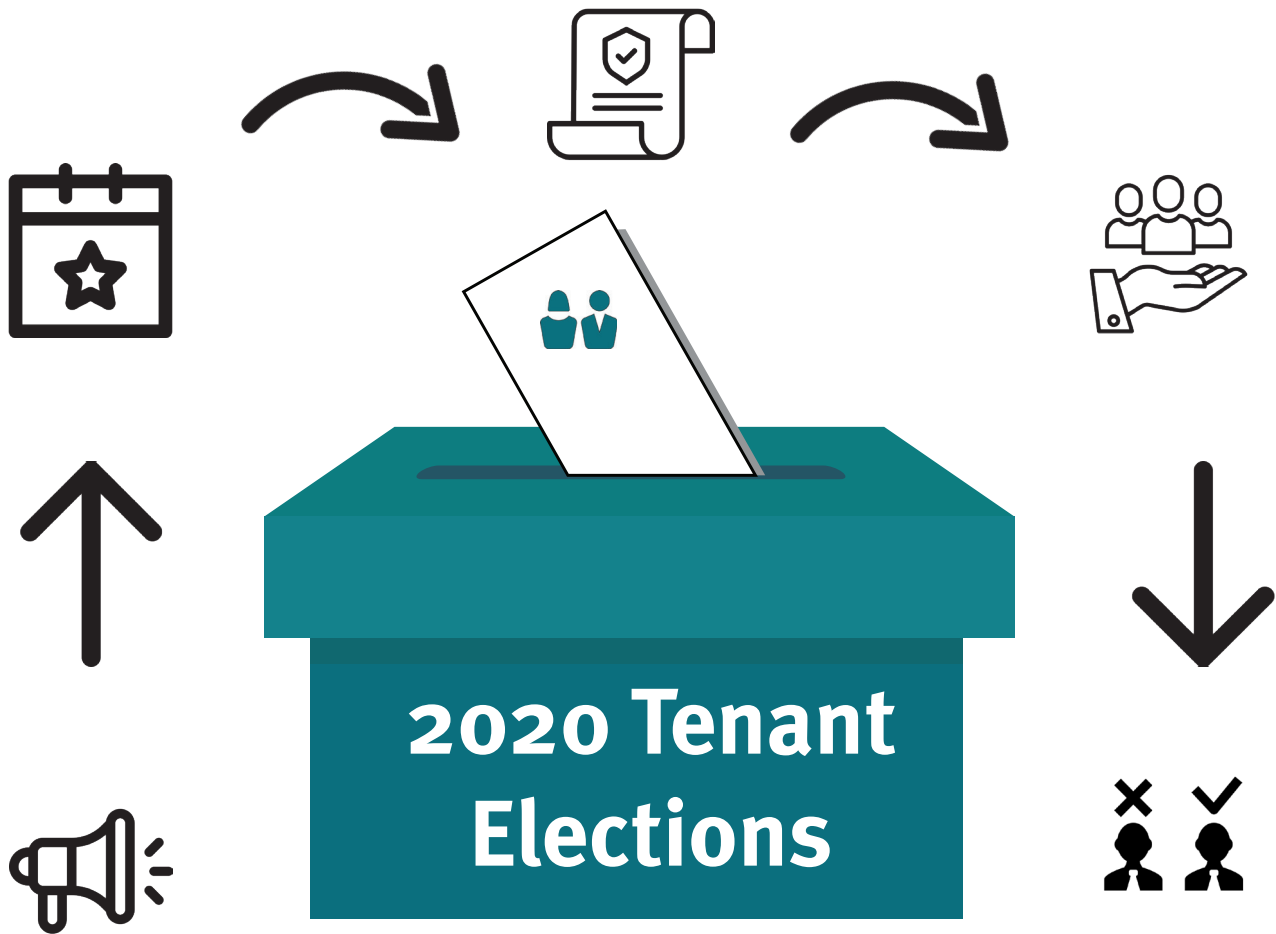




# Community Representative guide



## 2020 Tenant Elections



To request this document in an accessible format or for a translated version, please contact [help@torontohousing.ca](mailto:help@torontohousing.ca) or call 416-981-5500.



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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 getting involved in the Tenant Engagement System as a Community Representative.

For communities that selected to have Community Representatives, tenants will elect two representatives for every 250 households. Community Representatives aim to address tenant priorities to build vibrant communities.

Tenants will vote for who they want to represent them as their Community Representative on Wednesday, April 22, 2020.

Look through this guide to learn more about what is involved in being a Community Representative and the tenant election process.





