

SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE BENEFIT PROGRAM GUIDE

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Disclaimer: This guide is intended to provide general information about the Survivors of Gender Based Violence Benefit Program. Program details, eligibility criteria, funding limits, and application procedures are subject to change without notice. Applicants are responsible for reviewing the most current version of the guide and any related documents before applying. For the latest updates, please visit the Department of Growth and Development's [official website](#).

Was this guide helpful?

If you have suggestions for improvements, please email housingsupplements@novascotia.ca

Survivors of Gender-Based Violence Benefit (SGBV)

A benefit is available through the Department of Growth and Development (the Department) to help survivors of gender-based violence find safe and stable housing. This program is jointly funded by the Governments of Nova Scotia and Canada (through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation), under the National Housing Strategy.

What is the SGBV Benefit?

The benefit supports individuals or families who are seeking safe and stable housing after experiencing gender-based violence in their home. It provides financial assistance for rent or mortgages to help people rebuild in a secure environment.

Gender-based violence means harmful actions directed at someone because of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender. It can include:

- Verbal, emotional, spiritual, sexual, physical, mental, or financial abuse
- Domestic or family violence
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexual violence or sex trafficking
- Criminal harassment or coercive control

People who qualify can get support from this program for up to two years. After that, they can apply for the [Canada-Nova Scotia Targeted Housing Benefit rent supplement or homeowner program](#).

Who can get a SGBV benefit?

You may qualify if:

- You recently left, or are planning to leave, your home to ensure your safety.
- You're living in a home where a harmful person previously lived with you, but they have recently moved out. This could be a home you own or rent.

You must be getting help from a transition house or similar organization who can provide a statement (an attestation) that confirms your situation. A list of referral agencies that support this program may be found in Appendix A.



A **referral agency** is one of the many organizations working with the SGBV program including transition houses, women’s centres, and victim services.

Do you owe money to housing?

If you owe money to the Department or the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency, you must either pay the full amount or set up a payment plan before you can qualify.

- To arrange a repayment plan for money owed to public housing contact your local [office](#).
- To arrange a repayment plan for money owed to the Government of Nova Scotia call: 1-833-424-7711

Eligibility

You can apply if:

- You live in Nova Scotia
- You are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada
 - Ukrainian citizens in Canada under the Canada-Ukraine Emergency Travel Authorization who have experienced gender-based violence here may also apply
 - Refugee claimants living in Nova Scotia who have experienced gender-based violence here and whose claim has been referred to the Immigration Review Board may also apply for this benefit.

The following are eligible units:

<p>Private, self-contained units in apartment buildings or houses (e.g., basement or backyard suite) with their own entrance, bedroom(s), kitchen or kitchenette, bathroom, and living area.</p>	<p>Long-term rental of a hotel or motel unit with kitchen facilities and a written lease (tenancy agreement).</p>
<p>Houses or similar dwellings such as townhouses, row houses, duplexes, triplexes, mini or mobile home, or condo unit.</p>	<p>Rooming house rooms in buildings with three or more unrelated tenants, provided the room has a door number, shared kitchen and/or bathroom facilities, meals</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini or mobile homes, whether on wheels or not, must have a civic address, full service (water, wastewater, electricity etc.) and cannot be on family-owned property. Rent may be paid for the unit or the pad site. 	<p>not included, and the landlord cannot reside in the building.</p>
<p>Non-profit housing units that do not receive government subsidies.</p>	<p>Co-operative housing where the tenant is not a shareholder and has a lease (tenancy agreement).</p>

For rentals, a written lease (tenancy agreement) is required. A [Standard Lease Agreement](#) may also be accepted. In some cases, an alternative to a lease may be accepted (see Appendix B).

