



## The Low-End Market Rental Program

### What is the Low-End Market Rental program?

Low-End Market Rental (LEMR) homes are intended for low to moderate-income individuals and families who may not otherwise be able to afford rents at typical market rates in Richmond. The LEMR program helps ensure that the City has an appropriate mix of housing choices for a diverse population.

During the planning process, new residential developments with more than 60 homes are typically required to construct between 10%–15% of their total residential floor space into LEMR homes.

### How are rental rates set for LEMR homes?

Rental rates for LEMR homes are based on the terms of the Housing Agreement and vary depending on when the agreement was secured:

- **LEMR homes secured before 2017**

These homes typically use BC Housing's *Housing Income Limits* (HILs) to determine tenant eligibility. Rents are set at **30%** of the HIL, divided by 12 months. The City of Richmond uses the HILs for the *Vancouver Planning Area*, available at [BCHousing.org](https://www.bchousing.org).

- **LEMR homes secured between 2017 and October 2024**

These agreements set:

- **Income thresholds** at 10% below BC Housing's 2016 HILs.
- **Maximum rents** at 10% below CMHC's 2016 average market rents.

Both income limits and maximum rents are adjusted annually for inflation. This means the figures stated in the original Housing Agreement may be lower than the actual rents and income limits in effect today.

- **LEMR homes secured after October 2024**

These homes have:

- **Maximum rents** set at 10% below CMHC's current average market rents.
- **Income thresholds** set so that rent equals 30% or more of household income.

## LEMR Tenant Selection

### Who is eligible for LEMR homes?

To be eligible for a LEMR home:

- applicants must intend to make the home their primary residence; and
- the total (before-tax) annual income of all household members combined must fall below the maximum income and asset thresholds outlined in the Housing Agreement.

### **How do property managers verify applicants' incomes?**

Property managers must verify the income of all household members aged 18 and over. They should verify applicants' incomes using a Notice of Assessment from the Canada Revenue Agency and a corresponding detailed Income Tax Return.

### **How many people may live in a LEMR home?**

The City expects that preference to be given to households where there is at least one person per bedroom.

The household size should match the type (e.g. studio, one bedroom etc.). The National Occupancy Standards, outlined below, may be used as a guideline for the number of individuals that may occupy a LEMR home:

- A maximum of two persons per bedroom.
- Household members living as part of a married or common-law couple share a bedroom with their spouse or common-law partner.
- Household members under 18 years old of the same sex share a bedroom.
- Household members under 5 years old of the opposite sex share a bedroom.

### **What other considerations should property managers take into account when selecting tenants?**

The City expects preference be given to low to moderate income households that otherwise would not be able to afford permanent rental housing at market-rates in Richmond.

### **How does the City ensure that homes are rented to eligible tenants?**

Every year, the City of Richmond may conduct an affordable housing statutory declaration process. As part of this process, the property manager for the LEMR homes will require all tenants of affordable housing homes over 18 years old to provide proof of income and assets. The property manager will also ask tenants to confirm the number of people living in the home, including the number of those under 18 and the number of those over 55.

The Owner must provide the City with a completed Statutory Declaration and corresponding spreadsheet within thirty (30) days of receiving notice from the City.

## **LEMR Management**

### **Who manages LEMR homes?**

LEMR homes may be managed by either for-profit or non-profit property managers. Some Housing Agreements require that all LEMR homes be managed by non-profit housing providers.

### **What is the maximum rent that may be charged for LEMR homes?**

The maximum rent for LEMR homes varies by type (i.e. studio, one bedroom etc.) and by development. To determine the maximum rental rates for a specific development, please consult your Housing Agreement or contact City of Richmond Affordable Housing staff directly. Some non-profit housing providers have a mandate to provide workforce housing and are able to rent LEMR homes at the current maximum rents outlined. However, Housing Agreements only set the maximum rental rates for LEMR homes, and some organizations that generally have lower-income clients have been able to offer lower rental rates.

