

# Policy Note on the Temporary Rental Assistance Benefit

## 1. Background

On March 30th, the PEI government announced a \$1M Temporary Rental Assistance Benefit (“TRAB”) to support Islanders struggling to pay rent during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Few specifics were provided, and Islanders were encouraged to call a new toll-free hotline for more information.

The program was modelled from an existing rent supplement program administered by the Department of Social Development and Housing. Under that program, there are 1278 beneficiaries<sup>2</sup> and program spending is approximately \$8.57 million<sup>3</sup>.

According to the most recent CMHC data, the average rent on PEI is \$882 and there are approximately 6,375 private apartment units on PEI.<sup>4</sup> The 2016 Census reported that there were 17,575 rental households on PEI, which has likely increased over time.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Policy Recommendations

To ensure the TRAB meets the needs of Islanders, the Official Opposition have the following policy recommendations:

- 1) Eligibility should include all tenants, **including students, who spend 67% of their income on housing**<sup>6</sup>;
- 2) Eligibility criteria should be made public, along with the award criteria;
- 3) The TRAB should be made available in April to cover April rent, along with a written confirmation of a successful application that can be provided to landlords until funds are

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/news/province-announces-rental-support-measures>

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence w/ Sonya Cobb.

<sup>3</sup> Response to written question 10. September 11, 2019.  
[https://docs.assembly.pe.ca/download/dms?objectId=25529bb4-279c-412e-9f1f-8e704d0b8f66&fileName=66110\\_answer-10.pdf](https://docs.assembly.pe.ca/download/dms?objectId=25529bb4-279c-412e-9f1f-8e704d0b8f66&fileName=66110_answer-10.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/data-and-research/data-tables/rental-market-report-data-tables>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=11&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&SearchText=Prince+Edward+Island&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Housing&TABID=1&type=0>

<sup>6</sup> <https://twitter.com/emmamdrake/status/1244719812993040389>

released. Payment of rent voids any notice of termination related to the non-payment of rent, even if the payment occurs within 10 days of the notice being served<sup>7</sup>;

- 4) The TRAB should be offered on an ongoing basis with a suitable level of investment until the public health emergency has subsided and the public is able to return to work;
- 5) Government should increase the total amount of support available and the number of recipients based on demand;
- 6) Applicants should be able to access the program through an online process; and
- 7) Approved applicants should not need to re-apply in subsequent months.

---

<sup>7</sup> See section 13 of the *Rental of Residential Property Act*.  
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/R-13-1-Rental%20of%20Residential%20Property%20Act.pdf>