



Decision Letter

Subcommittee on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing

Meeting No.	4	Contact	Nancy Martins, Committee Administrator
Meeting Date	Monday, November 23, 2020	Phone	416-397-4579
Start Time	7:00 PM	E-mail	phc@toronto.ca
Location	Video Conference	Chair	Councillor Paula Fletcher

RH4.1	ACTION	Amended		Ward: All
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Tenant Support Grant Program Updates

Subcommittee Decision

The Subcommittee on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing recommends that:

1. City Council repeal City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 797, Tenant Support Grant Program.
2. City Council authorize the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to administer a Tenant Support Grant Program in accordance with program guidelines, which may be updated at the discretion of the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to ensure the program supports the preservation of affordable rental housing in Toronto.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to include as part of the Division's 2021 Budget Submission, an increase of \$25,000 to the Tenant Defence Fund to maintain the current service levels of 100 grants per year given the increase in available funding per grant from \$1,000 to \$1,250; and a further \$75,000 to provide sufficient funds given the expanded role of the Tenant Defence Fund and the impacts of lockdowns during the 2020 pandemic which resulted in many residents losing wages and thus facing severe challenges with paying rent.

Origin

(November 4, 2020) Report from the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

Summary

The Tenant Defence Fund (TDF) was created in late 1999 in response to the creation of the Provincial Tenant Protection Act, 1997. The TDF has two components: (1) a Tenant Support Grant Program for tenants to access legal representation to fight above guideline rent increases and (2) an Outreach and Organizing program to support tenant groups accessing a Tenant Support Grant. The TDF is complemented by a Tenant Hotline that provides telephone

information services for private market tenants in Toronto.

The Tenant Support Grant Program is currently prescribed in Municipal Code Chapter 797. Meeting the requirements of a codified program, while also accommodating the quickly changing circumstances of private market tenancies in Toronto, is challenging, and some of administrative components of the program set out in Municipal Code Chapter 797 have become barriers to tenants attempting to access the Tenant Support Grant Program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report recommends program updates to increase the flexibility and streamline the administration of the Tenant Support Grant Program. The proposed updates will improve the safety and efficiency of grant processing during the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to facilitate the recommended program updates, this report recommends repealing Municipal Code Chapter 797 and replacing it with modified program guidelines.

Background Information

(November 4, 2020) Report from the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration on Tenant Support Grant Program Updates
(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/rh/bgrd/backgroundfile-158145.pdf>)

Communications

(November 23, 2020) Letter from Jonathan Robart, Senior Advisor, Policy, Litigation and Law Reform, CERA - Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (RH.New.RH4.1.1)
(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/rh/comm/communicationfile-123418.pdf>)
(November 23, 2020) Letter from Anna Kim, Co-ordinator, Nita Goswami, Membership Engagement Worker, Scarborough Civic Action Network (RH.New.RH4.1.2)
(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/rh/comm/communicationfile-123652.pdf>)

Speakers

Geordie Dent, Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations
Aaron Caplan, Toronto St. Paul's Tenant Associations Network
Dan McIntyre, Paralegal for Tenants
Maryanna Lewyckyj, Park Vista Tenants' Association
Helen Chilas, 1501 Woodbine Tenants Group
Melissa Bowen, Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)