# 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.

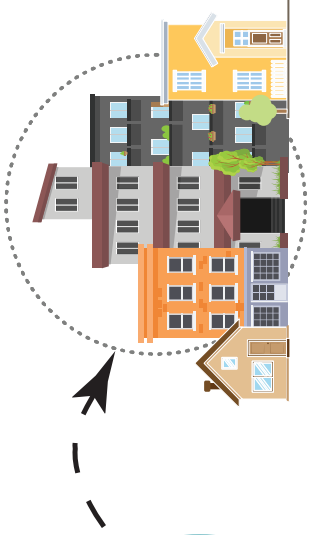
**See page 5 for a visual of the Tenant Engagement System structure.**

# The Tenant Engagement System



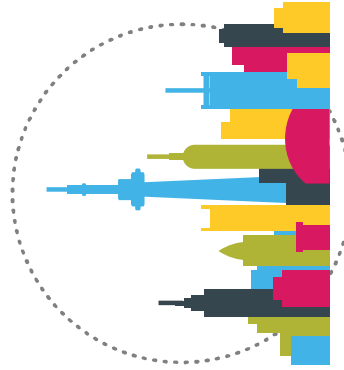
## 1. Building or townhouse level

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



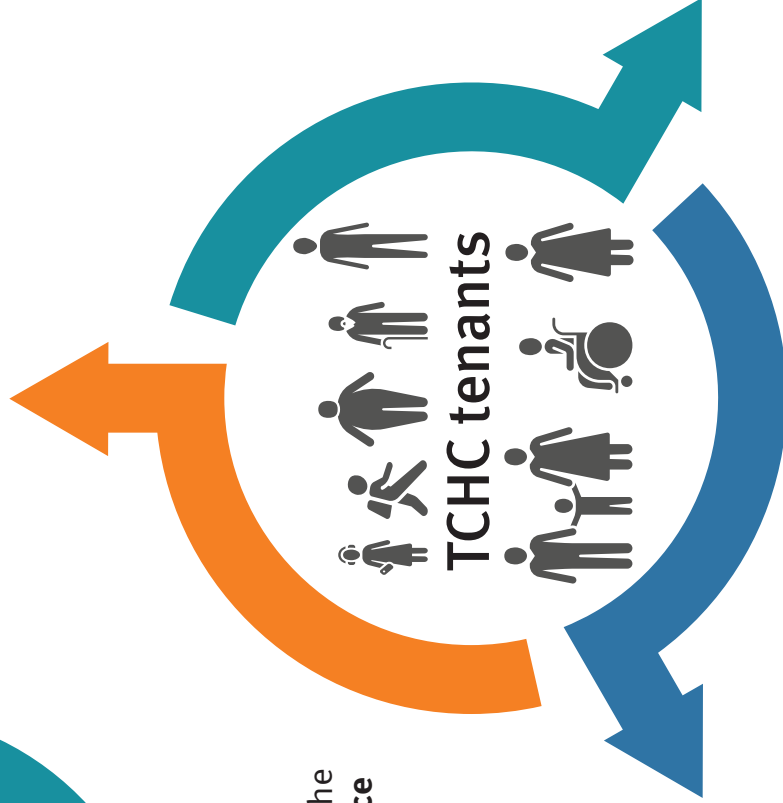
## 3. City level

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 becoming a Community Representative?

## Why run?

There are many reasons why you should run to be a Community Representative. Being a Community Representative is a rewarding experience. It is an opportunity for you to work alongside your neighbours and TCHC staff to build vibrant communities.

## Who qualifies as a candidate?

A candidate for a Community Representative must be:

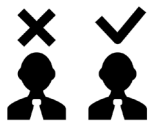
- A tenant, co-tenant or dependent of a tenant in the building or townhouse community where he/she is running.
- Registered on the TCHC household lease and seconded by another tenant who lives in the same building/townhouse community where the candidate is running.
- 16 years of age or older by the time the nomination form is submitted, or to nominate a candidate.
- 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 candidate

## 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 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



In your role as a Community Representative at the building/townhouse level, you will:

- Work with tenants, staff and community partners/neighbourhood groups to identify tenant priorities and implement the community action plan developed by tenants.
- Work with local Community Representatives 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 source to address their concerns for example, the Client Care Centre, Superintendent, the regional General Manager or Assistant General Manager, etc.).
- Participate in 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 Community Representative.
- 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

As a Community Representative, your role at the Tenant Community Action Table is to:

- Work with your 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 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 attendance and participation in meetings and providing minutes from Tenant Community Action Table meetings to their 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 roles.



# Principles and values



As a Community Representative, you must adhere to:

- The Toronto Community Housing Tenant Charter values: respect, community collaboration, accountability, integrity, accessibility, including all requirements 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 be a Community Representative candidate, 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). Don't know who your CSC is? Call the Client Care Centre and an agent will connect you to the right person. Submit your complaint form to your local CSC once complete.

