

ACORN Canada

Campaigns Against Renovictions - Draft

ACORN's tenant organizing links healthy housing, rent control, and preservation of affordable stock through direct member actions, survey data, and legislative advocacy. Campaigns address maintenance neglect (e.g., RentSafeTO), renovation displacement (renoviction bylaws), and redevelopment/demolition (rental replacement/relocation support).

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1. ACORN's fight to establish the model • 2018–2021

2018–2021 | New Westminster and BC develop a transferable model.

BC ACORN and their allies starting campaigning against renovictions in the 2010s as tenant displacement became the leading way for landlords to circumvent rent control laws in the province. Originally fighting for vacancy rent control, which would eliminate the incentive for displacing tenants and struggling to amend the RTA ACORN found success with an old ally, the City of New Westminster who fought with ACORN in an unsuccessful fight to stop the mass renoviction of tenants at Chelsea Place on 6th ave earlier in the decade. Led by Jaimie McEvoy, ACORN helped the city develop a landlord licensing bylaw that took away the financial incentive for landlords to displace a tenant by mandating renovation-specific amendments: permits, protection of existing tenancies and landlord-funded temporary housing be given to tenants before a renoviction took place.

2018–2019 | Hamilton: organizing from displacement.

ACORN Hamilton's campaign against renoviction started in 2018 when at tenant at 160 Sherman Ave N reached out concerned their new landlord had plans to force all tenants out. ACORN organized at the building - holding tenant meetings, training tenants on to stand their ground against buyout offers, and a rally outside the building with media coverage. Within a year all tenants were displaced after aggressive tactics to get tenants to accept cash for keys. Members who lost their homes brought testimony, and media attention in 2019 about the renoviction that took place. This included delegating to City Hall to oppose city grants being awarded to the company

(Malleum) that renovicted tenants at 160 Sherman. Despite Council still approving the grant, this was the first time ACORN brought the issue of renoviction straight to the City of Hamilton. The campaign was boosted with ACORN National Convention coming to Hamilton. The big action focused on tenant protections from renoviction with stops at Malleum's office and City Hall.

New West Success: 333 affected households renovicted in 2016–2018 versus zero after implementation.

As expected, landlord groups challenged the bylaw all the way to the BC Supreme Court. The city defended the rules in court and won!

ACORN continued to campaign for vacancy control as a way to stop renovictions throughout the province. Spurred by the visibility of this campaign and the City of New Westminster the BC government effectively banned renovictions with legislative reforms made in 2021. BC ACORN was a stakeholder in changes that developed a provincial model that used the RTA to ban renovictions. It did this by requiring landlords to prove to the provincial tribunal that renovations were not cosmetic and would prolong the structural integrity of the building, then prove that the units or building needed to be vacated in order to evict tenants.

2020–2021 | Hamilton launches municipal campaign.



In August 2020 ACORN Hamilton launched our demands to the City of Hamilton to protect tenants from renoviction based on the bylaw from New Westminster, BC. ACORN organized a press conference and rally at City Hall over two days inviting allies, Councillors and the press to attend. After the launch, members started meeting with Councillors to find a champion to bring forward a motion. In December, Councillor Brad Clark brought forward a motion for the city to investigate what other jurisdictions were doing and to see what was possible for Hamilton. While waiting for the

report to come back, we organized an 80 person online townhall with New Westminster Councillor Jaimie McCoy to share how the bylaw worked in New West. We invited Councillors and city staff to attend.

Ahead of the report back, members organized a delegation training. 13 members and 4 allies delegated to the committee to push back on staff's recommendations - to do nothing! With Councillor Ninder Nann's support, a motion was passed to expand the Tenant Defence Fund to cover N13 evictions and send staff back to work on a renoviction bylaw for Hamilton. In 2021

members were front page of the local newspaper twice - bringing further attention to the renoviction crisis happening in Hamilton.

In June 2021, Hamilton teamed up with Toronto ACORN for another online townhall - this time with city staff from New Westminster, BC and Councillors from both cities.

Over 2021, members organized against renoviction at their buildings and started utilizing the Tenant Defence Home to dispute their N13 hearings at the Landlord and Tenant Board. We also returned to City Hall to oppose more grants to the renovicting landlord Malleum. This time ACORN was successful in stopping public grants to the company and also won a motion to improve the grant program for vacant buildings to ensure tax payer money wasn't going to fix up building where tenants were displaced.

