

Improving Access to Housing Working Group
Working Group 2 – Meeting 2 – January 10, 2025

Present

Ann-Marie Moulton (Working Group Chair)
Lindsey Lemieux
Bee Soh
Chase Gaudet

Regrets

Harmy Mendoza

Housing Secretariat Support

Asha Sivarajah

Notes

Given this working group's focus on improving housing accessibility, group focused on transparency and accessibility considerations around the City's Affordable Rental Homes Program. In particular, the group discussed the 'expression of interest' process to apply for an affordable rental unit, which is a lottery-based system.

1. Check-in & Chair Updates

- HRAC members were invited to attend a consultation of the Rental Replacement Policy on January 8, 2025, five members attended
- Considered how tenant protection policies should expand to protect tenants whose landlords sell their homes, resulting in tenant displacement

2. Background – (Affordable Rental Homes Program)

- Documents shared:
 - [Affordable Rental Homes – City of Toronto](#)
 - [Centralized Access for Affordable Rental Housing](#)
 - [HousingTO Action Plan – 2022-2023 Annual Progress Update](#)
 - [Amendment to Integrate a Centralized Affordable Rental Housing Access System into Existing Web-Based System](#)

3. Human Rights-Based Analysis – (Affordable Rental Homes Program)

- Two key issues were discussed as they relate to housing accessibility, (which is one of the seven criteria for housing adequacy):
 1. Expression of Interest (EOI) Process for Affordable Rental Homes
 - Applicants may be given only five business days to complete a detailed application form if their name is drawn
 - A final decision can take months and may not include an explanation why the applicant did not receive the unit
 - This process raises accessibility concerns and can have disparate impacts on newcomers, rights holders with disabilities, rights holders who are elderly and/or have limited access to technology
 - The 'expression of interest' process is not aligned with a rights-based approach as those in greatest housing need are not prioritized in the selection and allocation of affordable rental units

2. Referral Pathways to Not-Profit or Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) Housing

- Those who are in housing need but are not members of an agency that provides non-profit housing are often not connected to key information about housing opportunities
- Many City-run housing programs are not as widely known or accessible to those in housing need
 - For example: housing workers often focus solely on RGI housing or community housing, (which have very long waitlists) rather than City-run programs
- Referral pathways from the shelter system, encampments, etc. should reflect the needs and unique circumstances of everyone who is in housing need
 - For example: those who are healthy, adult, single, can wait 20 years to access affordable or RGI housing
- Public libraries may act as a potential information hub for those in housing need or who face barriers accessing public services

4. Working Group Key Priorities

- Tabled for next meeting

5. HRAC Meeting Considerations

- Next Steps:
 1. Working group to consider inviting City Staff responsible for the integration of affordable rental units into the Centralized Access System present at a future HRAC meeting
 2. Working Group to prepare questions to Staff ahead of the proposed presentation, with a focus on the accessibility and transparency considerations within the Centralized Access System and the tenant selection process for affordable rental units

6. Work Plan for Council Term

- Tabled for next meeting

Working group ended at 2:30 pm.