



# Tenant Engagement System Information Package



Positive tenant experience



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**Addressing tenant priorities to  
build vibrant communities**

# Introduction



## Tenants and staff have created a new Tenant Engagement System at Toronto Community Housing.

Over the last few years, tenants and staff worked together to create a engagement option that encourages and empowers more tenants to get involved in their community.

The goal is to create a refreshed Tenant Engagement System that is inclusive, accessible, transparent and based on tenant-identified priorities.

The proposed system and implementation plan were approved by the Tenant Services Committee May 2019 and by the Board of Directors in July 2019.

We hope that after reading this information package, you are inspired to get involved in your community and understand exactly how to do that.

**Your community, your say!**





# What was approved by the Board of Directors?

Toronto Community Housing's Board of Directors approved the refreshed Tenant Engagement System and implementation plan on July 19, 2019.

## Key elements of the Tenant Engagement System include:

1. a structure that consists of three levels: building or townhouse level, Community or OU level and City level.
2. giving tenants the opportunity to decide if they want to participate in the refreshed Tenant Engagement System.
3. giving tenants the opportunity to vote for one of four options that best fits their community at the building or townhouse level.
4. allowing tenants to establish tenant associations in addition to engaging in the Tenant Engagement System.
5. directing Toronto Community Housing to:
  - design a voting process for tenants to select the local engagement option of their preference
  - create and carry out a communication strategy which informs tenants of the different local engagement options and selection process
  - establish Tenant Community Action Tables (formerly Tenant Councils) and City-Wide Tenant-Staff Governance Oversight Committee
  - continue to apply the 52 recommendations from the City-wide Tenant-Staff Engagement Advisory Committee
  - revise the roles and responsibilities and code of conduct of elected or selected community representatives guidelines and align timelines with performance milestones



# Background



## Why tenant engagement?

Tenants are in the best position to understand the needs and assets of their community. Offering tenants opportunities to be engaged in activities that improve their quality of life will allow Toronto Community Housing to improve service delivery and create a more tenant-focused experience.

To make sure that tenant voices are heard, TCHC is committed to providing a robust and effective tenant engagement process and equitable opportunities for all tenants.

## What is the Tenant Engagement System?

The Tenant Engagement System is the formal system of engaging tenants living in Toronto Community Housing. The tenant engagement refresh started with the goal of strengthening the existing tenant engagement system to increase tenant participation in local decision-making.

## How did we get here?

- **2015:** The Mayor's Task Force final report and the Tenants First - Phase I Implementation Plan recommended Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) strengthen the current tenant engagement system.
- **2016:** A group of tenants developed, implemented and analyzed the results from the "Take 5" survey, which directly informed a set of recommendations around changes to the Tenant Engagement System that were developed by a City-Wide Tenant-Staff Engagement Advisory Committee (CWTSEAC).
- **2017:** The CWTSEAC presented 52 recommendations to the Tenant Services Committee. These recommendations focused on governance, accountability, building profiles, communications, tenant participation and capacity-building.
- **2018:** Toronto Community Housing committed to adopting and applying CWTSEAC's recommendations.

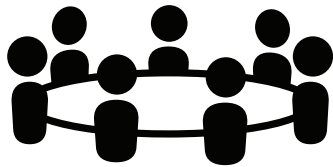


# Tenant Involvement

Through the consultation process, TCHC worked with tenants to identify their local priorities. Tenants told us they wanted a refreshed system that increases:

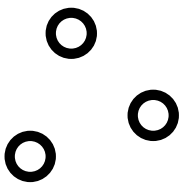
- tenant participation in local decision-making
- the capacity for tenants—regardless of age, race, gender, religion or ability—to engage with their community in a meaningful and accessible way

## 2018 highlights



**3,326 tenants**

participated in building and townhouse community meetings to brainstorm local priorities



