



**Richmond Community Services  
Advisory Committee**

To: Mayor Brodie and Councillors  
 From: Daylene Marshall and Alex Nixon, Co-Chairs, RCSAC  
 CC: Cathy Carlile and Lesley Sherlock  
 Date: October 8, 2015  
 Re: BC Rent Supplement Survey for Richmond Residents

Issue	Potential impact	Agency or individuals affected	Suggested action
<p>At a March 2015 RCSAC meeting, Hon. Linda Reid requested information on whether residents <u>needing BC rent supplements (RAP, SAFER) were being provided with them.</u> An RCSAC survey (att. #1) prompted responses from 7 agencies/City. Responses (att. #2) show about 1300 residents receive subsidies and about 150 applicants do not qualify. Problems cited: Narrow eligibility criteria; no rent receipt-no subsidy. Suggestions cited: Increase income ceiling (currently gross annual household income of \$35,000 or less).</p>	<p>“Affordable” (30% of gross income) rental housing for residents earning \$35,000/yr is \$875/month (30% of \$35,000=\$10,500. \$10,500/12 mo=\$875/mo).          Rent supplements do not cover the real cost of rental housing in Richmond and residents must make up the difference. Residents end up paying more than 30% of their income on rent and put extra pressure on already stressed local community services. <b>An increase in the income ceiling would benefit Richmond residents</b> by filling the gap between subsidy and the real cost of rent. Community service providers would benefit by having to deal with fewer clients with rent issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any community agency that serves clients with gross annual household incomes of \$35,000/yr or less.</li> <li>In particular, low-income immigrants and seniors with landlords that refuse to provide rent receipts.</li> </ul>	<p>That Richmond City Council advocate for Richmond residents and for local community service agencies by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sending this report and a cover letter to Hon. Linda Reid for her information and action; and</li> <li>Writing a letter to Premier Christy Clark and to designated ministers (Social Development; B.C. Housing, etc) <b>to urge the government to increase income ceilings</b> for rent supplement eligibility to cover the real cost of rental housing in Richmond.</li> </ul>

**Attachment # 1**

**RCSAC MEMBERSHIP  
BC RENT SUPPLEMENTS SURVEY  
MARCH 2015**

**\*\*PLEASE HAVE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED BY AN EMPLOYEE WITH A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF BC RENT SUPPLMENTS\*\***

The RCSAC Ad-hoc committee on BC rent supplements was formed to address a query from the Hon. Linda Reid, MLA on whether people needing rent supplements were being provided with them. The committee is comprised of Janice Lambert, Jocelyn Wong and De Whalen. BC rent supplement programs include Rental Assistance Program for families (RAP) and Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER).

The committee's task is to canvass RCSAC members to establish:

- Who knows about BC government rent supplement/subsidy programs;
- Who accesses them;
- If there are any problems with them;
- Any suggestions for improvement.

The committee has prepared a simple questionnaire, as below, for RCSAC agencies that provide direct client services. This is not meant to be a file audit but only a knowledgeable estimate of the take-up on these programs. The seven questions are:

1. Do you know about the RAP and SAFER programs?
2. Does your agency actually administer these programs?
3. Do you have forms, leaflets available for clients?
4. Using a monthly estimate, how many clients do you inform about the programs?
5. Using a monthly estimate, how many clients follow up and receive benefits (or you advocate for/help fill in forms, etc)?
6. How many clients would you estimate do not receive benefits and why?
7. How could the programs be improved?

**Thank you for your time and information!**

**Janice Lambert, Jocelyn Wong and De Whalen**

# Recipients of Richmond Rent Supplements as of May 2015

Agency	RAP/SAFER Applicants/yr	RAP/SAFER Recipients/yr	SIL Applicants/yr	SIL Recipients/yr	Problems	Suggestions
City of Richmond		1131			narrow criteria	MOU for combined subsidies
Pathways Clubhouse			130	120	10/yr don't meet eligibility	
Ministry Social Development	0				clawback of income assistance	
Family Place	360	120			no rent receipt-no subsid forms available, diff. languages	
Richmond Cares	72				no rent receipt-no subsid increase income ceiling	
Rmd Centre for Disabi	24	12			don't meet criteria	increase income ceiling
Chimo Comm Services	30	25			don't meet criteria	reduce wait times

**RAP=Rental Assistance Program**

**SAFER=Shelter Aid for Elderly Residents**

**SIL=Supported Independent Living**

The conditions set forth for eligibility for the RAP are as follows:

- \* Some or all of an applicant's annual household income must come from employment.
- \* The applicant has a gross annual household income of \$35,000 or less.
- \* The applicant has at least one or more dependent children.
- \* The applicant less than \$100,000 in assets.
- \* The applicant files an annual income tax return.
- \* The applicant pays more than 30 per cent of their household income towards rent for their home, or pays pad rental for an owned home trailer
- \* The applicant has lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding the date of application.
- \* Applicants must also meet the program residency requirements wherein each member of the household must be one of the following:
  - \* Canadian citizens not under private sponsorship
  - \* Individuals lawfully admitted into Canada for permanent residence and not under private sponsorship
  - \* Refugees sponsored by the Government of Canada
  - \* Individuals who have applied for refugee status

The SAFER program is available to eligible older adults who meet the following conditions:

1. The applicant is 60 years old or older.
2. The applicant has lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding the application
3. The applicant pays more than 30 per cent of their household income towards rent for their home, or pays pad rental for an owned home trailer
4. The applicant (and spouse/partner) must meet citizenship requirements where each member of the household must be one of the following:
  - \* Canadian citizens not under sponsorship
  - \* Individuals lawfully admitted into Canada for permanent residence and not under sponsorship
  - \* Individuals who have applied for refugee status
5. Individuals for whom private sponsorship has broken down