### **What is the maximum rent increase?**

Rent increases are determined by the terms of the Housing Agreement and must comply with the *Residential Tenancy Act (RTA)*.

- **For Housing Agreements secured after October 2024**, rent increases must not exceed the annual limit set by the *RTA*.
- **For Housing Agreements signed between 2017 and October 2024**, rent increases are limited to the lower of the *RTA* annual increase and the Consumer Price Index (CPI), calculated from the original rent permitted in the agreement.
- **For Housing Agreements signed before 2017**, please refer to the specific agreement or contact City Affordable Housing staff for guidance.

If a Housing Agreement allows for rent increases higher than those permitted under the *RTA*, the lower *RTA* limit applies.

### **Are short-term rentals permitted for LEMR homes?**

No. LEMR homes may not be used for short-term rentals (defined as rentals for periods shorter than 30 days) under any circumstances. If a LEMR home is found to be a short-term rental, fines of up to \$1,000 per offence may be charged under the City's Municipal Ticketing Bylaw, and additional fees may also be charged under the development's Housing Agreement.

### **Can tenants rent or sublet their LEMR home?**

In most cases no. The Housing Agreement states that the Owner may end the Tenancy Agreement if a tenant has subleased their LEMR home to someone not eligible for LEMR housing.

### **What percentage of LEMR homes in a development are accessible?**

The City's *Affordable Housing Strategy 2017–2027* sets a target of securing 85% of LEMR homes as Basic Universal Housing (BUH). BUH means buildings that have features designed to facilitate universal access, including access and use by a person with a physical disability. However, Housing Agreements signed before the implementation of the current *2017–2027 Affordable Housing Strategy* may have a lower percentage of BUH homes. For more information on the City's BUH Guideline Bylaw 8244, contact City Affordable Housing staff directly.

### **Can property managers charge tenants strata fees or move-in/move-out fees?**

No. The Housing Agreements for all LEMR developments prohibit charging tenants strata fees or move-in/move-out fees.

### **Can property managers charge tenants parking fees?**

In general, no. The Housing Agreements for the majority of LEMR developments prohibit charging tenants any parking fees. LEMR homes secured after July 2025 or where the Housing Agreement is amended, may charge for parking based on Council Policy 5475 – Low-End Market Rental Parking, Tenant Asset and Income Exceedance Policy.

### **Do LEMR home occupants have access to the same amenities as strata residents?**

Yes. Generally all LEMR home tenants and guests have access to all the same indoor/outdoor amenities and common areas as strata residents in the same building.

### **Can tenants leave their home vacant?**

Yes, but only for a limited amount of time. The Housing Agreement states that if a LEMR home remains vacant for three or more consecutive months, the Owner may end the Tenancy Agreement.

### **What is the City of Richmond's role in managing LEMR homes?**

The City of Richmond does not own or manage LEMR homes directly. The City sets the requirements for LEMR housing through the use of Housing Agreements with property owners, including tenant eligibility and maximum rents. The City maintains a directory of LEMR homes (the [Affordable Housing Guide](#)) and uses a statutory declaration process to verify owners are compliant with the terms of their housing agreements. (See [Bulletin INFO-60 Low-End Market Rental \(LEMR\) Program Requirements](#).)

## **LEMR Ownership**

### **Who owns LEMR homes?**

Developers may retain ownership of LEMR homes or sell them. Some LEMR homes in Richmond are retained by developers, whereas others are owned by BC Housing, non-profit organizations, or private owners.

### **Can LEMR homes be sold?**

Yes. LEMR homes may be sold or transferred in clusters, as specified in the terms of the Housing Agreement. If an owner sells a cluster of LEMR homes, the owner must provide the new owner's and property manager's contact information to the Program Manager, Affordable Housing at the City of Richmond. Please review the Housing Agreement for more details and information.

### **Can the owner live in a LEMR home?**

No. A LEMR home may not be occupied by the owner.

## **Contact**

If you have any questions or require clarification on the LEMR program, contact [affordablehousing@richmond.ca](mailto:affordablehousing@richmond.ca).