**10,205 tenants**

voted using the Dot-mocracy process to prioritize community priorities



**2,380 tenants**

filled out the Tenant Experience Survey



**125 tenants**

participated in the Tenant Volunteer Policy Consultations



**303 tenants**

participated in community consultation forums



**292 tenants**

participated in community feedback forums

# Tenant Engagement System options

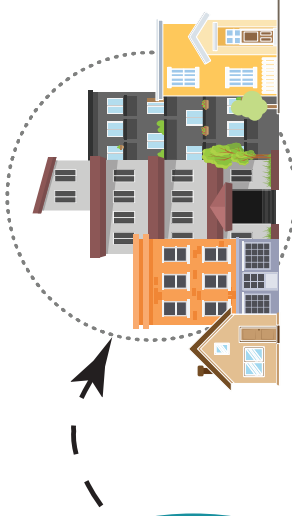


## 1. Building or townhouse level

Who makes up the building or townhouse level?

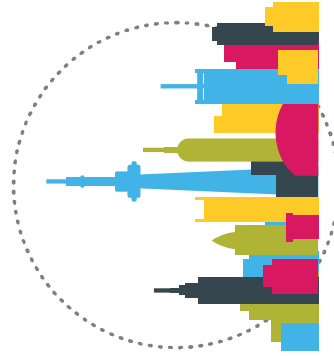
1. Community representatives for every 250 households, two representatives are elected by tenants.

2. Building or townhouse committees  
Open to all tenants



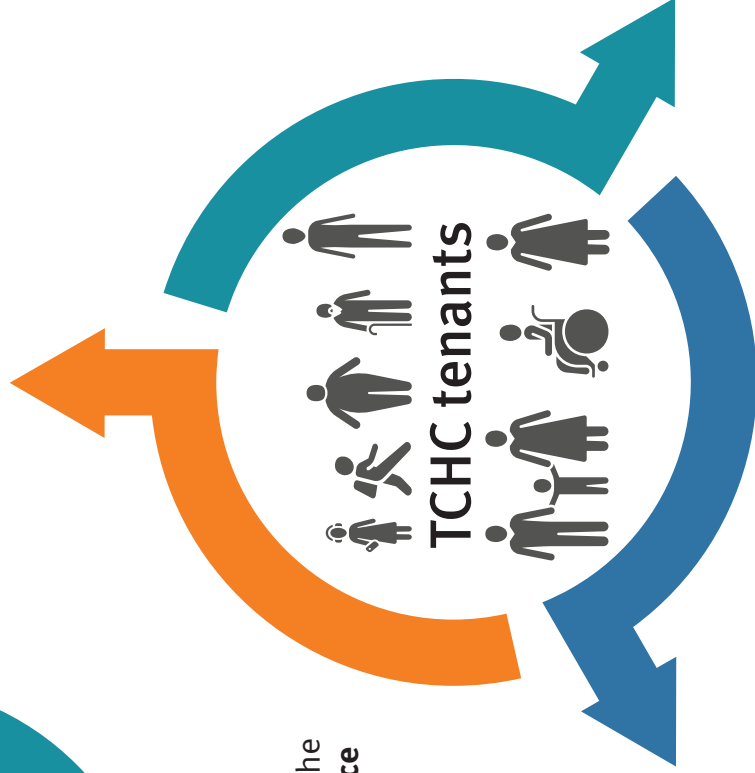
## 3. City level

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



# How does the new Tenant Engagement System work?

The structure of the refreshed Tenant Engagement System includes three levels.

## Building or townhouse level



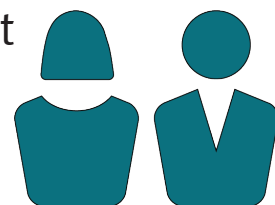
The **building or townhouse level** is made up of unique and diverse groups of tenants from a specific building or townhouse community. There are four local engagement options at the building level: community representatives, building and townhouse committee, tenant associations and no representation.

Tenants at the building or townhouse level will monitor the performance of their community action plan. The community action plan is a response to tenant-identified priorities and includes activities and solutions to address local needs and priorities. Tenants choose the local engagement option of their preference.

### Here are the engagement options:

#### Community Representatives

**Community Representatives** (formerly known as Tenant Representatives) are elected by tenants from a specific building or townhouse community. They can elect two representatives for every 250 households. All elected representatives represent their community at the Tenant Community Action Table. All tenants can run for a Community Representative position.