Late 2021, ACORN delegated in support of a motion for the city to hire a consultant to move the work forward for a renoviction bylaw.

2019–2021 | Toronto: a distinct anti-renoviction campaign.

ACORN demanded the New Westminster model from 2019. Building fights, including 245 Logan and the Leduc/Torbolton townhouses, informed the June 2021 Stop Renovictions report, tenant education, public pressure and deputations. The loss at Logan showed why resisting individual evictions needed enforceable citywide protections.

2020–2023 | Nova Scotia: provincial protection and renewed pressure.

ACORN records a temporary renoviction ban alongside the 2020 rent cap. After the ban ended in 2022, demanded stronger protections. A May 2023 Lower Sackville campout supported a family facing renoviction and called for a permanent ban.



2. Escalation and Demands • 2022–2023

2022 | Toronto under John Tory: an incomplete response.

ACORN deputations and local tenant union on Dawes Road challenged the development of a weak by-law. It was missing rent top ups, moving costs and nearby-housing assistance. July committee motions directed further investigation of these protections, return rights and outreach when buildings sold. This was progress on a weaker proposal - not delivery of the comprehensive bylaw members sought.

2022–2023 | Hamilton building support around the municipal election

In April 2023, over 50 attended a press conference; 23 tenants/members and seven allies addressed the committee to oppose another weak report back from staff. Another motion was passed sending staff back to work on the bylaw and expanded work to include a program similar to RentSafe in Toronto. In September members organized a walking tour to building facing renoviction in Ward 3 (facing the highest # of N13s in the city). Candidates running in the election were invited to attend. October 2023 was the closest to-date that a renoviction bylaw was on the table. ACORN and allies delegated again calling for the bylaw to be strengthened before fully approved by Council.

2022–2023 | Ottawa and New Brunswick: build the mandate.

Ottawa's door-knocking, five neighbourhood meetings, 145 survey responses and a 100-plus-person Tenant Rights Council made a renoviction bylaw the top priority; a 45-plus-person rally and later 50-plus-person forum with city by-law forced to listen to renovicted tenants' stories built pressure. At Ottawa's Manor Village, tenant-union meetings, petitions, demonstrations, media, deputations and RavenLaw support forced withdrawal of renovation-eviction notices. Remaining tenants could stay; though many households had already left.

New Brunswick ACORN Chair Nichola Taylor joined ACORN when her Fredericton apartment was being renovicted. NB ACORN held an action at her building that highlighted the need for a province-wide ban on renovictions. While unsuccessful in stopping the renoviction in her own building, province-wide renoviction regulations, which have subsequently come into effect along with rent control and security of tenure as part of major victories won by NB ACORN this decade. The renoviction ban is similar to the RTA reform model developed in BC.

2023 | Hamilton, London and Toronto

Three Ontarian cities held a joint Family Properties action with allies. Hamilton tenants also won a tribunal fight at 1083 Main.

2023 | London draws national press attention

ACORN's first neighbourhood organizing drive in London centres around the mass-renovictions of 1270/1280 Webster st - two buildings bought by notorious renovictor Michael Klein. First action draws 60 tenants out to protest at the buildings and is followed by regular meetings, rallies, and news stories. NDP leader Jagmeet Singh holds a press conference with ACORN members highlighting the issue.

2024 | Federal Government announces 2024 Budget

The federal Government announced in their 2024 budget a commitment to cracking down on renovictions.



3. Ontario breakthroughs and coordinated pressure • 2024

January 2024 | Hamilton wins Ontario's first strong model.

On January 17th 2024 Hamilton Council voted unanimously in favour of the city passing a strong anti-renoviction bylaw.

After a 5 year effort and several motions passed to direct the creation of a made in Hamilton bylaw (based on the success of policy from New Westminster, BC), we were ecstatic to support the Renovations License and Relocation Bylaw.