Ineligible rental units include:

- Rooms rented from an owner who also lives in the home
- Rooming houses that provide meals
- Private assisted living, nursing homes, university residences, or similar institutions
- Units owned and occupied by the applicant’s immediate family
- Units with Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) rent including private apartments, co-ops/non-profit housing organizations or subsidized social housing units or public housing
- Seasonal or short-term housing (e.g., non-winterized housing, workforce housing, Airbnb, short term rentals etc.)
- Recreational vehicles of any type (e.g., self-propelled or towable, including motorhomes, camper vans, trailers, truck campers, pop-up campers and fifth wheels)



***Rent-geared-to-income** means your rent is based on a percentage of your household income, rather than the full market rental rate. This type of housing is commonly offered through public housing programs and non-profit housing providers that receive government funding. The government funding helps cover the difference between what the tenant pays and the actual cost of maintaining the building, making

housing more affordable for tenants. **If you live in a rent-geared-to-income unit you are not eligible for this program as your unit is already receiving a government subsidy. If you are unsure if this applies to you, contact our office and we can help.**

How the Benefit Works

The benefit lasts for up to two years. **The rules for those who qualify and the benefit amount available are different each year.**

In the first year, you get a fixed amount based on how many bedrooms you need (not necessarily the number of bedrooms you have), which is determined by the gender and number of people in your household (see the Amount of Housing Benefit section for more information).

Toward the end of your first year with the benefit, you will receive a renewal form for you to complete. Based on the information you provide, the program will determine if you are still eligible and what the benefit amount may be.

Amount of Housing Benefit – Year One

Year 1: Monthly Benefit Amounts

If you're approved for the program, you'll get a flat monthly payment based on the size of your family and how many bedrooms you need for your family:

- 1 bedroom: You'll receive \$900 per month
- 2 bedrooms: You'll receive \$1,100 per month
- 3 or more bedrooms: You'll receive \$1,400 per month

How bedroom count is determined

The number of bedrooms you need is based on:

- How many people live in your home
- Their ages and their gender

One bedroom is given to:

- A single adult
- Children under 18 who are of the same gender (they share a room)
- Any child under five of the same or opposite gender may share a room
- Any child over 5 but under 18 of the same gender shares a room and of the opposite gender get their own room

You'll receive a housing benefit based on the number of bedrooms you need – not the number you have.



For example, a household with a single parent and a daughter (age 10) and a son (age 8) need:

- 1 bedroom for the parent
- 1 bedroom for the daughter
- 1 bedroom for the son

Three bedrooms are required. Even though the children are under 18, they are different genders, so they each get their own room.



For example, a household with a single parent and one son (age 10) need:

- 1 bedroom for the parent
- 1 bedroom for the son

Two bedrooms are required. If the family currently lives in a three-bedroom home, they will receive a housing benefit based on a two-bedroom home because that is the number of bedrooms they need.

Eligibility and Benefit Amount – Year Two

About two months before your first-year ends, you'll get a renewal form. You must fill it out and send it back to see if you still qualify and how much benefit you will receive.

To continue to be eligible for the program in year two you must:

- Be spending 30% or more of your total before tax (gross) household income on Average Market Rent* for the region where you live or on your mortgage and property taxes
- Show proof of income
- Show proof of your rental or mortgage and property tax payments
- Notify the Department of any changes to the household including address or household composition

- Have a household income below the limits set by the program (Household Income Limits**).



***Average market rent (AMR)** refers to the typical monthly cost of renting an apartment in a specific area, based on the number of bedrooms required (Bachelor, 1,2 or 3-bedroom). **AMR is used in year two to assess your program eligibility and AMR+10% is used to calculate your housing benefit payment.**

Example of How a Year Two Benefit Will be Calculated
(This is an example only – not your actual benefit amount.)

Assumptions:

- Gross monthly income: \$3,500
- Location: Dartmouth
- Bedroom count: 2-bedroom. CMHC AMR (2-bed): \$1,499 (refer to Appendix D in this guide for your AMR)
- Program rule: AMR + 10% for Year Two

Step 1 – Adjust the AMR

$\$1,499 + 10\% = \$1,649$ (use AMR only if your rent is higher than AMR. We use the lesser of AMR or actual rent)

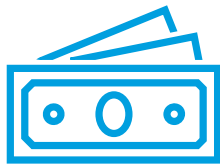
Step 2 – Calculate 30% of income

$30\% \times \$3,500 = \$1,050$

Step 3 – Determine the maximum possible benefit

Adjusted AMR (\$1,649) – 30% of income (\$1,050) = \$599

This means that, in this example, the program would cover up to \$599 per month, depending on your actual rent amount.



