

Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA) provides priority access to public housing for Nova Scotians in housing situations that impact their health and safety.

What does it mean to have priority access?

It means your application moves to the front of the line and your access to a unit will be accelerated.

All priority access applicants are placed on a chronological priority waitlist for **all units** that would meet their bedroom needs. This allows NSPHA to house priority applicants more quickly than general applicants.

Priority Access Streams

There are four priority access streams for applicants who are:

- experiencing homelessness
- fleeing or experiencing family violence
- living in inadequate housing (that is currently unliveable or threatens the occupant's health and safety)
- in need of housing near life sustaining health services

How do I get a referral?

A qualified professional listed below must complete the referral form. **Referral forms are available on NSPHA's website, nspha.ca.**

Homelessness:

- Housing Support Worker
- Support Worker or Case Manager

Inadequate Housing:

- Municipal Building Official
- Fire Marshall (or inspector)
- Certified Tradesperson
- Registered Home Inspectors
- Environmental Abatement Professionals

Family Violence:

- Medical Professional
- Psychologist
- Counsellor
- Elder/Community Leader
- Support Worker through Victim Services
- Police Officer/Law Enforcement
- Transition House Worker

Life Sustaining

Health Services:

Medical Professional

Priority Access Checklist

You must complete the steps below before NSPHA can review your priority access request:

- Complete the Public Housing Application Form
- Have a qualified professional complete the appropriate Priority Access Referral Form
- Submit the Public Housing Application Form and the Priority Access Referral Form, either online or at a local NSPHA office.



How do I know if I am eligible for priority access?

Once your referral form is submitted, we will review your public housing application and your request for priority access.

Be sure to submit all the information required on the checklist. This will help us assess your application and review your priority access request faster.

Once the review is complete, we will let you know if your request was approved or denied.

I have priority access, now what?

If you have priority status, we will place you on a waitlist for units that meet your housing needs in your municipality.

When a unit is available, we will contact you with a housing offer.

Priority Access means you require housing urgently. You only get one offer. If you refuse, you will lose your priority status and be moved to the general waitlist.

Why do I only get one housing offer?

Priority Access provides front of the line access to applicants whose health or safety is at immediate risk.

The goal is to put a Priority Access applicant in a secure, safe home as quickly as possible.

One housing offer ensures that every applicant has the opportunity to access safe and suitable public housing in an expedited timeframe.

Can I choose where I will accept housing?

Our focus is on getting you into a home as quickly as possible. Unless there is a social or medical reason you cannot live in an area, we will place you on a waitlist for all locations within your chosen area that meet your household's housing need.

Priority Access applicants are offered the first unit available that meets their number of bedroom requirements. **The unit may not allow pets, smoking or have parking.**

How quickly will I get housing?

As public housing is not emergency housing, there may be a wait between priority approval and getting housed.

If you need emergency housing, we encourage you to reach out to the [Dept. of Community Services](#) and their service provider network.

What happens if my priority request is denied?

If your priority access request is denied, you may still be eligible for the general waitlist for public housing.

If you disagree with the priority access eligibility decision, you can [request to appeal](#) that decision. Visit [nspha.ca](#) for more information.

We encourage all applicants to register for the [online applicant portal](#) and opt-in to email communication. This gives you real time access to your application to update and monitor the status of your application.

For more information about priority access, visit [nspha.ca](#) or contact your district office.

