

## Housing & Homeless Services Network

# Agenda

**Wednesday, Sept. 8, 2010  
490 Sherbourne St.  
Main Floor Amenity Room**

9:00 – 9:15 a.m.      Coffee and Networking

9:15 – 11:00 a.m.

- 1.      Municipal Elections, Joanne Wheatley, Toronto Elections**
- 2.      Housing Programs and Supports, Michael Higgins, Habitat Services**
- 3.      Housing Programs and Supports, Jason Zigelstein, Fife House**
- 4.      Toronto Bed Bug Project, Alicia Lowe, Toronto Public Health**
- 5.      New Business/Announcements**

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Future agenda items:

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# Housing & Homeless Services Network

## Minutes

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

Metro Hall, Room 308

**Attending:** Ron Barrow, Tammy Bays, Alakananda Brahma, Peggy Byrne, Jahvon Christian, Lorraine Clarke, Dale Coppins, Caroline Crawford, Dawn D’Cruz, Geordie Dent, Charlie Diamond, Fernelle Edmund, Sarah Fernando, Lorne Gratton, Alexandra Gunn, April Hawley, Jennifer Humphries, Janet Huynh, Dennis Lee, Dora Londen, Kate Love, Cheery MacIntyre, Mary-Jane McKitterick, Steve Milne, Mariruth Morton, Rodney Nembhard, Fanny Paz, Morag Perkins, Michael Rosenberg, Sonja Samsa, Shazia Shahid, Dexter Smith, Nicole Stewart, Christine Swearing, Alfred Tam, Soraya Torres, Katherine White, Allison Wilson, Elis Ziegler.

1. Janet Fairfield assumed the Chair and called the 6th session of the 2010 Housing and Homeless Services Network meeting to order. Minutes of the meeting held on June 9, 2010 were unavailable and will be reviewed at the meeting on September 8.
2. **Home Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program for Low-Income Residents, Mike Mulqueen**

The New Home Energy Efficient Program for Low Income Residents is a partnership between the City of Toronto, Enbridge Gas and Toronto Hydro, targeting 300 low-income home energy retrofits by the end of 2011. The work is fully subsidized, offering a detailed energy audit and potential improvements such as insulation upgrades, draft proofing, furnace replacement, lighting replacement and addition of power bars and timers.

All eligibility screening, the application process and contractors are managed by a local non-profit organization, Greensaver. The program is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 1,200 tonnes, conserve approximately 328,000 kWh of electricity and 415,000 cubic metres of natural gas. Retrofits will reduce a typical low-income participant’s energy bills by an average of \$300 - \$500/year. The program launch is July 8, 2010.

### **Challenges**

Low-income residents have inherent difficulty accessing government home energy grant programs since they are required to spend up-front and then wait for a grant as partial re-imburement. Low-income residents do not typically self-identify making it difficult for these types of programs to reach the target audience. The City of Toronto and social service agencies have established relationships with low-income residents through delivery of various programs and services. The key to the program’s success will be establishing strong referral processes through various social service organizations already engaged with low-income residents.

### **Program Eligibility**

*Housing Types:* Low-rise residential homes (single-detached, semi-detached, town and row houses) built prior to 1985. For duplexes, at least 50% of the households must be low income and for triplexes at least 66% must be low income.

*Tenancy:* Home owners or renters who pay their own gas bill. They must be a customer of Enbridge. In renting, the landlord must sign a consent form for the work and a guarantee that they will not raise rents based on the retrofits for at least 2 years.

*Income:* Income level at or below 135% of Federal Low Income Cut-Off:

Family Size	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven +
Income	\$29,931	\$37,261	\$45,810	\$55,617	\$63,081	\$71,144	\$79,208

OR the resident is a participant in one of the following programs:

- Ontario Works (OW)
- Ontario Disability Support (ODSP)
- Allowance for Seniors
- Allowance for Survivors
- National Child Benefit Supplement
- Guaranteed Income Supplement
- Toronto Property Tax Rebate Program for Low-Income Seniors/Disabled Residents
- Federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)

### **Application Process**

- Contact Greensaver: they will do an initial screen and may be able to pre-qualify the applicant over the phone,
- GreenSaver will mail an application form or it can be downloaded from the program website. A tenant who wishes to participate and meets the eligibility criteria must also ask their landlord to fill out a Consent Form. The completed application should be mailed back, along with a copy of the resident's last income tax assessment or benefit statement (the Social Insurance Number is not required and can be blacked out),
- GreenSaver will review the application. An energy advisor will contact qualifying residents to complete a Home Energy Assessment.

