can refer to local thrift stores and organizations for donations or purchases of items.