



Building/Townhouse Committee guide



2020 Tenant Elections



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Positive tenant experience



Introduction



Your journey to get involved in the 2020 Tenant Elections starts here.

This guide is intended to serve as a reference for Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) tenants who are interested in forming a Building/Townhouse Committee.

A Building/Townhouse Committee is open to all tenants who live in a building or townhouse community. There is no maximum limit to the number of tenants that can be a part of this committee. Committees will vary in size based on interest in the community.

Each committee will select two members to represent their community at the Tenant Community Action Table. This will happen on **Wednesday, April 22, 2020.**

Look through this guide to learn more about what is involved in being part of a Building/Townhouse Committee.





About the Tenant Engagement System

You are in the best position to understand the needs and assets of your community. Offering you opportunities to be engaged in activities that improve your quality of life will enable Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) to improve service delivery and create a more positive tenant experience.

To make sure that your voices are heard, TCHC is committed to providing a robust and effective tenant engagement process and equitable opportunities for all tenants.

The Tenant Engagement System is the formal system of engaging tenants living in Toronto Community Housing.

The goal of the refreshed Tenant Engagement System is to increase tenant participation in local decision-making, as recommended in the Mayor's Task Force and Tenants First reports. TCHC aims to foster relationships with tenants to build vibrant communities through diverse, inclusive and collaborative methods that give all TCHC tenants a platform to share their input on community-related decision-making.

At the foundation of the Tenant Engagement System are the needs and priorities identified by tenants through a priority-setting process. Tenant priorities inform the focus of all structures in the Tenant Engagement System. They will also inform our approach to partnership development and our program and service delivery model.

See page 5 for a visual of the Tenant Engagement System structure.

The Tenant Engagement System



1. Building or townhouse level

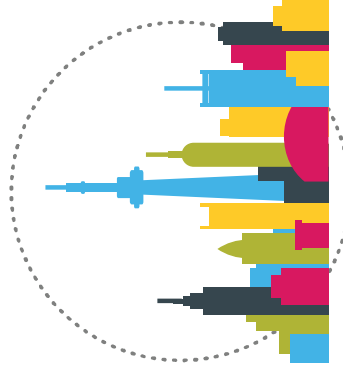


Who makes up the building or townhouse level?

1. Community representatives
For every 250 households, two representatives are elected by tenants.
2. Building or townhouse committees
Open to all tenants

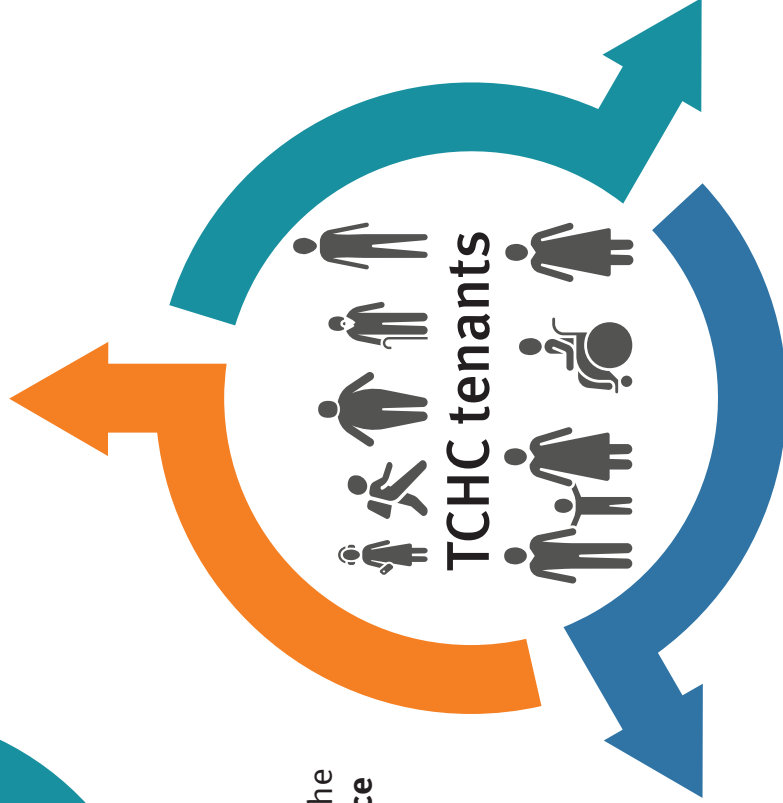
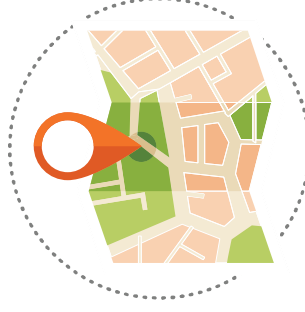
3. City level