For more information contact:

Joseph Bonello, GreenSaver [Joseph.Bonello@greensaver.org](mailto:Joseph.Bonello@greensaver.org); 416-203-3106 ext. 304,  
 Mike Mulqueen, Toronto Environment Office [mmulqu@toronto.ca](mailto:mmulqu@toronto.ca); 416-338-5373,  
 Cheryl Bezanson, Enbridge [cheryl.bezanson@enbridge.com](mailto:cheryl.bezanson@enbridge.com); 416-495-6199, or  
 Joyce McLean, Toronto Hydro Electric System [jmclean@torontohydro.com](mailto:jmclean@torontohydro.com); 416- 542-3047.

### **3. Multi-Residential Apartment Building Audit (MRAB), Rudolf Czekalla, [mrab@toronto.ca](mailto:mrab@toronto.ca).**

On December 1, 2008, the City of Toronto, Municipal Licensing and Standards launched its MRAB Audit program which targeted 176 of the City's rental buildings for inspection and enforcement action. This program has targeted 200 buildings for audit in 2010. This does not include the ongoing follow-up on outstanding rehabilitation and monitoring of the 187 buildings audited in 2009.

Municipal Licensing and Standards will also be introducing a number of program enhancements, including making it easier for tenants to have property standards and related issues addressed more effectively and efficiently as well as providing landlords with more specific and timely information to help them identify, address, and get resolution to issues more expeditiously.

### **Building Audit Program Elements**

- an inspection of all building common elements, including garages, mechanical rooms, waste disposal facilities, and property grounds,
- random inspections of apartment units (with tenant consent), and
- on-site availability of ML&S mobile office to tenants of both targeted building and adjacent buildings.

### **Program Enhancements made in 2009**

- Participation by Toronto Fire and Toronto Public Health,
- Individual notification of building audits to tenants,
- PSC agenda and minutes provided on the web,
- Ongoing engagement of landlords and tenants through the Rooming House Advisory,
- Individual meetings with landlords and landlord groups,
- Individual meetings with tenants groups,
- Extended hours implemented for the mobile community office

### **Program Enhancements Planned for 2010**

- Expansion of audit team from 12 to 14 officers (as of January 1, 2010)
- Dedicated two-officer team to undertake re-inspections and achieve compliance on buildings, including those audited in 2009
- Targeting to audit at least 200 buildings
- Elimination of witness fees for tenants before the Landlord and Tenant Tribunal (as of January 1, 2010)
- Enhanced notification of audits on the web site
- Enforcement protocols to be available on the web site
- Mechanism for tenants to more easily track unit Orders
- Enhanced notification to tenants of PSC and court appeals
- Orders to be generated within ten business days of the initial audit
- Re-inspections to take place within five business days of the expiry of a confirmed Order
- Currently involved in discussions on how the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario Certified Rental Building Program might be linked to the MRAB audit regime
- ML&S has nearly completed a preliminary survey of about 4,000 apartment buildings to provide a strengthened basis for audit program selection

For more information about the MRAB Building Audit Program, please visit:

<http://www.toronto.ca/licensing/mrab.htm#activity>

For a list of enforcement activity conducted and scheduled by Ward and property, please visit:

[http://www.toronto.ca/licensing/mrab/audit\\_activity\\_by\\_ward.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/licensing/mrab/audit_activity_by_ward.htm)

#### **4. Training Essential Skills for Housing Work (TESH), Tammy Bays and Janet Huynh**

Tammy and Janet briefly reported on the history of TESH. The City of Toronto contracted Resources Exist for Networking and Training (RENT) to develop a curriculum covering the essential and specialized skills required for housing workers. The program was officially launched in the fall of 2009. The TESH curriculum consists of eleven required workshops.

