

Youth Law: Public Housing

This factsheet is designed to help young people learn their rights and obligations surrounding public housing in the ACT. If you are a young person with questions or concerns about housing, please call the **Youth Law Centre ACT** on **6173 5410** or **1300 654 314**.

Note: The Youth Law Centre (YLC) is Legal Aid ACT's dedicated service for young people under the age of 25. It is a free and confidential legal service.

Public Housing

What is Public Housing?

Public housing is government-owned long-term housing for Canberrans on a low income. Housing ACT own and manage public housing in Canberra. Tenants pay the lower amount of either 25% of their household's assessable income or the market rent.

What is Affordable Housing?

Affordable Housing is provided to people whose income is higher than Centrelink income support payments, but not high enough to afford rent in the current private market. Community Housing Canberra is the primary provider of affordable rental housing and will cover up to 74.99% of the price of a private rental.

Recent Updates to Tenancy Laws

Recent changes to residential tenancy laws in the ACT have aimed to **increase protections** and **simplify processes** for renting a home in the ACT.

Renting

How to apply for Public Housing?

[Access Canberra](#) lists the documents each applicant must complete and documents that may be

required, depending on a person's circumstances. The link also provides various ways to submit the forms, such as by mail or client portal.

Proof of Identity

Firstly, you **must** have two forms of ID: one primary and one secondary form.

Examples of primary forms of ID:

- Driver's License
- Australian Passport
- Birth Certificate
- Australian Visa

Examples of secondary forms of ID:

- Driver's License (if not used for primary form)
- Australian Passport (if not used for primary form)
- Medicare Card
- Centrelink Concession Card

If you require more rooms, you must provide proof of a childcare arrangement. This can include:

- Any court orders regarding custody or child placement
- A foster care placement
- Centrelink family tax benefit payments
- A formally written agreement for care arrangements, or
- A child support assessment letter.

Proof of Income

Housing ACT needs to assess your ability to pay for housing. So, you need to provide proof of income for the last three to six months for everyone in your household over 16 years old. You can **provide six months of bank statements for each person** who

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contributes to the household income. Income sources that are assessed include:

- Wages (including bonuses and commission)
- Centrelink benefits
- Superannuation
- Child maintenance
- Compensation for loss of income
- Self-employment income from all sources
- Any other income paid to you and all other household members.

Income that is **not** assessed includes:

- Child Care Subsidy
- Carer Allowance or bonus
- Foster child allowances
- Child maintenance payments you make
- Pharmaceutical Allowance
- Payments for loss or damage to property or for personal injury (except for compensation for loss of income)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support packages

Proof of Assets

Along with your income, Housing ACT must assess if your assets are able to cover the cost of housing. This is done by ensuring you do not have more than \$40,000 worth of assets. Your six months of bank statements will be used to assess this your assets.

Proof you have lived in ACT for six months

You must have proof you have lived in the ACT for at least six months. This can include:

- A Centrelink address history
- A lease on your current home, or
- An energy bills for the last 6 months.

Other Documents

Once you have submitted the above, Housing ACT may ask you to complete more documents to better assess you needs. These could include:

- Proof of medical needs or disability
- Proof of housing needs from support services

Repairs

Urgent Repairs

For urgent repairs (i.e. gas leak, serious flood damage, broken toilet system), you should call Housing ACT on their maintenance issues line: 6207 1500. If the repairs are not fixed within a reasonable time, you can apply to ACAT for an order requiring Housing ACT to complete the repair work.

Non-Urgent Repairs

Housing ACT must complete non-urgent repairs within 4 weeks of being notified by you of the damage or defect. Non-urgent repairs are repairs that do not have a significant impact on your ability to live in the premises.

Rent Increases

Housing ACT can review and increase a public tenancy's rent once every 12 months according to market value. If a tenant believes the rent increase is excessive, they can write to Housing ACT and explain why the increase is inappropriate.

Ending the Tenancy

If you decide to end your tenancy, you must:

1. Give Housing ACT at least 3 weeks' notice
2. Leave the house clean
3. Attend a final inspection
4. Return your keys to Housing ACT.

To provide notice, you should fill out a Notice to

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Vacate form and sending it to Housing ACT. The Notice to Vacate form can be found here: [Moving out of your public housing home - ACT Government](#)

Useful Contacts

Legal Aid ACT

Monday to Thursday: 8:30am to 7:00pm

Friday: 8:30am to 5:00pm

www.legalaidact.org.au

Phone: **1300 654 314**

Youth Law Centre

Monday to Friday: 8:30am to 5:00pm

ylc@legalaidact.org.au

Phone: **(02) 6173 5410**

Kids Helpline

www.kidshelpline.com.au

Phone: **1800 55 1800**