



Keeping the Territory affordable
for people like you and me.



www.venturehousing.org.au

Frequently Asked Questions for Key Workers

What is Rent Choice?

Rent Choice is a form of private rental assistance that supports Key Worker households to access suitable affordable housing in the private rental market.

It aims to relieve rental stress by providing a subsidy towards the rent and address barriers preventing Key Workers from joining the NT workforce, or having an affordable place to live and settle to access or retain a job.

What is the definition of a Key Worker for Rent Choice?

Key worker occupations eligible for Rent Choice can be found on our website or via the NTG 'Hard to fill Jobs' page https://nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/490335/nt-skilled-occupation-priority-list.pdf

How much can I earn to be eligible?

Rent Choice has been specifically designed to meet the affordable housing requirements of Key Workers essential to the growth and development of the Northern Territory's economy; eligibility for assistance under this initiative is based on criteria associated with employment status and income as follows:

Single: income less than \$100,000 per annum

Couple: income less than \$122,100 per annum

Families: income less than \$144,300 per annum

Key Workers will be eligible if they meet the following criteria:

- They are in the NT or moving to the NT and are working in a priority industry occupation including not for profit organisations, private enterprises and Government
- They are a citizen of Australia or New Zealand, a permanent resident or have a current Australian work visa.

Priority industries include (but are not limited to), Transport and Logistics, Construction, Automotive, Health and Human Services, Hospitality and Tourism

A detailed list of eligible occupations can be found on our website.

Which regions and towns will participate in this scheme?

The program is targeted to eligible Key Workers in the following locations:

- Greater Darwin & Palmerston
- Katherine
- Tennant Creek
- Alice Springs

How do I check if I am eligible?

Venture has developed an online eligibility calculator which you can access on our website. This should only be used as a guide, we have a comprehensive online application process which includes a thorough assessment of household income and proof of eligibility documentation to determine actual eligibility and subsidy allocation. You must be entering into a new lease or extending a lease agreement to access subsidy payments. The lease commencement or extension date must come after, but within 8 weeks, of the Rent Choice voucher issue date.

Do I need to be on the housing register to be eligible?

No, the scheme is open to everyone as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

I'm renting an NRAS property. Am I eligible?

No, if you are already living in a subsidised rental, you will not be eligible; you must be seeking to rent a property, or extend an existing lease in the private market to be eligible.

How do I apply?

We have an online application process where applicants submit evidence of their eligibility and household income. Detailed information can be found on our website.

How do you determine my income?

Employed applicants and adult household members must provide a minimum of four weeks' payslips as evidence of their employment income. Assessments will include no more than eight weeks evidence of income to determine the household income at the time.

Self-employed applicants and household members are required to supply the most recent BAS and with a detailed Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet for the most recent period endorsed by a certified/registered accountant. This enables us to most accurately determine your income at the time of application.

Why do you require a minimum of four payslips and not my Year To Date income?

We will be assessing your current gross income to determine your eligibility for the scheme at the time of the application, **not** your Year To Date income or income for the last financial year as this may not be an accurate reflection of your situation now.

What if I know my income is changing in the future?

Your application will be assessed using the required income evidence provided at the time of your application. We do not take into account future changes to your income or household composition when assessing your current eligibility.

If you know your household income is currently above the income eligibility threshold you should not make an application for the scheme, even if you know your income will be decreasing in the future. We suggest you lodge your application at that time, as we can only consider your household income at the time of your application.

A second eligibility assessment will be undertaken with Rent Choice participants one month prior to the six month rent subsidy payment, please note that subsidy payments will never increased beyond the initial allocation.

I receive salary packaging through my employer, will this impact my eligibility or the subsidy amount I receive?

No, eligibility is determined based on your gross household income, salary packaging will not impact your eligibility assessment.

Can more than one person in my household obtain Rent Choice?

Only one subsidy can be applied per lease agreement, even if there is more than one eligible key worker living in that property or planning to be part of that household.

Can I access the rent subsidy for a property with a private landlord who is not a licensed Real Estate Agent?

No, the subsidy can only be paid to licensed Real Estate Agents. Licensed Real Estate Agents are bound by the Agents Licensing Act 1979 which requires regular auditing of trust accounts, providing more security when administering Government funding. The formal arrangement for payments within the scheme is only between Venture Housing and Licensed Real Estate Agents.

But I have an REINT Lease Agreement?

While REINT Lease Agreements are covered under the Residential Tenancies Act 1999, they are available for use by Landlords who are not Licensed Real Estate Agents.

Is there a limit on the weekly rent for the property I choose?

No, there is no limit on the weekly rent. The subsidy is calculated based on the median market rent in the area, your household composition and income, not the weekly rent of the property you wish to lease.

Does the subsidy cover my Bond and rent payments to secure the lease?

No, we must have a signed copy of the Lease agreement before we can commence payments. The applicant is responsible for the Bond and any costs to secure the lease. The first subsidy payment to the Real Estate Agent will be backdated to include rent from the Lease commencement date up to 28 days in advance.

Who does the subsidy get paid to?

The subsidy will be paid directly to the licensed Real Estate Agency. Venture will confirm the payment schedule with the agency once the lease has been provided to us by the participant.

What subsidy amount can I expect to receive?

The amount provided is calculated based on the median market rent in that location, the Key Worker household income and household composition. Rent Choice provides up to a maximum of \$12,000 pro rata, per annum, distributed over a six to twelve month period depending on continued eligibility. An online eligibility calculator is available on our website which you can use to obtain an estimate of the amount of subsidy you may be eligible for by entering in your details.

How long is the subsidy paid for?

The Rent Choice subsidy is provided for a maximum duration of 12 months. Successful applicants will be issued with a voucher guaranteeing rent subsidy payments for six months. Prior to the end of the first six months, a review of the Participants eligibility will take place which will determine if the subsidy payments will continue.

What if I am no longer eligible after I commence my lease?

The payments are guaranteed for six months. If you are no longer eligible, then the payments will cease at the end of the six months, as long as you remain in the same lease.

If at the six month assessment my household income has increased, what happens then?

If you are still in the same property, in a Key Worker occupation and your household income has increased but is still within the income eligibility threshold, your subsidy entitlement may be reduced. If you are assessed as no longer eligible for the scheme, you will not receive subsidy payments beyond the first six months.

What if my household income has reduced at the time of the review?

We hold 12 months subsidy in trust for each Participant based on the initial assessment. If your eligibility changes, your subsidy will either remain the same or reduce. It will not increase.

If you are still in the same property, working in an approved Key Worker role and your household income has reduced at the time of the review assessment, your subsidy payments will stay the same.

How do I know which Real Estate Agents are accepting vouchers?

We have undertaken extensive engagement with the Real Estate sector across the NT and Real Estate Agents have responded positively about the scheme. Information for agents is included on the voucher with contact details for Venture should they need to know more.

What happens if I break my lease?

If you break your lease agreement to vacate the private rental property prior to the end of the fixed lease term, the standard Residential Tenancies Act 1999 obligations apply. The subsidy payments will continue for the property until your rent obligations cease.

You can reapply for Rent Choice for another property if you still meet the eligibility criteria.

What happens when the subsidy stops?

We will advise you when the subsidy is due to expire, including the date this will occur and when the last payment will be made. The subsidy may be six months or up to one year.

Once the subsidy ceases, you will then be responsible for the total rent.

How can I find out more about Rent Choice?

You can find more information on our website

<https://www.venturehousing.org.au>

or scan the QR Code to access our Rent Choice webpage

