

Hamilton Tenant Support Program

General Information Package

Program Overview

The Hamilton Tenant Support Program (TSP) is focused on allowing urban renewal to occur while maintaining an environment that does not displace tenants for profits. It aims to assist the City's most vulnerable tenants to stay housed, support their case at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB), prevent possible eviction, and reduce opportunities for the occurrence of homelessness in Hamilton, in accordance with the City's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. The program is made up of four pillars, which include:

1. Tenant Defence Program *(replacing the Tenant Defence Fund)*

This new comprehensive program will fund the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic to increase its capacity beyond their current provincially-funded service levels to support approximately 200 tenant cases per year. This expanded program will support tenants through the LTB tribunal process and will cover evictions for renovation, demolition or conversion (N13), evictions for personal use (N12), Above Guideline Rent Increases (AGIs), tenant applications for bad faith evictions (T5), and tenant applications for maintenance on their units (T6). The program will ensure that tenants are provided the opportunity to adequately exercise their rights, significantly increasing their chances of maintaining their housing.

2. Tenant Organization and Capacity Building

The community organization and capacity building item focuses on creating supports for tenants to exercise their rights. It includes the direct funding of ACORN to do proactive community outreach and engagement with a focus on buildings at risk for renovations, demovictions, and AGIs.

3. Tenant Education

To support community capacity building, educational outreach is necessary. Educational materials and campaigns will include information about the various tenant supports available in Hamilton, tenants' rights if issued any notices from the LTB, and the general responsibilities of landlords and tenants.

4. Community Research Table

The final element is a community research table that will include tenants' voices on the current system of tenant supports. It will gather community input and identify gaps in the system and how they could be addressed in future years. The Community Research Table will also coordinate events to engage tenants on a wide scale, making sure that individual tenants can also have their voices heard, not just tenant organizations who are represented on the table. This outreach process will ensure that tenants from all building forms are actively engaged throughout the discussion process of how best to help serve and support tenants in every type of housing.

Partner Organizations

The TSP is funded by the City of Hamilton and administered in partnership with the following service providers:

Hamilton ACORN

ACORN is in charge of tenant organizing and capacity building and tenant education (pillars 2 and 3). ACORN's role includes direct outreach through door knocking, attending community meetings and events, targeted educational outreach to tenants about the program, sharing housing rights literature, support with organizing tenant meetings and other capacity building work, as well as direct tenant support. ACORN can intake tenants to the Tenant Support Program and help them connect with other agencies, including the Housing Help Centre to ensure that tenants facing eviction are supported with a housing plan and assistance finding alternative housing, and liaising with the legal clinic to refer tenants to the Tenant Defence Program. ACORN will also ensure that all opportunities to keep tenants housed are fully exhausted beyond tenant rights education, including assisting eligible tenants with completing applications for the City's Access to Housing Waitlist.

Hamilton Community Legal Clinic (HCLC)

Hamilton Community Legal Clinic is a non-profit community legal clinic serving low-income residents of Hamilton. HCLC is in charge of running the Tenant Defence Program. They provide tenants with a range of legal supports, including: legal advice on tenant rights and the process for enforcing those rights, help defending against eviction applications, assistance navigating the LTB system, assistance with completing applications to enforce tenant rights, and legal representation through the LTB tribunal process.

Housing Help Centre Hamilton (HHCH)

The Hamilton Housing Help Centre is a non-profit social service agency providing housing resources, stabilization, and eviction prevention services to help community members secure long-term housing opportunities through advocacy and financial support. HHCH helps tenants find and maintain housing, access subsidized and supportive housing, apply for financial assistance programs, understand their tenant rights, and prevent evictions through landlord education/outreach and mediation of disputes. As part of the Tenant Support Program, HHCH acts as a resource centre for tenants facing displacement from eviction, focusing on helping keep landlords and tenants informed on their rights and responsibilities related to N12 and N13 evictions, supporting tenants with exercising their rights, and helping tenants find alternative housing and/or temporary accommodations (for tenants being displaced temporarily). They can also help eligible tenants complete applications for the City's Access to Housing Waitlist and fill out homeless priority status forms.