



NB RENTERS AT RISK:

THE LACK OF EVICTION
PROTECTION AND
HOUSING INSECURITY

ACORN



NB ACORN conducted an exploratory survey of its growing membership in New Brunswick's tenant community to identify issues and concerns tenants have that require both policy change and further investigation. In all, 169 tenants from across the province filled out the survey in both official languages.

The results show that current tenant laws in New Brunswick are inadequate, outdated, and are in many ways a leading cause of the housing crisis. Tenants are needlessly displaced, forced to pay rising rents they can hardly afford, and due to the absence of eviction protection, tenants are often forced to live in substandard housing with no recourse.

In this report, we dissect the survey responses that relate to the lack of eviction protections in the province, something that was clearly overlooked by the Province's rental review that was conducted earlier this year.

HOUSING IS PRECARIOUS

Unlike many jurisdictions, New Brunswick's Residential Tenancies Act does not give tenants security of tenure. What that means is that NB tenants can be evicted through no fault of their own. In most cases, other provinces require landlords to prove that the tenant is at fault (E.G. behind on rent; damaging the property) in order to evict. Evicting a tenant is much easier to do in New Brunswick.

The lack of eviction protection in NB exacerbates a wide range of problems for tenants including harassment, lack of maintenance, and of course displacement.

36.5%

THREATENED WITH EVICTION

More than 1 in 3 of respondents have experienced threats of evictions from either their landlord or building manager. For ACORN's low-to-moderate income membership, their apartments are their homes. It is alarming that such a high percentage do not feel secure in their homes.

43%

FEAR EVICTION WHEN ASKING FOR REPAIRS

This lack of housing security compounds the chronic issues lower income tenants have with substandard health and safety conditions in their homes. Due to the lack of eviction protections, tenants dealing with maintenance issues in their apartment are much less likely to ask for basic repairs.

20%

HAVE BEEN HARASSED BY A LANDLORD

The power imbalance between tenants and landlords that is caused by the lack of eviction protections makes some landlords and building managers believe it is legitimate business practice to harass tenants.

44%

HAVE TROUBLE GETTING MAINTENANCE DONE

Nearly half of respondents indicated they have problems getting repairs done in their units. When extrapolated across the province, this means thousands upon thousands of hard working New Brunswickers have issues getting basic repairs done in their homes. Coupled with the respondents who fear reprisals for making maintenance requests, it becomes clear that the power imbalance that exists between tenants and landlords forces tenants to accept living in substandard housing conditions.

TENANCY IS TRANSIENT

81.4%

MOVED IN LAST 5 YEARS

Perhaps the most troubling finding was that only 18% of respondents have actually lived in their apartments for more than 5 years.

Moving is a stressful task for anyone, but for lower income people it is even more stressful. They have higher rates of mobility issues, lack the money to hire movers, and have inflexible work hours. On top of this the rapidly increasing rents are making housing unaffordable, meaning that when they have to move they are increasingly finding nowhere to go.

We urge all homeowners, policy and decision makers, and especially our elected MLAs to take a moment and think about this: In the last five years, 81.4% of respondents moved at least once, 52% moved at least twice, and 18% of tenants reported moving more than four times.

A large portion of respondents gave reasons for moving that we consider direct results of the NB housing crisis and the inadequate tenant legislation in the province: 20% moved due to poor living conditions; 9% moved because of bad treatment by the landlord; and 14% moved because they could not afford the rent.

This is the NB Housing Crisis. The outdated tenant laws in New Brunswick have created a rental housing market wherein the average New Brunswick tenant is transient, moving from apartment to apartment endlessly trying to find a place they can call home.

TENANT PERSPECTIVES

The following are testimonials offered by respondents to the survey:

"I know if I ask for too much he will sell the house. He had sold off many other properties and doesn't really want to be a landlord anymore."

Fredericton Tenant

"When I had a roommate he would always threaten to kick her out. He makes it very clear that he did me a favour by giving us this place."

Moncton Tenant

"Landlord has been working on getting the black mold out of our second bedroom for 2 months. They originally said it would take one week. They told us to stop texting or will be evicted, and have stopped responding to texts and calls."

Rothesay Tenant

"The new landlord bought the building and made K Squared the property management. Three months later they give me a 30% rent increase and say pay it or move out. I have two kids and a disabled husband. As the sole earner for the family I can't tell you how stressful it

is the thought of having to move again."

Moncton Tenant

CALL TO ACTION

END THE NB HOUSING CRISIS

**ACORN's campaign consists of
three demands:**

- 1. Rent Control**
- 2. Eviction Protections**
- 3. Overhaul the RTA**

We will be expanding our campaign, working with our allies, and hopefully working with the government as well, to bring about the effective housing policy reforms that are required to ensure housing is safe, secure, and affordable for all New Brunswickers.

Email us at nb@acorncanada.org if you are interested in getting involved, or have any questions or comments.