Tenants are selected through an application process to make up the **City-wide Tenant-Staff Governance Oversight Committee.**



2. Community level

Tenants from every building or townhouse level structure are elected or selected to represent their community at the **Tenant Community Action Table.**



Addressing tenant priorities to build vibrant communities



Interested in joining your Building/Townhouse Committee?

Why form a committee?

Being part of your community's Building/Townhouse Committee is a rewarding experience and an opportunity for you to work alongside your neighbours and TCHC staff to build vibrant communities.

How do we form a Building/Townhouse Committee?

If your community chose the Building/Townhouse Committee model, watch for communications on when the open call meeting will take place in your community. Attend the meeting for your community and sign up to be a part of the committee. If you are unable to attend, contact your local Community Services Coordinator (CSC) to find out what you missed and how to sign up.

Who qualifies to be on a Building/Townhouse Committee?

A member of the Building/Townhouse Committee must be:

- A tenant, co-tenant or dependent of a tenant in the building or townhouse community where he/she lives and be registered on the TCHC household lease.
- 16 years of age or older by the time they sign up to be a member of the committee.

How is our community represented at the Tenant Community Action Table?

Each committee will select two members to represent their community and sit at the Tenant Community Action Table.

What if I change my mind and no longer want to be on the committee?

Committees are established for a three-year term. If you wish to withdraw your membership, you can do so by writing at any point in time to your local Community Services Coordinator (CSC).



Interested in joining your Building/ Townhouse Committee?



Who qualifies to be a Community Representative?

Any committee member interested in being a Community Representative must be:

- A tenant, co-tenant or dependent of a tenant in the building/townhouse community;
- A committee member registered on the TCHC household lease and, seconded by another tenant committee member in the building/townhouse community where he/she is running. You can nominate yourself;
- Be 16 years of age or older to sit on the committee and run for a Community Representative;
- In good standing as a tenant in order to be a candidate;

If you are a permanent full time staff of TCHC, resident key persons, rooming house representatives and have a family member living in the same household, neither of you can participate.

What it means to have a tenancy in good standing:

A tenancy in good standing means:

- The tenant has no arrears on their lease with TCHC or, if there are arrears, they have a signed agreement with TCHC to repay the arrears and are in compliance with the agreement.
- TCHC is not taking any legal action against the tenancy.
- There have been no reported acts by the tenant, their household or guests, on or in relation to TCHC property, that constitute a serious violation of a federal, provincial or municipal law.
- There have been no reported anti-social behaviours, which constitute an ongoing disturbance caused by the tenant, their household or guests that intereferes with the reasonable enjoyment of the unit or complex for its reasonable uses by the landlord or tenants and which has not been resolved through tenancy management.



Becoming a Community Representative

How do I become a Community Representative candidate?

1. Submit a nomination form no later than March 23, 2020.
2. You can nominate yourself, but your nomination needs to be seconded by another tenant committee member in the building/townhouse community where you are running.
3. Each application must be signed by you the candidate, which will indicate your acceptance. Applications must be received no later than Monday, March 23, 2020.
4. You will receive a letter indicating whether or not your nomination was accepted and you are eligible.

How long do Community Representatives serve?

Community Representatives serve a three year term ending April 15, 2023.