## Building or townhouse committee

A **building or townhouse committee** is open to all tenants from a specific building or townhouse community. Each building or townhouse committee will select two members to represent their community at the Tenant Community Action Table.



## Tenant association

**Tenant associations** are independent membership-based tenant groups. They are independent from Toronto Community Housing and do not have representation at the Tenant Community Action Table. A community can choose to have a tenant association in addition to engaging in the refreshed Tenant Engagement System.



## No representation

A community that selects the **no representation** option will have no community representation in the Tenant Engagement System. There will be no form of engagement at that level to monitor the success of their community's action plan.



## Community or Operating Unit level



Tenants from every building or townhouse structure are elected or selected to represent their community at the **Tenant Community Action Table** (formerly known as Tenant Councils). Members of the Tenant Community Action Tables will work with tenants, staff and partners to address the tenant-identified priorities of the communities that form each Tenant and Community Action Table.



## City level

Tenants and staff will make up the **City-Wide Tenant-Staff Governance Oversight Committee**. The committee will act as a resource and accountability structure for tenants and staff participating in the Tenant Engagement System. Members are selected through an application process and final decisions on membership selection will be made by a panel of tenants and staff.

## What's coming up

Next steps in implementing the refreshed Tenant Engagement System:

- Have communities vote on their local engagement option
- Establish committees for communities that voted for the building/townhouse committee option
- Hold tenant elections for communities that voted for the Community Representative option
- Establish Tenant Community Action Tables
- Establish City-Wide Tenant-Staff Governance Oversight Committee through an application process
- Provide training and opportunities for tenants participating in the Tenant Engagement System

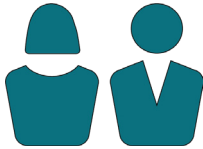

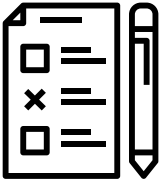
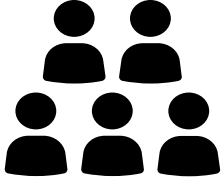
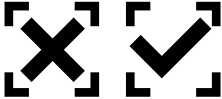





# What you need to know about your local engagement options



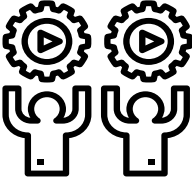




Tenants will have the opportunity to vote for the local engagement option of their choice. **Don't know which option to choose?** Here is a chart to help you decide.

Criteria	Option	Option
	<b>Community Representative</b> 	<b>Building/townhouse Committee</b> 
<b>Selection process</b> 	Elected by tenants  All tenants from respective communities will have an opportunity to run and vote.	Open call to all tenants  A minimum number of tenants are required to form a committee.
<b>Membership</b> 	Two community representatives are elected for every 250 households. Elected representatives sit at the Tenant Community Action Table	There will be an open call to tenants to join. Each committee select two tenants to sit at Tenant Community Action Table
<b>Eligibility</b> 	Any tenant who is 16 years of age or older and is on a TCHC leasing agreement	
<b>Funding</b> 	All tenants can submit requests for resources to address their community priorities	





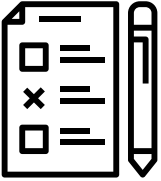
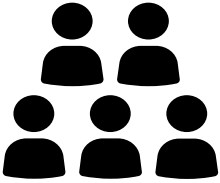
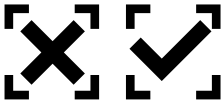

# What you need to know about your local engagement options

Criteria	Option	Option
	<p data-bbox="743 369 1013 457"><b>Community Representative</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="1149 369 1528 457"><b>Building/townhouse Committee</b></p> 
<p data-bbox="342 684 496 722"><b>Function</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="688 684 1528 772">Monitor and carry out their community's action plan</p>	
<p data-bbox="245 957 597 995"><b>Staff accountability</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="683 957 1539 1045">TCHC staff is responsible for supporting and building tenant engagement in their community</p>	
<p data-bbox="228 1236 613 1274"><b>Tenant accountability</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="683 1236 1539 1560">Tenants must follow a terms of reference, which aligns with principles and values of the Tenant Charter and the Tenant Engagement System. This includes accessibility requirements in the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> and TCHC's <i>Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy</i></p>	





