

EVICTION PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

'WHAT WE HEARD' CONSULTATION REPORT

February 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2016, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) engaged with community partners, stakeholders and City of Toronto staff seeking feedback on an Eviction Prevention Framework and proposed directions for development of an Eviction Prevention Strategy. This report presents an overview of the consultation methods and a summary of what we heard from participants. Through four in-person consultation sessions and an online survey, approximately 180 people participated in the consultation process, and expressed a variety of views and ideas for how to improve eviction prevention efforts in Toronto.

This report summarizes the ideas brought forward on the possible actions, priorities and indicators of success to inform the development of an eviction prevention strategy. The following actions emerged as key themes that were strongly supported by the majority of consultation participants:

Accessible information and education

Consultation participants supported the need for more accessible information on rights, responsibilities and support services. Additional landlord and tenant education was seen as a way to maintain tenancies.

Timeliness of response

The importance of timely responses was emphasized to prevent eviction. Suggestions to improve this included a crisis response team, more training for case workers on timely referrals and provision of eviction prevention services directly at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB).

Access to financial supports

Participants wanted greater options for financial assistance including a flexible fund for tenants in financial crisis that assists beyond arrears. A higher level of financial support for individuals on Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) was identified as important to avoiding evictions.

Access to legal supports

It was noted that more awareness and information about legal services for evictions is required. In addition, participants identified the need for greater linkages between the housing and homelessness service system and the legal-justice sector.

Building effective landlord relationships

Participants supported building effective landlord relationships including greater education about rights and responsibilities. Participants also wanted a greater number of supports for landlords to encourage them to rent to vulnerable tenants.

Coordinated approach

Participants identified the need to ensure all social support programs and services such as hospitals, correctional facilities and tenant programs are coordinated. This can include eviction risk identification at intake, staff training and a cross-sectoral eviction prevention table.

System level support and solutions

The intersection of eviction and many other issues was highlighted by participants, including the lack of affordable housing and poverty in Toronto. Participants noted that these issues need to be dealt with in tandem with evictions in order to improve the housing stability of vulnerable households.

Appendix A provides a detailed list of actions identified in the consultations.

In the consultation sessions, participants also identified indicators that could inform and track the progress of an eviction prevention strategy. Participants highlighted the outputs and outcomes they associate with both short and long term success. A wide variety of outcomes and indicators were suggested, however, the most common outcomes were 1) tenants at risk of eviction maintain their housing, and 2) tenants have increased knowledge and information before and during the eviction process.

All input and feedback received through the consultations will be used to develop a comprehensive eviction prevention strategy with an implementation plan and timelines.

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INTRODUCTION

Helping people stay in their homes and avoid eviction is an important component of improving housing stability for Toronto residents. The development of an eviction prevention strategy is a key action in Shelter, Support and Housing Administration's (SSHA) 2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Plan. A comprehensive eviction prevention strategy will build on relationships with Toronto Community Housing (TCHC), non-profit and cooperative housing providers, private sector landlords, community service partner agencies and other City divisions that encounter vulnerable households.

In August 2016, SSHA released the Eviction Prevention Framework, which presented a vision, principles and possible actions for the eviction prevention project. Using this framework, SSHA engaged with stakeholders in fall 2016 for feedback and validation of the findings, to identify solutions to barriers and to prioritize potential eviction prevention interventions.

This Consultation Report is an overview of the key findings and themes we heard from in-person consultations and an online survey. The report outlines the purpose, scope and format of the consultations. It provides an overview of the ideas and feedback that emerged in the consultation discussions and analysis on services and interventions that could be effective in reducing evictions and preventing homelessness in Toronto. The summary identifies potential performance indicators and outcome measures

for tracking progress and measuring success in an eviction prevention strategy. Finally, the report presents next steps for the project.

BACKGROUND

Purpose and Scope

The goal of this consultation was to engage with community stakeholders and City of Toronto staff for feedback on the Eviction Prevention Framework. The scope included: services for households who are at imminent risk of homelessness due to eviction; processes/strategies to reduce evictions from social housing and private market rental units, including working with landlords; relationships with other City divisions that encounter vulnerable households; recommendations for specific initiatives to prevent evictions; and identification of indicators for outcome measurement and evaluation. The consultation findings will help inform the development and implementation of a comprehensive eviction prevention strategy in 2017.