## 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.



# Campaign information

Congratulations on your decision to run as a candidate for a Community Representative.

The following tips could help you with your campaign efforts.

The campaign period is until Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.. This is your chance to help tenants understand why you would make a good Community Representative. There are three ways for you to do that:

- Creating and posting a campaign flyer introducing yourself and what you aim to do.
- Connecting with tenants face-to-face, in the lobby, at their door or other places in the community.
- Hosting a candidate meeting.

## **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. 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:
    - damaging or vandalizing other candidates' materials
    - spreading rumours or mistruths regarding other candidates
    - harassing or threatening other candidates or their supporters
- Violating the Code of Conduct could result in a candidate being removed from the ballot.

# Campaign information



## What you can do to campaign as a Community Representative:

- **Creating 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.





# Campaign information

## What you need to know when preparing for all candidate meetings:

Communities can have up to six Community Representatives, depending on the community size. There will be two Community Representatives for every 250 households. If there are more than six candidates in your area running for that position, there will be an opportunity to host an all candidates meeting in the community.

## What is the purpose of an all candidates meeting?

At an all candidates meeting, you can:

- **Share your vision.** Tell tenants 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 the meeting.
- **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. If other candidates are being disrespectful, the moderator will intervene to make sure the meeting continues in a respectful manner.



# Election Day information



## What you need to know for Election Day:

- You are not allowed to campaign in your building or near the polling station on Election Day.
- No one is allowed to linger in the polling station. Once you have submitted your vote, you must leave the polling station. Only polling station staff and authorized volunteers are allowed.

## What voters need to know for Election Day:

- Each voter must present identification at the time of registering at the polling station.
- All tenants over the age of 16 are eligible to vote.
- Tenants may only vote once and can only vote in their designated polling station.
- Voters will get a blank ballot initialed by the Poll Captain. Once they receive their blank ballot, they must go behind the voting screen, mark their ballot, fold it and place it in the ballot box.

## What happens once voting ends on Election Day:

All voters may return to the polling station once voting closes for a public ballot count and announcement of the results. Two tenant volunteers will participate in the public counting of the ballots. When all observers arrive, the ballot box will be opened for the public count to begin. All votes are recorded on a public tally sheet and results are documented in a poster template and posted in the community. The results will also be communicated to all tenants. The tenant volunteer must sign-off on the results in a form attached with the ballot box. Results will also be posted in the building and communicated to all tenants.



# Election Day information

## **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, the Poll Captain will declare a tie and pack up the poll. The Poll Captain then will ask the candidates if they want to either negotiate a winner or flip a coin. If candidates cannot agree on either option, then a by-election will be held. Candidates will have to sign a note indicating they agree to a by-election. The by-election will only be held for the candidates who are tied.

## **If a tenant 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 someone else to vote on the candidate of your choice on your behalf. In order to do so, a voter must present a completed Proxy Voting Consent Form to the Poll Captain. It is the Poll Captain's responsibility to check to see if the form is signed, the voter is on the voters' list and the proxy voter is also on the voters' list and has not presented a previous proxy.

## **What if a tenant can't leave their home to vote?**

The Poll Captain may be asked to arrange for a ballot to be taken to a voter who is in the building but unable to physically go to the polling station. The Poll Captain sends a staff member and volunteer to the individual's unit with a ballot and pencil so the tenant may vote. The tenant requiring assisted voting may select their witness. Their witness can be anyone they choose -- friend, relative, neighbour, personal support worker, etc. The staff member will return the ballot to the poll station, deposit it in the ballot box and give the Poll Captain the name of the voter to cross off the list.





# Important dates



<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Awareness campaign	Monday, February 3 to Monday, March 2, 2020
Kick-off meeting: Informtion sessions	Monday, February 3 to Monday, March 16, 2020 (dates vary by community)
Nomination period	Monday, February 3 to Monday, March 23, 2020
Campaign period	Monday, February 3 to Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.
All candidates meeting	Tuesday, March 10 to Tuesday, April 14, 2020 (dates vary by community)
Advance polls	Wednesday, April 15, 2020
Election Day	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](mailto:tania.reid@torontohousing.ca) or **647-471-9768**
- East Region: Asfar Manji at [afsar.manji@torontohousing.ca](mailto:afsar.manji@torontohousing.ca) or **647-458-2315**
- West Region: Clint Vassell at [clint.vassell@torontohousing.ca](mailto: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](mailto:EngagementRefresh@torontohousing.ca)



**416-981-4435**

## Get in touch!



[torontohousing.ca/tenantelections](http://torontohousing.ca/tenantelections)



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starts **NOW!**