**** Household Income Limits (HILS)** are the maximum before tax (gross) income your household can earn to qualify for a rent supplement. These limits vary depending on where you live in Nova Scotia and how many bedrooms your household needs. **HILs are used to assess your program eligibility in year two of the benefit. Program staff will determine your income based on the information you provide.**

Important Reminder for Year Two

You are not guaranteed to keep getting the benefit in year two — you must meet the rules for year two eligibility. Even if you qualify again, your benefit amount may be lower than what you received in year one. This is because the second-year amount is based on several criteria, not a flat rate.

Benefit Calculation in Year Two

The amount you get is based on:

- Your actual rent or mortgage/property taxes (up to AMR+10%) – whichever is less,
- Your total before tax (gross) household income,
- The number of bedrooms your household needs.

You can't get a benefit that is higher than your rent or mortgage payment. You won't get help if your rent is already affordable (less than 30% of your income)

Don't Worry

You don't have to figure it all out on your own.

A Case Worker will carefully review the information you provide in your renewal form and:

- Check if you still qualify
- Calculate how much support you can receive in year two

They'll make sure everything is done fairly and based on your situation.

Things to know:

- Housing benefits are paid the first of the month following when you are approved
- It is not backdated to when you applied
- The benefit is deposited into your (the applicant's) bank account on or before the first of each month
- We can pay your housing benefit directly to your landlord or a trustee at your request
- Your landlord does not need to know you are receiving this benefit, unless you prefer it be paid to them directly

After Year Two: What You Can Do Next

If you still need help paying rent after your second year of receiving SGBV support, you can apply for the Canada-Nova Scotia Targeted Housing Benefit (CNSTHB).

How to Apply for the SGBV

To apply, you need to fill out the application form and get help from a referral agency (like a transition house or similar organization). We aim to respond to applications within 2 weeks of receiving a complete application.

Step 1: Gather Your Documents

You'll need to include digital copies (not originals) of supporting documents.

Step 2: Go To the Application Form

Go to the Government of Nova Scotia website to find the online application:

[Apply for a survivors of gender-based violence housing benefit - Government of Nova Scotia](#)

Step 3: Fill Out the Form

Complete all required sections.

Step 4: Upload Your Documents and Click Submit

Make sure your application and documents are complete.

Step 5: Keep a Copy of Your Application

Be sure to save a copy of your application for your records.

Step 6: Decision

We will let you know whether you have been approved or not and what the next steps may be.

Other Ways to Apply

If you prefer to submit a print application, it can be found [here](#). When complete, email the full application package to: gbvprogram@novascotia.ca

Questions

If you have any questions or need help completing your application, email

gbvprogram@novascotia.ca or call **902-219-3228**.

When to Apply

Applications are accepted any time. Funding is limited and depends on the provincial budget.

The program will close for the year once all the funds have been used.

Your Privacy is Protected

The government takes your privacy seriously. In addition to following the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, we've added extra steps to keep your information safe and communication private:

Dedicated Case Managers

Only one Case Manager (and one backup) handles all SGBV applications across the province. This helps keep your information secure and consistent.

Private Contact Options

A special phone number and email address have been set up just for this program, so you can communicate privately.

You Choose How to Be Contacted

On the application form, you can say how you prefer to be contacted (phone, email, etc.). This helps make sure communication is safe and comfortable for you.

Who do I contact if I have questions about SGBV?

If you would like general information about the benefit or help filling out an application, you can contact us at:

By Email: gbvprogram@novascotia.ca By Telephone: 902-219-3228

Decision Review

A decision review may be initiated when an applicant or client disagrees with:

- An application or a renewal decision
- A benefit calculation
- Overpayment charges

Decision reviews may be requested over the phone, by email, mail, in-person, or by submitting a Decision Review form **within 30 days** of the date on the letter explaining the decision on your case. An applicant or client can opt to have a third-party representative (trustee or advocate) act on their behalf during the review.

