



START SAFELY PROGRAM

SOUTHERN CROSS HOUSING FACT SHEET

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Start Safely Program is a NSW Government rental assistance program that assists people that do not have a stable and secure place to live due to domestic or family violence with rent support. Start Safely supports those who have already left or need to leave an unsafe relationship by helping to find a safe and affordable place to rent by providing funds to help pay a proportion of the rent for up to three years and assisting with education and employment options for financial independence. People that participate in the Start Safely Program must have the capacity to afford private rental accommodation at the end of the subsidy period.

START SAFELY MAY BE ABLE TO HELP IF YOU:

- Are escaping domestic or family violence
- Are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Are income eligible
- Are willing to engage with support services (if recommended)
- Can work towards financial independence
- Express commitment to sustaining a tenancy

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1- Assess Eligibility

You will need to complete an online application for housing assistance or an application for housing assistance form and submit it to Southern Cross Housing. Your application will then be assessed to determine if Rent Choice Start Safely is suitable for you.

2 - Find a suitable and affordable property

Once you have been approved for Rent Choice Start Safely, you will then need to find a suitable and affordable property. Southern Cross Housing can provide social housing options that are eligible under the Start Safely Program. People can also apply for bond and advance rent assistance with Rentstart online at www.housing.nsw.gov.au or by phone 1800 422 322.

3 - Paying Rent

Once you have secured a private rental property, in the first 12 months you will only pay 25% of your income as well as 100% of any Commonwealth Assistance that you may be entitled to. You will pay your share of the rent to the Real Estate Agent that you lease the property from. Southern Cross Housing will pay the remainder of the rent to your Real Estate Agent. The rent will gradually go up after the initial 12 months had ended, however Southern Cross Housing will contact you directly toward the end of your first year of the lease to inform you about the adjusted rental amount.



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4 - Review

Once you start paying rent, a quarterly review is conducted to determine your household income details, circumstances and your eligibility for the subsidy. If your income increases or decreases the rent will be reassessed to ensure you are paying the correct amount of rent.

DOES THE SUBSIDY END OR RUN OUT?

Yes, the subsidy will assist the person for up to 36 months, subject to eligibility. By the time the subsidy ends, it is presumed that you should have had ample assistance to transfer into the private rental market and gain financial independence.

ARE THERE ANY ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS AVAILABLE?

Rent Choice Start Safely clients will be eligible to receive additional brokerage funds to help you maintain your tenancy and live comfortably in your new home. Brokerage funds may be used for the following:

- Assistance with education and training
- Employment related costs
- Household establishment
- Professional services that assist the client in sustaining their tenancy or prepare them for employment or training
- Counselling related services
- Transport related assistance

Brokerage funds may not be used for the following purposes:

- Advance rent or bond payments
- Rent arrears
- Gift cards



NEED MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Southern Cross Housing's Access and Demand Team on 1300 757 885 or email info@scch.org.au.