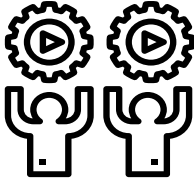


# What you need to know about your local engagement options



Criteria	Option	Option
	<b>Tenant Association</b> 	<b>No Representation</b> 
<b>Selection process</b> 	Tenant association decides	Not applicable, no representation
<b>Membership</b> 	Tenant association decides	No membership
<b>Eligibility</b> 	Tenant association decides	No eligibility
<b>Funding</b> 	All tenants can submit requests for resources to address their community priorities	





# What you need to know about your local engagement options

Criteria	Option	Option
	<b>Tenant Association</b> 	<b>No Representation</b> 
<b>Function</b> 	Not part of the Tenant Engagement System	Not part of the Tenant Engagement System
<b>Staff accountability</b> 	Tenant association is independent	Community is independent
<b>Tenant accountability</b> 	Tenant association decides	Community decides


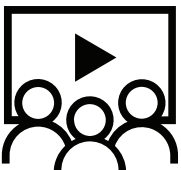

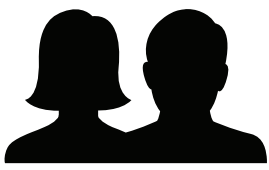

# Voting process overview



## Awareness campaign

Step	Description
	<b>Step one:</b> Inform tenants about the voting process and the different local engagement options.
	<b>Step two:</b> Do an outreach to encourage tenants to vote and to inform them of when voting will take place.

## Voting day

Step	Description
	<b>Step three:</b> Staff verifies if tenant is on the household lease agreement.
	<b>Step four:</b> Tenant signs off that they watched the Local Engagement Options video. Tenants can watch the video in advance of or on voting day.
	<b>Step five:</b> Tenant receives a ballot and votes for <b>one option</b> behind a voting screen. The marked ballot is placed in ballot box.
	<b>Step six:</b> At the end of the voting event, two tenants volunteer to count the votes publicly and sign off on the results.
	<b>Step seven:</b> The results are documented and the results are posted in the community using multiple communication channels.



# Q&A on choosing your local engagement options



## What am I voting on?

Tenants will vote for an engagement option at the building or townhouse level. There are four options:

- Community Representatives
- Building/townhouse committee
- Tenant association
- No representation

## Can my community have a tenant association?

Tenant associations are independent of Toronto Community Housing.

A community can form a tenant association at any point of time.

Tenant associations can exist or be formed in addition to the refreshed Tenant Engagement System.



## Who can vote?

Any tenant of Toronto Community Housing who is 16 years of age or older and who is on a lease agreement.

## When do I vote?

Voting will begin in fall 2019. Tenants will receive at least two weeks' notice. Voting dates will vary by community.

## What happens before I vote?

Toronto Community Housing staff will be doing an outreach campaign using multiple communication channels to raise awareness on how voting that will take place and the features of the different local engagement options. Tenants can go to [torontohousing.ca/TER](http://torontohousing.ca/TER) to watch the video.



# Getting involved



## Want to get involved in your community? Great! We can help.

We are committed to making sure that engagement continues as we carry out the refreshed Tenant Engagement System. As we move forward, there are a number of opportunities for you to get involved.

Here are some ways to get involved:

- Help your community finalize their community action plan
- Identify the non-capital items that will improve your community through the Participatory Budgeting program
- Apply for the Tenant Action Funds (previously known as Tenant Council Funds) to get funding for a project or initiative that will address your community priorities
- Participate in local events and initiatives

Talk with your engagement Community Services Coordinator (CSC) to help connect you to the resources you're looking for. Not sure who your CSC is? Call our Client Care Centre at **416-981-5500** and they will help you find the right person.

Engagement staff are also trained to make sure TCHC can support your needs.





# 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.**

**Your local Community Services Coordinator can provide you with more information if you:**

- need support in starting community projects
- need support in creating communication posters
- want to book a meeting space
- want more information about the services and resources around your community and at Toronto Community Housing

**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!**



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