Decision reviews do not include:

- Changes to policy
- Landlord and tenant relations
- Matters involving criminal activity
- Situations where a higher court is involved
- Decisions that do not relate directly to a given individual or their household
- Applications cancelled due to:
 - Incomplete information
 - Inability to reach an individual
 - Incomplete annual renewal
 - Individual requested cancellation of an application, and
- Complaints about staff members

Call 1-833-424-7711 for more information.

Appendix A: Referral Agencies

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM)

[Adsum for Women & Children](#)

Halifax, NS
adsum@adsumforwomen.org or
902-423-1687

[Alice House](#)

Dartmouth, NS
livesafe@alicehouse.ca

[The Association of Black Social Workers](#)

Dartmouth, NS
1-855-732-1253 (ext. 2) or contact form on
www.nsabsw.ca

[Avalon Sexual Assault Centre](#)

Halifax, NS
info@avaloncentre.ca

[Bryony House Shelter](#) (Halifax Transition House Association)

Halifax, NS
staff@bryonyhouse.ca

[Chebucto Connections](#)

Halifax, NS
hub@chebuctoconnections.ca or
902-477-0964

[Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland NS](#)

Holly House
1 Tulip Street
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
ed@efrymns.ca or
(902)454-5041

[Elizabeth Fry Society](#)

85 Queen Street
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 1G7
(902)454-5041

[Halifax Regional Police Victim Services](#)

902-490-5300 (call)

902-497-4709 (text option - hearing impaired)

[Home of the Guardian Angel](#)

Halifax, NS
902-479-3031

[LEA Place Women's Resource Centre Society](#)

Sheet Harbour, NS
director@leaplace.com or
902-885-2668

[Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Society](#)

Halifax, NS
contact@mymnfc.com or
902-420-1576

[Nova Village NS – formerly Fairview Resource Centre](#)

Halifax, NS
info@novavillagens.com
902-443-9569 (call) 902-210-4848 (text)

[Tearmann House](#)

Halifax, NS
info@tearmann.ca

[Welcome Housing](#)

Halifax, NS
902-423-5479
Dartmouth, NS
902-455-3483

[YWCA Halifax](#)

Halifax, NS
contact@ywcahalifax.ca or
902-423-6162

Antigonish County

[A Roof Over Your Head](#)

Antigonish, NS
support@aroyh.ca
902-870-9919

[Antigonish Women's Centre & Sexual Assault Services](#)

Antigonish, NS
info@awrcsasa.ca or
902-863-6221

[Naomi Society](#)
Antigonish, NS
support@naomisociety.ca

Cape Breton Island

[Cape Breton Transition House Association](#)
Sydney, NS
cbtha@cbtha.com or
902-539-2945 (24-hour help line)

[Every Woman's Centre](#)
Sydney, NS
info@everywomenscentre.com or
902-567-1212

Nova Scotia Native Women's Association - Jane
Paul Indigenous Resource Centre
Sydney, NS
violenceprevention@nsnwa.net
902-539-5890

[Leeside Transition House](#)
Port Hawkesbury, NS
902-625-2444

[Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre](#)
We'koqma'q (serving Cape Breton)
902-756-3440 (We'koqma'q)

[Strait Area Women's Place](#)
Port Hawkesbury, NS
902-625-1614

[Willow House \(Cape Breton Transition House Association\)](#)
Sydney, NS
902-539-2945

Colchester County

[Bridges Counselling Centre](#)
Truro, NS
bridges@bridgesinstitute.org or
902-897-6665

[Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland NS](#)
25 Revere Street
Truro, NS B2N 3J9
ed@efrymns.ca or
902-897-0852

