THE AGENCY FOR CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

POLICY MANUAL

DATE ISSUED: June 2008	**NUMBER:** 2.1
REPLACING ISSUE OF: September 2007	**CROSS REFERENCE:** 2.2: Bilingual Services, 2.3: Communications, 2.4: Confidentiality and Access to Information, 2.6.1: Complaints and Dispute Resolution , 2.6.2: Staff Guidelines for Handling Disputes
REVIEW CYCLE: 2 Years	**AUTHORITY:** Board of Directors
DUE FOR NEXT REVIEW: September 2009	**SUBJECT:** Client-Service Standards

1. Introduction

The Agency delivers services of various kinds to the general public, housing co-operatives, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, co-op residents and other stakeholders, such as federations of housing co-ops. The Agency's administration of programs reflects a collaborative approach that recognizes an alignment of interests among these groups.

The standards of service delivery for legal clients, such as Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, do not come within the scope of this policy. CMHC has defined its expectations of the Agency's service-delivery standards in Schedule D of its agreement with the Agency. This policy sets out standards of service delivery for all other groups and, where appropriate, for service satisfaction.

2. Service Standards for All Groups

Some Agency service standards are common to all the groups to which we provide services. These standards are set out below.

2.1 Service Standards for Communications

The Agency will respond to general communications within the following time limits:

- **Voice mail left in general-delivery mail box**: within four (4) business hours;

- **Voice mail left in an individual staff member's mail box**: within four (4) business hours of the individual's return to the office. (Front-line staff will leave information about their return time or date on their voice mail if they are away and will refer callers to someone for immediate assistance);

- **E-mail**: within one (1) business day of the recipient's return to the office

- **Fax or letter:** acknowledgement within two (2) business days.

If a full response is not possible within these time limits, the Agency will give an interim response within the applicable time limit. Where possible, this fax, letter or e-mail acknowledgement should say when a full response will be available.

2.2 Service Standards for Transparency and the Provision of Information

The following standards apply to the provision of general information:

- The Agency will post contact information for all staff on the Agency website in both English and French, updated within one (1) week of any change.

- Within two (2) weeks of adoption of minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors, the Agency will publish English and French summaries of the proceedings on the Agency's website.

- The Agency will publish new or updated policy and program information on the Agency website in both English and French within four (4) weeks of approval by the Board or other appropriate authority.

3. Service Standards for the General Public

The Agency's contacts with the general public include inquiries from students, calls from potential applicants for co-op housing, and inquiries or complaints from neighbours of housing co-ops and anyone else who is neither a co-op resident or staff member nor part of another group identified in this policy. The general standards for service delivery set out above apply to the general public.

4. Service Delivery and Satisfaction Standards for Housing Co-operatives

The general standards for service delivery set out above apply to this group, with the addition of the specific requirements listed below.

4.1 Further Standards for Transparency and the Provision of Information

- The Agency will notify co-ops within five (5) working days of any change in their primary contact at the Agency.

- Where the effect of the changes resulting from new or updated policy and program information will be significant for co-ops, those affected will be notified by e-mail (or fax or mail, if a co-op has no e-mail address) sent out within two (2) business days of its posting on the Agency's website

- The Agency will post co-ops' reports in English or French on the password-protected area of the Agency's website within four (4) weeks of the date they were sent to the primary contact at the co-op.

4.2 Standards for Meeting Co-op Service Requests

The Agency will respond to the following service requests from client co-operatives within the time limits shown:

- Request for **approval to spend replacement reserve funds:** two (2) business days for an interim response where additional information is required;

- Request for **approval to spend replacement reserve funds:** five (5) business days for a final response;

- Request for **replacement reserve plan approval** answered: four (4) weeks from date submitted;

- **Request for information** (by mail, voice mail, e-mail, or personal contact): two (2) business days;

- Request for **budget approval:** four (4) weeks following receipt of a complete budget.

If, due to extenuating circumstances, it is not possible to give a final response within the above time limits, the Agency will give an interim response within the applicable time limit, advising when a final response will be available.

4.3 Standards for Processes and Procedures that Affect Housing Co-ops

The Agency will complete its processes and report back to its clients within the time limits below:

- **Validate Annual Information Returns**: within four (4) weeks of receipt of the co-operative's complete Annual Information Return, audited financial statements and signed Board Certification;

- **Report to the co-op on its compliance with its operating agreement**: within five (5) weeks following validation of an Annual Information Return;

- **Provide a risk-assessment report to the co-op:** within five (5) weeks following validation of an Annual Information Return;

- **Forward the results of the co-op's property inspection to the co-op**: within four (4) weeks following receipt of the complete inspection report at the Agency;

- **Communicate any health or safety concerns**: within no more than three (3) days;

- **Provide a co-op data report to the co-op**: within five (5) weeks following validation of an Annual Information Return.

If these time limits cannot be met, before the deadline the Agency will inform the co-op, explaining why staff cannot meet the deadline and advising when the review or report will be completed.

4.4 Satisfaction Standards

The Agency has set the following satisfaction standards for co-op clients:

- 80 per cent of co-ops responding to a survey identify Agency service as satisfactory or better in its timeliness;

- 80 per cent of co-ops responding to a survey identify Agency service as satisfactory or better as to staff knowledge and competence;

- 90 per cent of co-ops responding to a survey identify Agency service as satisfactory or better as to staff courtesy;

- 90 per cent of co-ops responding to a survey identify Agency service as satisfactory or better as to fair treatment;

- 80 per cent of co-ops responding to a survey identify Agency service as satisfactory or better as to outcome (meaning that they got results they can live with);

- 90 per cent of co-ops responding to a survey confirm that they received service in the official language of their choice.

5. Service Standards for Housing Co-op Members and Residents

The Agency has set no special standards for serving this group. The general standards for service delivery apply.

6. Service Standards for Organizations that Serve Co-ops

Regional co-operative housing federations and property-management firms providing services to multiple clients are valued Agency partners. The Agency has set certain unique standards for service to this group. Apart from the matters listed below, the general standards apply.

Further Transparency and the Provision of Information:

- The Agency will e-mail any new contact information for its staff to all affected service-partner organizations within one (1) week of any change.

- The Agency will make all affected service-partner organizations aware of any new or updated policy and program information within four (4) weeks of the change.

- The Agency will notify staff at our service-partner organizations within one (1) business day when the Agency refers a caller to a specific individual in that organization.