Consultation Process

The invitation to participate in the Eviction Prevention Framework consultation was shared broadly through the Housing and Homelessness Services Network list-serve (membership of approximately 1000 people). Participants had the option to participate through in-person and/or online consultation formats. Approximately 180 people participated in the consultation process. Four in-person consultations were held in October and November 2016. Three of

the sessions were targeted to community stakeholders and were attended by representatives from community agencies, housing providers and legal service providers. One session was targeted to City of Toronto staff from SSHA and other City divisions that work with vulnerable households.

All in-person consultations had the same format and content. At the sessions, each table was assigned one of the principles from the Eviction Prevention Framework. Participants self-selected which table they would sit at based on their area of interest. A staff facilitator was seated at each table to encourage the discussion, answer questions and take notes.

The format of each consultation session included

- introductory presentation on the Eviction Prevention Framework
- exercise to rank and add to possible eviction prevention actions
- exercise to expand on eviction prevention actions
- exercise to identify indicators/performance measures
- opportunity to review and contribute to the work produced by other tables

A detailed outline of the consultation format is included in Appendix B.

An online survey was posted on the SSHA website and open to the public for three months (September-November 2016). A total of 30 online surveys were completed. The survey asked for feedback on the principles and allowed participants to rank possible actions

based on what the City should start working on immediately as part of the Eviction Prevention Strategy. The questions included in the online survey are in Appendix C.

WHAT WE HEARD: ACTIONS

The Eviction Prevention Framework outlined seven principles that were identified as key components of successful eviction prevention interventions. (See Appendix D for a list of eviction prevention principles.) Many participants noted that the principles overlap and are interconnected. Using these principles as a guide, participants discussed potential eviction prevention actions that would fall under each of the principles

Accessible Information and Education

HIGHLIGHTS

- Increased availability of information on eviction prevention
- More landlord and tenant education on rights and responsibilities
- Need to increase accessibility of information for people who do not speak English, with disabilities, low literacy and other vulnerabilities

There was general consensus that increasing the availability of information on eviction prevention across the service system (e.g. in services for newcomers, employment and community centres) is a high priority. Without information

and education, tenants are at a disadvantage in situations of eviction and can feel powerless to respond to the actions of their landlord when faced with the threat of losing their housing. An increase in the availability of information and education was seen as a key factor to building the capacity of tenants to fight eviction, prevent illegal evictions and maintain tenancies.

Participants advocated for more landlord and tenant education. Many noted the gaps that both tenants and landlords have with regard to knowledge of their rights and responsibilities. For landlords, it was suggested that education should be about increasing awareness of the law (e.g. human rights code, anti-discrimination) and providing tools and information on alternatives to eviction (e.g. who to reach out to for help, harm reduction approaches). Including landlords in education initiatives was seen not only as a good practice but necessary to resolve tenancy issues without eviction. (See page 6 on building effective relationships with landlords for additional ideas and feedback.)

“The processes are intimidating and lack a sense of dignity for many tenants. Asking for help is difficult for most of us at the best of times, but when you are in need, it makes it harder.”

-Respondent

For tenants, increasing access to information on tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities included suggestions of implementing drop-in hours for tenant legal services, developing

an easy-to-read tenant handbook (with case studies), encouraging the formation of more tenant associations, and awareness-building activities such as an Eviction Prevention Week and an ad campaign.

Many challenges to increasing information and education were noted, such as the lack of access to information from a centralized source and the need to ensure information is accessible to all. In particular, accessibility for people with disabilities was highlighted as an important aspect of reaching vulnerable tenants. Some good practices that were identified to overcome these challenges include:

- develop easy to use online resources
- develop plain language handouts
- ensure all written materials are available in alternative and accessible formats
- create culturally appropriate resources/training
- ensure workshops/training are accessible
- identify ways to ensure that all agencies are sharing information
- implement tenant/landlord workshops and schools
- peer support

Timeliness of Intervention

HIGHLIGHTS

- More timely responses can be achieved through a crisis response team
- Greater training of case workers across sectors for timely referrals
- Eviction prevention workers directly at the LTB

Participants emphasized the need to encourage more timely responses to prevent eviction. The timing of intervention can mean the difference between a household maintaining housing and becoming homeless.

“Tenants need to know to bring forward the threat of eviction to workers as soon as possible, and workers across the system need to actually respond in meaningful and actionable ways.”