1. Housing Overview & Holistic Assessment (full-day)
2. Cultural Competency/Anti Oppression (full-day)
3. Housing Standards: Promoting Safe, Habitable Housing Conditions for all (half-day)
4. Budgeting & Resource Management: Putting Clients in the Driver's Seat (half-day)
5. Social Assistance Programs: OW & ODSP (full-day)
6. Subsidized Housing Access & Housing Connections (half-day)
7. Supporting our Seniors (half-day)
8. Eviction Prevention: Strategies for Advocates (half-day)
9. Working with Landlords: Conflict, Communication & Quick Intervention (half-day)
10. Best Practice in Housing Work with People with Mental Health and/or Addiction Issues (full-day)
11. Managing Stress & Building Personal Resiliency in Housing Work: A Backpack of Resources (half-day)

In order to receive a certificate of completion, participants must have attended all workshops (11 in total). There is no cost to the registrants, but they must be a member of RENT and register for the entire program. If registrant misses more than 3 of the first 5 workshops, they will forfeit their registration. For missed workshops, participants must make up their attendance in upcoming TESH workshops within 12 months.

Next certificate program:

Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010.  
 East York East Toronto Family Resources  
 947 Queen St. East (Queen & Carlaw)

The priority registration guidelines are as follows:

First: Housing sector workers with less than 2 yrs experience in the field,

Second: Housing sector workers with more than 2 yrs experience in the field.

Third: Students – They need a written confirmation from their academic advisor stating the program they are enrolled in and that they are interested in pursuing a career in the housing sector.

For more information or to register for the program contact: Janet Huynh, Housing Sector Coordinator at 416-686-3390 x 9336 or [TESH@housingworkers.ca](mailto:TESH@housingworkers.ca)

## **5. Defining a Typology of Homelessness Based on Shelter Patterns in Three Ontario Cities, Stephen Hwang**

This was a seven year study conducted by a multidisciplinary team from St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, University of Ottawa and the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group. The research team looked at the patterns of shelter utilization in Guelph, Ottawa and Toronto. These cities were chosen as they had comprehensive shelter data that would allow tracking of use. The primary research questions were:

1. Are patterns of shelter stays of single adults and families from three Ontario cities similar to those previously found in the United States?
2. Are differential patterns of shelter stays of single adults and families in the three Ontario cities associated with distinguishing socio-demographic characteristics?

This presentation focused mainly on the data/patterns of shelter utilization of 54 shelter sites in Toronto. The research concluded that there are three main groups who use the shelter system:

- Temporary – characterized by a low number of episodes of homelessness and a short duration of shelter stay;
- Episodic – characterized by several episodes of homelessness and varying lengths of shelter stays; and,
- Long Stay – characterized by few episodes of homelessness (less than episodic group) and lengthy shelter stays.

The study concluded that these findings replicate results of the U.S. research in that those classified in the temporary group represents a large majority of those who use the shelter system. Further, episodic and long-stay groups are very heavy shelter bed users relative to their numbers. The implications of these findings are that:

- the temporary group appears to require largely short-term assistance to search for and move into housing
- episodic and long-stay users require assistance *both* with finding housing and support of a sustainable nature (e.g. supportive and supported housing)
- support that is targeted at episodic and long-stay users are likely to yield the largest impact in terms of reducing shelter utilization.

To view the PowerPoint presentation visit RENT’s website at [www.housingworkers.ca](http://www.housingworkers.ca).

The Research Alliance for Canadian Homelessness, Housing and Health (ReACH<sup>3</sup>) is a pan-Canadian multi-disciplinary team of research and personnel of community agencies located in 5 cities. Funded through the Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement (ICE) Grant of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, their objectives include to:

- understand the causes and consequences of homelessness in Canada;
- examine the health disparities affecting homeless adults, families and street youth; and
- recognize the social, economic, and behavioral forces underlying these disparities.

## **6. New Business/Announcements**

### **Meeting:**

*Bed Bugs: Essential Information for Housing Workers*

July 22, 2010, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

947 Queen Street East.

### **DVD:**

*Serving clients who live with hoarding issues.*

available through RENT for \$10.00.

### **Next Meeting:**

**Wednesday, September 8, 2010**

**9:15 am**

**Fife House**

**490 Sherbourne St.**

**Main Floor Amenity Room**