

Improving Access to Housing Working Group Meeting 3 – May 7, 2025

HRAC Members

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The meeting of the Housing Rights Advisory Committee's Improving Access to Housing Working Group started at 1:00pm.

Notes

1. Chair Updates

- Working Group Chair shared they will be meeting with representatives from the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) and the GTA Disability Coalition to discuss how HRAC may align with their work.

2. Key Priorities & Planning

- The Working Group reviewed HRAC's [Key Priorities Framework](#), raising the following questions for consideration:
 - People face barriers accessing housing that is affordable, safe, and helps them meet their other needs. Is the City applying an intersectional lens to assess and understand these barriers?
 - What opportunities exist for rights holders, especially those impacted by housing precarity, to input on the design of the City's housing pathways and referral programs?
 - Are there adequate staffing and resources for housing workers serving people exiting the shelter system?
 - How is access to housing monitored and evaluated?
- Demand for affordable and/or subsidized housing outweighs current supply, resulting in the need for managed systems that support fair and equitable access to this housing.
- While there are many programs at the City for people to access housing, some of these programs can be made more accessible.
- Engagement with caseworkers and community accessibility organizations can provide key insights into the challenges rights holders experience when trying to access permanent housing.

3. Consultation on Access to Affordable Rental Units & RGI Housing

- **Overview:**
 - In response to discussions arising from the previous Improving Access to Housing Working Group [meeting](#), this Working Group requested a consultation with the City's Access to Housing Team, which oversees the management of the City's centralized waitlist for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing and the integration of affordable rental units onto the waitlist.
- **Staff Presentation:**
 - Staff provided a presentation overviewing MyAccessToHousingTO, (the City's centralized waitlist system for RGI housing), and an overview of the process underway to integrate affordable rental units onto the centralized waitlist.
 - Staff shared updates on enhancements to improve user accessibility, including increasing technology access and establishing referral pathways with shelters and community networks to integrate clients onto the waitlist.
- **Working Group Discussion:**
 - **Accessibility**
 - Discussed how the Province's single-offer rule can be very overwhelming for someone who has waited a long time for RGI housing.
 - The digital divide is a prevalent concern with respect to accessing RGI housing. This divide is not solely about a lack of digital literacy, but a lack of access to technology, (which is very costly for people experiencing housing precarity).
 - Annual reporting processes required of RGI or community housing tenants can be re-traumatizing because their housing is contingent on them being able to complete this reporting (sometimes without access to a computer).
 - The City's Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology should be considered from a Violence Against Women (VAW) perspective – this population is best served when services are less automated and more personalized to meet their needs.
 - Recommended additional referral pathways with agencies serving people in housing precarity, including people with disabilities.
 - **Transparency**
 - Emphasized that the current Expression of Interest (EOI) process for affordable rental units is not in alignment with a rights-based approach.
 - Interested to see the outcomes of the integration of affordable units onto the waitlist.
- **Next Steps**
 - As a next step, this Working Group will be compiling follow-up questions for a scoped conversation with the City's Access to Housing Team at its next Working Group meeting. This conversation will be used to inform the key priorities of this Working Group with respect to improving access to housing.
 - The Working Group requested that the deck provided by staff for this consultation be included in the Working Group's update to HRAC at its upcoming meeting.

Meeting ended at 3:00pm.