-Respondent

One way to have more timely responses is through a crisis response team. Participants stressed that a crisis response team needs to be able to quickly provide support to those who are at risk of eviction. It should be a proactive approach with after-hours response, expedited client consents and follow-up support. It is important that this team be structured with efficiency in mind to avoid spending time travelling across the city. Participants noted that the effectiveness of a crisis response team will depend heavily on whether there are available funds for arrears and other issues. This type of intervention must be aligned with improvements to existing financial assistance programs to be more flexible, timely and available.

Another identified action to increase timeliness is providing more training for case workers across sectors. By increasing knowledge of the signs that an individual is at risk of eviction with pre-screening for vulnerability, more timely referrals can be made and support can be accessed sooner. This

includes case workers at OW, ODSP, 311, hospitals, Children’s Aid, Housing Help Centres and more. Another significant way to encourage timeliness is to coordinate eviction prevention directly at the LTB. This was suggested in two ways: first, require easy-to-read information about the eviction process and available services is given to tenants with each eviction notice; and second, to partner with the Tenant Duty Counsel Program (TDCP) at LTB offices. One suggestion was to partner with the TDCP and LTB to have housing workers directly on site at the LTB to match tenants and landlords to necessary supports and prevent evictions.

Access to Financial Supports

HIGHLIGHTS

- More financial support is required to help households pay their rent and arrears
- Increased shelter allowance in OW/ODSP
- Improve and expand financial assistance programs for rent and arrears
- Expand voluntary trusteeship programs

Participants emphasised that the inability to pay rent is at the core of the majority of evictions. More financial support is required in order to assist households to pay their rent and arrears prior to eviction.

A common suggestion was to request that the Province increase OW/ODSP rates, and in particular, recalculate the shelter allowance to reflect the high rent costs in Toronto. Increasing access to rent payment methods for OW/ODSP clients, such as pay direct and bi-monthly

payments, will help to prevent arrears and improve housing stability.

Participants also identified issues and barriers surrounding financial assistance programs such as Rent Bank, Housing Stabilization Fund and the Toronto Transitional Housing Allowance Program. Some of the issues with these programs and funds were around eligibility barriers, slow pace of approvals or processing, and limitations in what the funding can be used for. A new flexible fund to be used for tenant insurance, extreme cleaning and damages was seen as an action to prevent evictions and keep people housed. Others wanted existing programs improved before implementing a new fund.

Expanded voluntary trusteeship programs were seen as a positive way to provide financial support and assistance to individuals. Seniors, in particular, were a group identified that may require more financial support. In order to mitigate some of the challenges with finances, participants saw value in teaching skills such as budgeting to build client capacity. They also want the City to advocate to the Province for a basic minimum income program.

“Older housing stock with affordable rents is being eliminated in favour of new housing stock (mostly condos) with rents that are far out of reach for the average person working a minimum wage job or receiving social assistance.”

-Respondent

Access to Legal Supports

HIGHLIGHTS

- Legal recourse should be a last resort for issues between landlords and tenants
- Vulnerable tenants require more awareness and information about legal services for evictions
- Greater linkages between the housing and homelessness sector and legal-justice sector are required
- Advocacy to the Province for changes to legal aid funding and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 is needed

Evictions are formally decided by the LTB, a tribunal formed to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants. The goal is to make legal recourse the last resort for eviction issues between landlords and tenants. However, many tenants require greater access to legal support to prevent evictions.

Overall, participants identified that there can be a significant lack of knowledge on legal rights and responsibilities by both tenants and landlords. One suggestion frequently mentioned was the need for more information, in plain language, about legal aid services to be included with each eviction notice. They suggested that there is value in an advertising campaign about legal rights, responsibilities and available resources. The need for more assistance for tenants to fill out forms and understand legal documents was frequently mentioned. A mobile legal support team that can go into buildings and provide on-site service to individuals who are at risk was suggested.

Participants were in agreement that there needs to be a greater linkages between the housing and homelessness sector and legal-justice sectors, including community legal services and provincial institutions such as the Sheriff's Office (who enforces evictions) and correctional facilities to ensure that there are no further legal gaps that affect housing stability.

Legal Aid and the LTB are both bodies of the Province, therefore many recommendations made were outside of the jurisdiction of the City. Potential advocacy efforts mentioned include: requesting the Province increase funding for the TDCP and Legal Aid Ontario; allowing paralegals to be covered by legal aid certificates; and removing the exemption from the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 that does not apply rent control policies to buildings built after 1991.