Terms of reference



The role of a Committee member at the Building/Townhouse level is to:

- Work with tenants, staff, community partners and neighbourhood groups to identify tenant priorities and implement the community action plan developed by tenants.
- Work with local building/townhouse committee members to hold quarterly building/committee meetings and events that encourage and bring culturally diverse/mixed-income communities together.
- Represent tenants in your community and liaise with TCHC staff on local issues.
- Promote the availability of funds for the community (e.g., Participatory Budgeting, Tenant Action Funds, etc.).
- Share information from TCHC with tenants in your community (e.g., event posters, updates, opportunities) as well as information about local community programs and initiatives.
- Maintain an open and ongoing dialogue with all tenants in your local community, including other Community Leaders and fellow Building or Townhouse Committee Members or Community Representatives. This may include attending and participating in meetings and sharing decisions made by the Building/Townhouse Committees or Community Representatives at the local level.
- Help direct tenants to the appropriate sources to address their concerns, for example, the Client Care Centre, Superintendent, the regional General Manager, etc.
- Participate in a mandatory accessibility training and an orientation session on applicable Toronto Community Housing policies.
- Participate in capacity-building training to enhance your leadership skills and support you as a committee member.
- Follow a Code of Conduct aligned with the principles and values of the Tenant Charter, including all requirements for accessibility under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and TCHC's Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy.



Terms of reference

If you are selected by your committee to sit at the Tenant Community Action Table, your role is to:

- Work with fellow Tenant Community Action Table members, Toronto Community Housing staff and key stakeholders to exchange ideas and identify solutions and strategies that address tenant priorities.
- Collaborate with fellow Tenant Community Action Table members to allocate resources for tenant priorities.
- Actively attend and participate at the Tenant Community Action Table every two months.
- Keep the Building/Townhouse Committee and tenants in the community informed on neighbourhood priorities and on information shared by Toronto Community Housing staff or partners at Tenant Community Action Table meetings.
- Maintain an open and ongoing dialogue with all tenants in the community, including other community leaders and Building or Townhouse Committee members or community representatives. This includes encouraging attending and participating in meetings and providing minutes from Tenant Community Action Table meetings to your building or townhouse community.
- Follow a Code of Conduct aligned with principles and values of the Tenant Charter, including all requirements for accessibility under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and TCHC's Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy.
- Participate in mandatory accessibility training and an orientation session on applicable Toronto Community Housing policies.
- Participate in optional capacity-building training to enhance your leadership skills and support you in fulfilling your role.



Principles and values



As a member of the Building/Townhouse Committee, and as a Community Representative at the Tenant Community Action Table, you must adhere to:

- The Toronto Community Housing Tenant Charter values: respect, community collaboration, accountability, integrity and accessibility, including all requirements for accessibility under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- Toronto Community Housing's Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy.
- The core principles and values of the Tenant Engagement System:

Respect: Mutual respect between all involved

Equity: Ensuring equitable treatment for all involved

Informative: Ensuring all involved have the capacity to make informed decisions

Inclusive: Inclusive and representative of all TCHC tenants

Collaborative: Working together as partners

Innovative: Continue to foster innovation and change





Candidate information



What if I change my mind and no longer want to be a candidate?

If you wish to no longer sit at the Tenant Community Action Table, you can withdraw your nomination and application by writing to your local Community Services Coordinator (CSC).

What if I have a comment or complaint about the process?

Please submit your comment or complaint in writing by completing a complaint form. You can get a complaint form by contacting your local engagement Community Services Coordinator (CSC) and submitting it to them. Don't know who your CSC is? Call the Client Care Centre and an agent will connect you to the right person.

How does TCHC support you in your role?

TCHC staff will support you by:

- Delivering mandatory training and provide learning and capacity building opportunities.
- Removing barriers to participation by providing food and transportation reimbursement, translation and interpretation support, etc.
- Providing tools and resources to carry out roles and responsibilities.
- Assisting with Tenant Action Funds applications.



Candidate Campaign: Connecting with Committee Members

Congratulations on your decision to run as a candidate for a Community Representative at the Tenant Community Action Table.

The following tips could help you with your campaign.

The campaign period is until Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. This is your chance to help your committee members understand why you would make a good Community Representative.

What you need to know before you get started on your campaign

- **Develop a key message:** It is good to share the reason why you are interested in being a candidate with your neighbours and committee members. What motivates you to run? Is there a particular area that you are passionate about? What would you like to change in your community? It is also good to ask about and listen to the ideas and concerns from community members. What are their priorities? Is there something you could do to try and address those issues?
- **Follow the Code of Conduct:** TCHC will not tolerate negative campaigning strategies. This includes:
 - spreading rumours or mistruths regarding other candidates
 - harassing or threatening other candidates or their supporters

Violating the Code of Conduct could result in having your name removed from the ballot.