The bylaw will require landlords to apply for a licence within 7 days of issuing a tenant a N13. The license asks for information on the landlord and rental unit, requires tenants be provided with a Tenant's Rights and Entitlements Package and most significantly that tenants that request first right of refusal (their unit back post reno at the same rent!), the landlord must provide temporary accommodation for the duration of the renovations OR a rental top up for the duration of the renovations. Key allies that supported the campaign - Hamilton Community Legal Clinic,

Hamilton Community Benefits Network, Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario and Claire Michela from RavenLaw LLP.

This win was only possible because of every single member that supported this campaign! All the delegations, interviews, City Hall meetings, town halls, press conferences and rallies and relentless pressure to demand our Hamilton do something to address the crisis.

February 2024 | Research becomes coordinated organizing.

ACORN launched its Ontario Renoviction Report with actions in Ottawa, Toronto, London and Kitchener. Tenant testimony and tribunal-data analysis supported a province-wide demand for Hamilton-style bylaws and vacancy control. Report found that renovictions from 2017-2022 had increased by 300% across the province.

London in 2024 | Mobilization wins a bylaw, with significant gaps.

Member meetings with politicians secured January directions to investigate protections. Hamilton ACORN shared its campaign lessons at a large townhall; tenant testimony, protests and a city-hall campout kept pressure on the city to continue its work. Council passed the bylaw September 24, including licensing, qualified persons report proving vacancy is needed, stronger penalties and a review in one year's time. It omitted ACORN's demand for landlord-funded temporary accommodation or rent top-ups; members continued campaigning.

Toronto in 2024 | Hamilton's example strengthens the campaign.

February deputations secured unanimous committee support for investigating a stronger bylaw. A June press conference united ACORN, ACTO, FMTA, Don Valley Community Legal Clinic and councillor Paula Fletcher. Members attended three consultations; 11 attended the October committee, where deputations and allied amendments helped remove an emergency-repair exemption. The campaign secured a bylaw implemented in July 2025.

Ontario in 2024 | Corporate research connects local tenant unions.

ACORN linked Michael Klein to 21 buildings facing renovictions in seven cities and dubbed him Ontario's biggest renovictor in a report covered by the Globe and Mail. ACORN filed a Federal Housing Advocate complaint and organized coordinated October actions Klein owned buildings in Toronto, Hamilton, London, Kitchener, Cambridge, and Lindsay. Tenants used petitions, media, building meetings and direct pressure while demanding municipal bylaws, provincial vacancy control and transparent ownership. In December, ACORN and allied Tenant Unions went caroling outside what appeared to be Michael Klein's house as it was the only legitimate address that appeared on corporate documents as his company's head office. ACORN and allies convened a coalition of legal clinics, lawyers & paralegals representing Klein tenants and other tenant groups to support tenants' collective legal fight while keeping pressure up in the

streets. ACORN was called as a witness in LTB N13 cases against Michael Klein but was routinely denied the ability to speak by adjudicators. The first tenant victory against Klein was at 3 Torbolton.

Ottawa in 2024 | Tenants demonstrate the scale and urgency.

Following council's decision to study Hamilton's bylaw, over 70 rallied at city hall demanding more urgent and decisive action as ACORN documented more than 330 tenants facing renoviction in 11 buildings. National Housing Day mobilization took the demand to the mayor's office. Members paired affected tenants' testimony with legal and councillor support.



4. Implementation and continued defence • 2025

Hamilton, London and Toronto in 2025 | Fund and implement the wins.

Hamilton's bylaw took effect January 1, following budgeting, recruitment, training and outreach. London's rules began in March. Toronto's Rental Renovation Licence Bylaw came into effect in July. Its framework includes vacancy evidence, tenant information, temporary housing or rent-gap payments and moving assistance (in Toronto & Hamilton), and enforcement. ACORN won \$1.438 million and 14 positions in Toronto's 2025 budget for renovation-licence administration and public education.

Ottawa in 2025 | Win a development mandate; challenge delays.

Rallies and deputations overcame resistance: council voted 19–6 on January 22 to develop a local bylaw if the province did not put the renoviction changes it announced in Bill 97 in effect by April. ACORN followed with an April Deadline Day rally. At its October 30 consultation, 55 members hosted city staff in charge of developing the bylaw; more than 15 people with renoviction experience and a RavenLaw lawyer contributed evidence. ACORN pressures new owners of

low-rise buildings on des peres blanc and a high-rise in Ottawa's west end (Aspen Towers) to withdraw eviction notices.