Building Effective Landlord Relationships

HIGHLIGHTS

- Better relationships between tenants and landlords must be formed, both in private market and social housing
- Improve education and partnerships with landlords through workshops and other forums
- Identify ways to support and encourage landlords to rent to vulnerable individuals

The landlord is a crucial party in the eviction process. When considering eviction prevention, the role that landlords play is often overlooked. Involving landlords in eviction prevention strategies is an important piece of the puzzle.

"Why not create an open forum for various landlords and social housing to get/share information on how to best manage loss of eligibility and notices of eviction."

-Respondent

Participants were overwhelmingly supportive of the idea of exploring options for stronger relationships with landlords, including actions to prevent evictions by both landlords of private market and social housing.

They identified ways that the City can help to prevent eviction in social housing. There was support to develop and implement standards related to eviction prevention in social and co-operative housing through the SSHA's Raising the Bar Initiative. The City of Toronto could provide greater oversight on rent-geared-to-income (RGI) calculations and loss of eligibility notices, to reduce incidence of errors. This could ensure tenants are not charged the wrong amount or lose their subsidy, which contributes to households unable to keep up with payments and potentially facing eviction.

For private market landlords, a significant aspect of building effective landlord relationships was educating them and ensuring evictions are a last resort. This could occur through open forums or workshops for landlords, where they can gain information on barriers that tenants may face and what they can do to support tenancies. Workshop topics could include: how to manage challenging tenants, how to set up repayment plans, human rights and accommodation,

the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and more. Many participants identified that as the City of Toronto moves towards licensing or regulating landlords, there are opportunities to coordinate and provide an important element of accountability for landlords in Toronto. There may also be an opportunity to provide education as part of the licensing process.

Another important element was ensuring landlords have access to adequate supports. It was stressed that there needs to be incentives for private market landlords to rent to vulnerable tenants. Many tenants have challenges that are outside of the purview of what a landlord can provide. By providing supports for landlords, more may be willing to keep a tenant who may face barriers or poses challenges related to their tenancy. For example, translation services for landlords with tenants who speak a different language, or information and resources around accommodation measures to support tenants who have accessibility needs related to mental health and addictions. Many participants viewed establishing long-term partnerships between landlords and community agencies as an important element of eviction prevention.

Coordinated Approach

HIGHLIGHTS

- More coordination with hospitals and correctional institutions to screen for risk of eviction
- Improved communication within and across social service organizations
- Involve tenants in the eviction prevention strategy

Participants identified a need for services to be coordinated to ensure that households are supported to prevent eviction. Services such as income support programs, hospitals, correctional facilities and tenant programs, among others, all play a role in eviction prevention.

Participants spoke strongly about the need to work with social workers in hospitals and correctional institutions to screen for risk of eviction during intake and discharge. Early and consistent identification of at-risk clients is required to coordinate needs. Programs that support tenants such as Housing Help services and the Tenant Defence Fund should also be reviewed to ensure service coordination and efficient referral pathways. Effective service coordination will likely require consent to share information about clients.

Participants suggested that there is room for improvement in communication within and across organizations, including a cross-sectoral eviction prevention table, stronger links to case management, mandatory case conferences and regional service coordination.

A key element of a coordinated approach is involving tenants in an eviction prevention strategy. To do so, the identification of barriers to engagement need to be addressed. A few ideas of how to encourage tenant input include peer support programs and the formation of tenant associations.

System Level Support and Solutions

HIGHLIGHTS

- Measures to address the lack of affordable housing in Toronto
- Eviction prevention should be a part of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy

A systems approach to prevent evictions is based upon the idea that the challenges Torontonians face are inter-dependent. It is important to consider the system within which individuals are facing precarious housing and eviction.

“Without fully understanding the problem, I don't think we'll easily land on the right solution.”
-Respondent

A significant component of this is the lack of affordable housing. Consultation participants spoke to how the lack of affordable housing and low vacancy rate give landlords little incentive to prevent evictions. As one participant summed up, “If a landlord evicts one tenant, another one will quickly move in.” The lack of affordability is also rooted in poverty and unequitable concentration of wealth in Toronto. Poverty, as it relates to housing, can be seen through the increasing percentage of income individuals are spending on rent each month. Incorporating eviction prevention into the City of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy is one action to ensure a systems level approach. Another action is to identify ways to incorporate eviction prevention or vulnerability with the City's Human

Services Integration project.

