

**CORE
PRINCIPLES OF
SUCCESSFUL
TENANT
ENGAGEMENT
DURING A RETROFIT**



TENANTS AS EQUAL STAKEHOLDERS

1

Establishing a working relationship with tenants is crucial. Follow these steps to ensure tenants are treated as equal stakeholders:

- Engage with any established tenant association or union, if one exists in your building.
- If there is no tenant association or union, initiate conversations with tenants.
- Hold regular meetings with tenants throughout the process to keep them engaged and informed about the project.

2

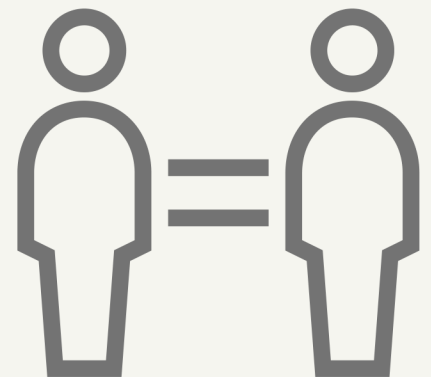
Engage tenants throughout the project to learn about:

- The local context from the tenants' perspective.
- Levels of energy poverty in the building.
- The time and effort tenants can contribute to making the project a success.
- Desired improvements in the building.
- Concerns about construction.
- Language barriers that may exist.
- How to best limit disruption to tenants.
- How to best involve tenants in the project.

3

Work with tenants to:

- Develop a retrofit project that keeps tenants housed, reduces their energy costs, and improves their housing standards.
- Ensure there are no surprises. Keep tenants informed about both good and bad news associated with the project.
- Develop more ways to reduce energy use in the building.
- Ensure that the design plan includes simple improvements that might have been missed.
- From the first planning stage to a post-retrofit evaluation, tenants must be respected as stakeholders.



STAFF TRAINING

It's possible that the staff who can reliably fix issues in your building may not be the best people to lead tenant engagement.

- Reach out to tenant engagement specialists to train your staff on how to communicate with tenants.
- Include tenant engagement as a key metric in staff evaluations. Building managers shouldn't just be seen as rent collectors! Invest in staff training; it can save you money in the long run.

If you are only hearing about problems with your tenants from your staff, the problem is likely with your staff and not the tenants. The vast majority of tenants in your building are respectable, hardworking people who want a clean and decent place to live.



NO SUPRISSES



1

Inform tenants of building management and designer intentions, such as:

- What retrofits, improvements, and repairs are planned.
- The timeframe and potential disruptions.
- The benefits to tenants, such as energy reduction and savings.

3

Hold regular tenant meetings

- Going door-to-door with important messages.
- Emailing tenants regular updates.
- Setting up a table in the lobby with information.
- Posting flyers that provide updates.
- Creating and utilizing a building bulletin board that tenants and landlords can use.
- Translating communications into languages prevalent in the building.

4

Post weekly updates in common areas

- Professionally written updates posted in common areas on a weekly basis can help keep tenants informed and involved.

2

Use all possible means of communication as tenants in your building are a diverse group. This should include:

- Going door-to-door with important messages.
- Emailing tenants regular updates.
- Setting up a table in the lobby with information.
- Posting flyers that provide updates.
- Creating and utilizing a building bulletin board that tenants and landlords can use.
- Translating communications into languages prevalent in the building.

****Warning:** Streamlining communications with tenants through third-party mobile apps may be efficient for you but is not seen as a good communication tool for the majority of tenants.

5

Communicate with the tenant association or union:

- For major announcements, have one-on-one meetings with tenant leaders to discuss things when they happen. This will help avoid the spread of negative rumors. Whether there is good or bad news, tenants need to know!

HUMAN TOUCH

1

Treat tenants as equals and with respect.

- Remember that you are running a business that significantly impacts peoples lives.
- Investing in retaining long-term tenants and treating them with respect is something you should budget for if necessary.
- Increasingly, government incentives for energy retrofits in apartments have affordability and anti-eviction covenants in place. Expect this to be the case.
- Owners of Canada's multi-residential apartment buildings have a social responsibility to house low-to-moderate income tenants.

Energy retrofits are good for your business, but they should not be seen as a way to make quick returns on an investment.

2

Upgrade Your Building, Not Your Tenants

The apartment is your investment and business. It's also people's homes.

- Work together with tenants to make the building a great place to live.
- Take advantage of government programs to buy energy-efficient appliances for your tenants.
- Provide green spaces and small financial assistance to help tenants develop a community garden.
- Work with tenants to create tip sheets on how to best limit energy use in the building.
- Collaborate with tenants to improve or develop recycling and green bin programs to establish a waste diversion strategy for your building, which can save money.



CONTACT US

Calgary ACORN

223 12 Ave SW #23

Calgary, AB

T2R 0G9

cgyorg@acorncanada.org

403 973 5744

ACORN National

715b Danforth Ave

Toronto, ON

M4J 1L2

canadaacorn@acorncanada.org

416 461 5322

