

# Rent Choice Start Safely Factsheet

## Need help finding a safe and affordable place to rent?

The NSW Government has a rental assistance program called Start Safely. It provides rent support to people who do not have a stable and secure place to live due to domestic or family violence.

Start Safely supports people who have already left or need to leave an unsafe relationship by:

- helping to find a safe and affordable place to rent,
- paying a proportion of the rent for up to three years, and
- assisting with education and employment options to support financial independence.

## Who can get Start Safely?



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

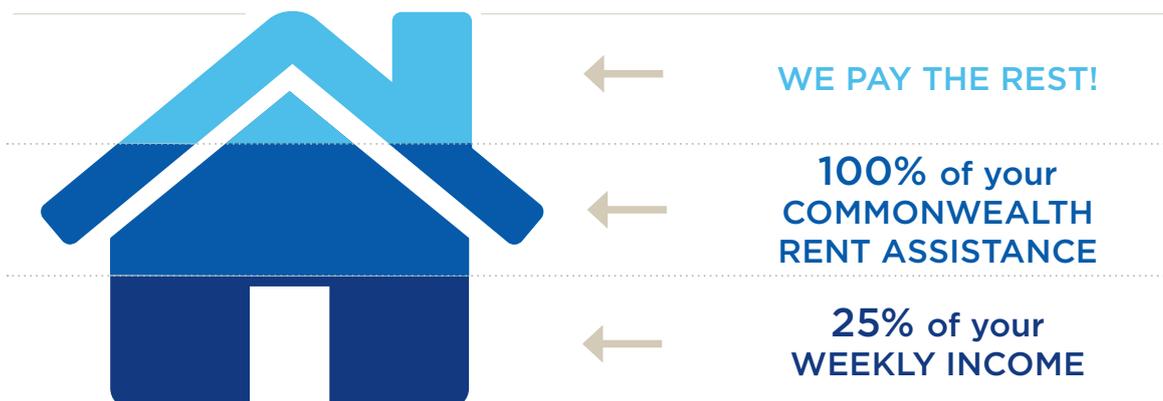
If you are on a moderate income and are assessed as at serious threat you may also be eligible for Start Safely (Moderate).

## How does Start Safely work?



For the first 12 months, you pay 25% of your weekly income plus 100% of any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you may be entitled to get. Once you have paid your part of the rent, we pay the rest directly to the landlord or real estate agent. The amount you pay will go up gradually after 12 months, but we'll chat to you about that closer to the time.

How you pay your rent can include wages, government allowances, benefits and child support payments. Your income can increase and you can still continue to receive Start Safely.



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## Affordability



Start Safely can only be paid if the rent is affordable. When considering what's affordable for you, take into account your weekly income plus 100% of any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you may be eligible for.

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## Is there an assets test?



You can receive Start Safely if you have assets but cannot access them because of circumstances beyond your control (for example, if you own a home but cannot live in it due to threat of domestic or family violence and the Family Court has ordered that the property cannot be sold until court proceedings are complete).

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## What is a moderate income?



Moderate income households are not eligible for social housing but may still be eligible to receive Start Safely. The weekly income for a moderate income household can be up to almost double the income for social housing. You can check your income with a member of the team by calling our Housing Contact Centre on 1800 422 322.

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## What other housing support can I receive?



FACS provides a range of private rental supports that can help you find and secure a new home. You may also be able to get help with costs to set up your new home, or to pay for education, training or work related needs while receiving help from Start Safely.

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## What is Commonwealth Rent Assistance?



CRA is a weekly payment given to suitable people who rent in the private or community housing market. If you would like more information, visit [www.dss.gov.au/housing-support/programmes-services/commonwealth-rent-assistance](http://www.dss.gov.au/housing-support/programmes-services/commonwealth-rent-assistance) or contact Centrelink by visiting [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink).

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## How do I find out more?



If you would like to apply for Start Safely or just want to know more, call your local public housing office listed at [www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/contact-us](http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/contact-us) or call our Housing Contact Centre on 1800 422 322.