



MR. JACKIE JACOBSON
MLA, NUNAKPUT

FEB 11 2020

Oral Question 26-19 (1) Evictions from Public Housing

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on December 12, 2019 regarding the Public Housing Rent Scale.

In 2017, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC) engaged in a comprehensive consultation with residents through the Housing Engagement Survey. There was participation from all communities that contributed to over 1400 responses to the Survey, or approximately one out of every ten households in the Northwest Territories.

This feedback led to many initiatives to improve the Public Housing system, including addressing customer service, rental counselling, and initiatives designed to transition higher income and/or financially stable Public Housing tenants into homeownership, realizing homeownership goals of those tenants, as well as freeing up much needed Public Housing for those that need it most.

The NWT HC implemented the current rent scale in 2012 in order to make rents simpler, more affordable, more predictable, and to increase fairness. Not only are Public Housing clients paying the lowest rent in Canada, from 4% to 19% of their income, but the rent scale has not changed from 2012 resulting in greater affordability when considering the costs of inflation.

The NWT HC uses total income information on tax returns from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) as the method for income assessment, resulting in tenants having their income assessed annually instead of monthly. This is a benefit for seniors and single parents who are less mobile or find it inconvenient making visits to their local housing organization offices. Residents have found that they have benefited from the more streamlined annual approach.

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For tenants whose income decreases, the NWTHC can adjust rent if the tenants brings in an income statement showing the decrease in rent. The reported income will be verified annually and is subject to rent adjustments if discrepancies are noted.

I will continue to engage with the NWTHC and Local Housing Organizations to identify any rent scale issues that they might identify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paulie Chinna". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "C".

Paulie Chinna
Minister responsible for the
Northwest Territories
Housing Corporation

c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs