



Roles and Responsibilities for Tenant Representatives

Policy Owner: Resident and Community Services

Approval: Executive Leadership Team

First Approved: November 2011

Effective Date: February 6, 2015

Policy Statement

Through tenant engagement initiatives, Toronto Community Housing facilitates the participation of tenants in issues that have an impact on their buildings and their communities. In meeting its mission, Toronto Community Housing applies its resources to support meaningful engagement, reduce barriers and spark social change.

Tenant Representatives represent the interests of all the tenants in their building or complex. Tenant Representatives must treat all tenants equally, with respect and dignity, this includes but not limited to: race ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed or religion, sex, sexual orientation, same-sex partnership status, gender identity, age, marital status, family status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation or disability.

These guidelines provide a framework within which Toronto Community Housing can meet the following objectives:

- Outline the roles and responsibility of Tenant Representatives.
- Maintain high ethical standard, good judgement, and accountability, as well as commitments of Tenant Representatives.
- Support activities that will enable Tenant Representatives and Tenant Councils to become more involved in governance and decision-making in their communities.

Scope



These guidelines apply to all elected Tenant Representatives when carrying out their duties as a Tenant Representative.

Definitions

Tenant Representative: any individual, residing in a Toronto Community Housing unit who is formally elected/acclaimed through the Tenant Engagement System. The Tenant Representative acts as a liaison between Toronto Community Housing and the individuals and communities they represent.

Policy Details

Get To Know What Issues Are Important To the Community

It is the Tenant Representative's role to:

- Encourage tenants to talk about what is important to them by organizing meetings and community events in partnership with staff and tenant groups.
- Keep an open and ongoing dialogue with tenants and staff in their building or complex regarding community issues.
- Get to know the local community agencies and partners through your Community Services Coordinator.
- Represent tenants on different issues that affect the community and neighbourhood.

Participate Actively on Tenant Council

Tenant Representatives are responsible for:

- Regularly attending Tenant Council meetings
- Participating actively and sharing ideas with other Tenant Representatives
- Addressing the needs and concerns of all the tenants in the community at Tenant Council meetings
- Helping to develop community plans for Tenant Councils
- Being prepared and on time for Council meetings. (e.g. read previously provided material before the meeting, review agenda, arrive before meetings begins etc.)



- Not missing more than three Tenant Council meetings per calendar year

Keep Tenants Informed

Tenant Representatives are responsible for:

- Collectively working with staff to inform their community about the decisions made at Tenant Council meetings
- Providing regular updates to communities on Toronto Community Housing initiatives
- Actively participating at building café/meetings throughout year
- Promoting the availability of Use of Space Funds and Tenant Council Funds for their community

Building Meetings/Café

Tenant Representatives will participate in monthly café/meetings with their local staff on numerous issues regarding their community

Make Connections

It is the role of the Tenant Representative to:

- Network, connect, and liaise with other Tenant Representatives
- Link with other tenant groups
- Develop links with community organizations and other partners or issue based groups

Advocate for Change

Advocacy is an important part of the Tenant Representative role. Tenant Representatives should:

- Advocate for tenant rights on topics of interest to their constituents
- Invite staff and community partners to attend meetings
- Advocate on behalf of tenants regarding systemic issues



- Encourage healthy communities by building on the strengths of tenants and encouraging others to become more active members of their community
- Host community meetings on tenant identified issues like:
 - Pest control
 - Safety concerns
 - Environmental concerns
 - Recycling Initiatives

Resources and Supports

Tenant Representatives need to make sure they know what resources and supports are available to them. Accordingly, Tenant Representatives should:

- Speak with their Community Services Coordinator to identify training needs and opportunities
- Utilize the skills of the Community Services Coordinator to learn about partners and agencies in the area
- Become familiar with Toronto Community Housing policies
- Familiarize themselves with the orientation for Tenant Representatives, Toronto Community Housing structure, budget, staff roles, Operating Unit structure and Tenant Engagement Structure (eg. Tenant Council, issue-based groups, and work groups)
- Utilize the Tenant Council Funds to improve their leadership skills and for community development initiatives

Set Some Limits

Remember tenant representatives are volunteers and they are not expected to work full time. This is not a paid position and tenant representatives should enjoy this opportunity.

Compliance and Monitoring

Action will be taken against Tenant Representatives who do not follow these guidelines, up to removal from the Tenant Representative position.



Governing and Applicable Legislation

- *Housing Services Act*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Ontario Residential Tenancies Act*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act*

Related Policies and Procedures

- Tenant Representatives Code of Conduct
- Tenant Complaint Process
- Distribution and Allocation of Use of Space Funds Policy
- Distribution of Tenant Council Funds Policy
- Expense Reconciliation Procedures for Toronto Community Housing Tenants Guidelines

Commencement and Review

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Approval
First approval:	November 2011	New	Executive
Revision # 1	January 2015	Minor changes – updated references to legislation, policy and staff titles	Executive Leadership Team
Last review:	January 2015		

Next Scheduled Review Date: January 2016