Campaign information



What you can do when campaigning as a Community Representative at the Tenant Community Action Table?

- **Create a flyer:** TCHC will provide you with a template of a flyer that you can use.
- **Distribute copies of the flyer:** Your engagement Community Services Coordinator will give you copies of your flyer. It must be letter-sized and single-sided. The maximum number that staff will provide is double the number of units in your community. Copies of the poster will be printed in colour, if requested.
- **Get volunteers:** Having friends or neighbours help you with your campaign is always a good idea. They can accompany you when you are knocking on doors seeking support, help you to distribute flyers or put them on bulletin boards. Your volunteers can also encourage others to vote for you and accompany you at debates. All campaign volunteers must follow the Code of Conduct.
- **Track supporters:** TCHC cannot provide you with tenants' names and unit numbers. However, while campaigning, you can ask your neighbours if they wish to share that information with you so you can keep track of who is supporting you. When a tenant has pledged their support, make a note of their name and unit number. That way you can remind them to vote for you on Election Day. Your volunteers can also remind your supporters to vote.





April 16, 2020: Selection of Community Representatives

What you need to know for April 22:

- April 22, 2020 is when committee members will elect two tenants to sit at the Tenant Community Action Table.
- You will have an opportunity to share your vision and why you are interested in being a Community Representative and sitting at the Tenant Community Action Table.

Tips for candidates

On April 22, 2020:

- **Share your vision.** Tell committee members why you are running and give them some ideas you have in mind for change. Be clear and consistent with what you have been advocating for during the campaign. Candidates are encouraged to prepare some remarks ahead of time.
- **Learn the issues in the community and know your audience.** It is always good to find out about the issues in your community and the feelings people have toward those issues ahead of time. This shows that you are taking the steps to understand your community better. Think about ways you can connect with your audience and find similarities in the concerns they have.
- **Be respectful.** When interacting with tenants and other candidates, remain calm and collected. Avoid making negative comments.



Election Day information



What happens once voting ends on Election Day?

All votes submitted by committee members are recorded on a public tally sheet. Results are documented in a poster template and posted in the community.

What happens if there is a tie?

If there appears to be a tie after counting all the ballots, votes will be recounted. If there is still a tie, staff will declare a tie and ask the candidates to flip a coin.

If a tenant committee member is unable to vote, can someone else vote on their behalf?

Yes. This process is called proxy voting. Proxy voting is a form of voting whereby you may delegate your voting power to another committee member to vote for a candidate of your choice on your behalf.

What if a tenant committee member can't leave their home to vote?

If a tenant is unable to leave their home on Election Day, staff may be asked to arrange for a ballot to be taken to the committee member who is in the building but unable to attend the meeting. A staff member and a volunteer will go to the individual's unit with a ballot and pencil so the tenant may vote.

Important dates



Task	Timeline
Awareness campaign: call-out to join committee	Monday, February 3 to Monday, March 9, 2020
Information sessions and establishment of the committee	Monday, February 3 to Monday, March 16, 2020 (dates vary by community)
Nomination process for members to put their name forward as representatives	Monday, February 3 to Monday, March 23, 2020
Election day to select two members to represent the community at the Tenant Community Action Table (only for committee members)	Wednesday, April 22, 2020



Who to contact

Toronto Community Housing team members are available to support you. Here is a contact list to find out who you can get in touch with.

Tenant Participation Coordinators

- Central Region: Tania Reid at tania.reid@torontohousing.ca or **647-471-9768**
- East Region: Asfar Manji at afsar.manji@torontohousing.ca or **647-458-2315**
- West Region: Clint Vassell at clint.vassell@torontohousing.ca or **416-873-9526**
- Your local Community Services Coordinator (CSC). Don't know who your CSC is? Contact our Client Care Centre at **416-981-5500** and an agent will connect you to the right person

Want updates on the Tenant Engagement System? Reach out to our Tenant Engagement hotline.



EngagementRefresh@torontohousing.ca



416-981-4435

Get in touch!



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Your new journey
starts **NOW!**