[The Lotus Centre](#)
Truro, NS
coordinator@thelotuscentre.net or
902-895-4295

[Third Place Transition House](#)
Truro, NS
support@thirdplaceth.ca

Cumberland County

[Autumn House](#) (Cumberland County Transition House Association)
Amherst, NS
info@autumnhouse.ca

Kings County

[Chrysalis House Association](#)
Kentville, NS
support@chrysalishouse.ca
902-679-1922

[Women's Place Resource Centre \(Western Area Women's Coalition\)](#)
Kingston, NS
isa.wprc@gmail.com
902-363-2030

Lunenburg County

[Second Story Women's Centre](#)
Lunenburg, NS
info@secondstory.ca or
902-640-3044

[South Shore Open Doors Association](#)
Bridgewater, NS
info@ssoda.org or
902-521-0994

[South Shore Transition House
Association/Harbour House](#)
Bridgewater, NS
thw@harbour-house.ca

[Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre](#)
Millbrook (serving mainland NS, except
Pagtnkek)
902-893-8383

Pictou County

[Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual
Assault Centre](#)
Pictou, NS
902-755-4647

Yarmouth County

[Juniper House](#)
Yarmouth, NS
juniperhouse@juniperhouse.ca

Province-Wide

[Department of Justice – Victim Services](#)
VICSERVICES-HeadOffice@novascotia.ca
Toll Free: 1-888-470-0773

Appendix B: Proof of Rental - Alternate Documents

You must provide **one** of the following:

- A copy of your lease or tenancy agreement (if signed within the past 12 months), or
- A copy of an older lease and recent letter from your landlord showing a rent increase (a Market Rent Increase Letter).

If you don't have a lease or a rent increase letter you can submit a combination of two documents (issued in the last 12 months) from the list below:

- A utility bill (Nova Scotia Power, municipal water, telephone etc.)
- Correspondence from CRA
- Photo ID with address
- Vehicle registration with address
- Vehicle permit with address
- MSI renewal form
- Credit card return payment slip with address

Appendix C: Important Information if You Receive a Survivor Benefit

Keep this guide with your important papers.

If you've been approved for a housing benefit through the SGBV program, this guide explains what you need to know while you receive the benefit.

1. When Will You Get Your Housing Benefit?

You'll get your first payment on or before the 1st of the month after your approval.

Example: Approved June 15 → First payment July 1.

Payments are made by direct deposit to your bank account. If needed, a cheque can be mailed, but direct deposit is faster. We can pay your rent supplement directly to your landlord or trustee at your request.

Here is the payment schedule for 2026:

Month	Payment Date	Month	Payment Date
January	December 28	July	June 29
February	January 29	August	July 30
March	February 26	September	August 28
April	March 30	October	September 28
May	April 29	November	October 29
June	May 28	December	November 27

2. How Long Will You Get the Benefit?

Renewing Your Housing Benefit

- You must renew your benefit every year to keep receiving it.
- We send renewal forms early, so you have plenty of time to gather documents. You will usually receive your renewal package about 3–4 months before your renewal date.
- Submit the completed form and all required documents before your renewal date to avoid interruptions.

What You Need to Do

Submit your completed renewal form and documents as soon as you can.

You will need:

- Proof you are still renting, your rent amount or your housing costs
- Proof of income
- A signed renewal form

Important Deadlines

If we don't receive your documents by your renewal date:

- Your payments will pause
- Your file will be closed within 2 months if documents are not received and you will need to reapply

Your subsidy may change, or end based on your updated information.

3. What If Your Situation Changes?

Tell the Department of Growth & Development within 30 days if:

- You move to a new place or out of Nova Scotia.
- You stop renting or you sell your home.
- Your household size changes.

Income changes (Applicable to Year 2 Benefit Only):

- If your income goes up, your subsidy stays the same until your next renewal.
- If your income goes down by more than 10%, you can ask for a reassessment (once per year). No back pay is given.
- If your income is seasonal or self-employed, we'll look at this year and last year's income.
- Strikes or lockouts don't qualify for income reassessment.

IMPORTANT: Not reporting changes may lead to overpayment, which you'll have to pay back.