Waterloo Region and Peel in 2025 | Organize for the next bylaws.

Tenant-union fights, a January town hall sharing Hamilton's lessons, surveys, report launches, direct actions and council mobilization advanced Waterloo and Kitchener proposals. Mississauga met with city staff sharing ACORN's demands for strong protections, flooded public consultations and city surveys, demonstrating large community support.

Ontario in 2025 | ACORN Tenant unions protect people left outside new rules.

At London's 1270/1280 Webster, 2½ years of door-knocking, leadership development, meetings, rallies, direct actions blocking the sheriff, petitions, deputations at city hall, and constant media coverage secured withdrawal of remaining N13s. The bylaw was not retroactive, so the campaign remained essential; approximately 40 households' homes were saved. Separate victories included Kitchener's 267 Traynor, and Hamilton's 103 Emerald and 325/325A James Historic firsts at the LTB - LTB adjudicators join 221 Melvin and 508 Dawes cases after 150 supporters attend Melvin hearing in solidarity. This was the first time buildings from different cities had their cases combined and was a first step in piercing the corporate veil. Ultimately, a mega hearing never occurred as Klein began withdrawing N13 notices, leading to massive wins in a dozen buildings.

New Brunswick in 2025 | Turn provincial protections into practical defence.

Outreach and rights workshops accompanied the 2025 rent cap. September action in Moncton challenged false renovation-eviction notices despite earlier reforms. Members continued demanding closure of displacement loopholes so rent control would protect existing tenants.



5. Further wins, weaker outcomes and unfinished work • 2026

January | Hamilton evaluates; Waterloo wins.

Hamilton ACORN reported zero successful N13 applications after the bylaw's first year through an organizational report. In Waterloo, rallies and delegations overcame staff opposition and secured a January breakthrough; ACORN's later comparison identifies rent gap and moving-cost protections as the standard Kitchener should match.

April | Peel and Kitchener advance.

Peel ACORN reported Mississauga's bylaw victory April 1, with Chartwell seniors' displacement a major catalyst. Protections include temporary accommodation, rent-gap payments and moving costs; implementation monitoring continues. In Kitchener, members and allies stayed until nearly midnight, comprising over half of 24 delegations. Council approved 5-4: licences, permits, professional vacancy assessments and two staff positions, including a tenant liaison. Implementation is scheduled for January 1, 2027; ACORN still seeks Waterloo-level relocation support.

February–July | Ottawa: evidence, final pressure and a qualified victory.

Tenant testimony challenged claims that tribunal filings captured the whole problem. April's Hidden Renovictions report documented displacement missed by official records; members rallied and deputed in July. Council passed the bylaw 21–5 on July 15, effective January 1, 2027: licensing within seven days of an N13, building permits and a tenant-rights guide. It lacks required professional reports, temporary housing, rent-gap payments and moving costs. ACORN will use the 2027 review to seek these protections and worked with allied councillors to pass a motion to ensure they are considered. Motion passed to investigate similar protections for demovictions.

June–August | Expand leadership and connect local wins to rent control.

Waterloo Region's candidate education included renoviction bylaws. August organizing brought together 20 members from 12 Ontario cities, including tenants fighting a Chatham renoviction. ACORN's national campaign calls for federal housing-funding conditions, stronger rent control and protection against bad-faith/no-fault eviction. Municipal rules address immediate displacement while vacancy control would remove the incentive to raise rents by replacing tenants.

Ontario | Continuing Action

As of April 2026, two years after the first win in Hamilton, 13 Ontario cities were in the process of developing municipal renoviction bylaws with half already passed.

6. Conclusion

Organizing Model

ACORN uses direct actions, survey research, town halls, local building organizing, door knocking, house meeting, legal partnerships, and member deputations to force changes by



landlords and policy changes. Organizing continues post-passage to monitor enforcement, educate tenants, and support excluded renters. In all cases local organizing by ACORN members and leaders in buildings, fighting local landlords applying collective action and direct action against landlords win important steps. When the local ACORN tenant unions and chapters come together to fight for city wide protections we win. The fight continues to hold corporate landlords accountable both through direct action and legislative campaigns.