4. Can Your Housing Benefit Be Stopped?

Yes, if:

- You move out of Nova Scotia.
- You stop living in your rental unit or sublet it or sell your home.
- You move into public housing or long-term care.
- You rent from a close family who lives in the same unit or building.
- You don't pay rent on time or break your lease.
- You get other rent assistance (like Rent-Geared-to-Income).
- You gave false or missing information.
- You commit or try to commit fraud.

5. What Happens When the Program Ends?

The program is funded until March 31, 2028. You'll be contacted 6 months before it ends with info about other options.

6. What If You Disagree with a Decision?

First, talk to your Case Manager or Client Service Supervisor. Still not satisfied, ask for a review. Write a letter or fill out a Decision Review Form. Include:

- The decision you disagree with.
- Why you disagree.
- Your name, contact info, and case number.

The decision review process will not change (or override) any rules or policies. Call 1-833-424-7711 to get the form.

7. What if I get evicted?

If you get evicted, tell the program right away. You'll have 60 days to find a new place to live. During that time, your rent help will be paused. If you find a new place within 60 days, the help will start again. If you don't, the help will stop. You can apply again once you've moved into a new rental.

Appendix D: Average Market Rent and Household Income Limits

Housing Authority	Housing Location	AMR Bachelor	AMR 1-BR	AMR 2-BR	AMR 3-BR	HILs Bachelor	HILs 1-BR	HILs 2-BR	HILs 3-BR
Eastern	CBRM (County of Cape Breton excluding Sydney)	747	849	1,084	1,368	35,000	35,000	47,500	55,500
	Sydney	747	872	1,122	1,433	35,000	35,000	47,500	55,500
	Remaining Cape Breton (Town of Port Hawkesbury, Counties of Victoria, Inverness and Richmond)	679	716	1,006	1,102	62,500	62,500	73,000	84,500
Central	Halifax (City of Halifax, Beechville, and Lakeside)	1,202	1,464	1,712	2,262	59,000	59,000	71,000	80,000
	Dartmouth (includes Cherry Brook, Cole Harbour, Dartmouth, Lake Loon, Shearwater, Westphal, Woodside)	985	1,186	1,499	1,659	59,000	59,000	71,000	80,000
	Bedford/Sackville (Beaverbank, Bedford, Hammonds Plains, Kinsac, Lakeview, Lower Sackville, South Uniacke, Upper Hammonds Plains, Upper Sackville, Windsor Junction)	1,056	1,539	1,866	2,224	59,000	59,000	71,000	80,000
	Halifax Other & East Hants	1,133	1,470	2,041	2,587	59,000	59,000	71,000	80,000
Northern	Truro CA (Towns of Truro, Amherst, Oxford, Stewiacke, and Villages of Bible Hill and Tatamagouche)	674	885	1,105	1,337	36,000	36,000	49,000	59,500
	Northern Cobequid (Remaining County of Colchester and County of Cumberland)	674	885	1,105	1,337	62,500	62,500	73,000	84,500
	New Glasgow CA (includes Towns of Antigonish, Mulgrave, New Glasgow, Pictou, Stellarton, Trenton, and Westville)	582	828	973	1,047	36,000	36,000	49,000	59,500
	Remainder of Northern (County of Antigonish, Pictou, Districts of Guysborough and St Mary's)	582	828	973	1,047	62,500	62,500	73,000	84,500
Western	Kentville Other Small Towns (includes Towns of Kentville, Annapolis Royal, Bridgewater, Berwick, Digby, Lunenburg, Mahone Bay, Middleton, Shelburne, Yarmouth, Clark's Harbour, Lockeport, Wolfville. Villages of New Minas, Canning, Port Williams, and Greenwood)	651	791	1,189	1,212	36,000	36,000	49,000	59,500
	Remainder of Western (includes Region of Queens, District of Argyle, Barrington, Chester, Clare, Digby, Lunenburg, Shelburne, and Yarmouth. County of Annapolis, County of Kings)	736	791	1,162	1,212	62,500	62,500	73,000	84,500