Other actions suggested to improve the system within which eviction prevention takes place include:

- gather more data on housing issues including eviction outcomes
- adopt a housing quality lens
- encourage tenant organizing and activism
- reduce or mitigate precarious employment
- research the health impact of being on the centralized waiting list
- learn from existing programs such as Hostels to Homes

WHAT WE HEARD: INDICATORS

An important part of an eviction prevention strategy is the development of performance indicators and outcome measures. Indicators can help to ensure effective implementation of short- and long-term actions and track progress over time. At the in-person consultation sessions, participants brainstormed the indicators of success that have been summarized below. Generally, the ideas for indicators focused on information that can give a sense of the bigger picture, and how to show what services and interventions are working and not working.

Indicators

Outcomes

Tenants at risk of eviction are assisted to maintain their housing

- Number of eviction applications filed at LTB
- Number of evictions avoided

Tenants at risk of eviction access information easily

- Increase use of services
- Increase number of user-friendly materials
- Single point of access to information
- Number of website views

Tenants and landlords are aware of their rights and responsibilities

- Number of workshops/meetings/schools held for landlords and tenants
- Number of attendees at landlord and tenant workshops/meetings/schools
- Percentage of landlords and tenants who report increased knowledge of rights and responsibilities
- Number of tenants filing at LTB
- Number of illegal evictions

Tenants at risk of eviction access relevant supports quickly

- Average length of time from service request to eviction prevention service
- Average length of time from assessment to housing stabilization
- Number of services accessed in early stages of eviction
- Number of community agencies with eviction prevention knowledge
- Number of services in-building and with proactive outreach
- Positive feedback from housing workers about communication and referral pathways between agencies

Tenants at risk of eviction are assisted financially to maintain housing

- Number of tenants accessing financial supports
- Number of tenants in trusteeship programs
- Positive survey feedback from clients about efficacy of financial benefit programs
- Decrease number of eviction applications for arrears
- Increase number of landlords utilizing repayment plans for tenants in arrears

Tenants facing eviction are supported through the LTB process

- Number of tenants with representation at LTB
- Number of tenants receiving Legal Aid support
- Number of tenants accessing the TDCP
- Increase partnerships with legal clinics
- Increase promotion and distribution of information about legal clinics

More effective relationships with landlords to resolve tenancy issues and maintain housing

- Number and type of cases adjudicated at LTB
- Increase number of informal mediation
- Increase number of mediation hearings at LTB
- Increase number of partnerships with landlords
- Inventory of landlord services and incentives
- Development of a coordinated housing procurement model

More effective and efficient use of existing resources available to prevent evictions

- Increase referral pathways
- Positive feedback from clients and workers about efficacy of intervention
- Number of case conferences

Reduced number of people experiencing homelessness due to eviction

- Number of shelter users who report eviction as the reason for their homelessness
- Number of diversions

CONCLUSIONS

Through the consultations, SSHA engaged with a diverse range of staff and community stakeholders on the important topic of eviction prevention. We would like to express our gratitude to those who took the time to participate in the consultation process. The ideas brought forth during these consultations are a key part of the development of an eviction prevention strategy.

This summary document presented the key themes and ideas heard in the consultation sessions. SSHA will use the feedback and findings from engagement with staff and the community to develop an eviction prevention strategy with actions, an implementation plan with timelines, and an evaluation plan. Along with the feedback on the vision, principles, possible actions and indicators, participants also noted that eviction is a big challenge; it is not an easy issue to solve and there is no quick fix. Community stakeholders called on the City to take action and move forward on tangible solutions to prevent evictions, in the context of recognizing and working to address broader systems issues such as the lack of good quality affordable housing, significant funding gaps, inadequate income supports, and challenges with the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and the LTB.

We are committed to what the City, with our community partners, can do together to develop and implement a strategy with specific, tangible initiatives. We will continue to work with our

partners and stakeholders throughout this process to ensure that the strategy demonstrates a comprehensive and collaborative approach to improving the housing stability of vulnerable Torontonians.

APPENDIX A : ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE EVICTION PREVENTION CONSULTATIONS

ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR SSHA

OTHER IDENTIFIED ACTIONS

IMMEDIATE

- Engage tenants in the development of an eviction prevention strategy
- Develop an eviction prevention crisis response team
- Expand voluntary trusteeship programs

- Incorporate eviction prevention into the City of Toronto’s Poverty Reduction Strategy

SHORT-TERM

- Implement tenant/landlord workshops and schools
- Education of tenants on rights
- Education of landlords about the law and alternatives to eviction
- Host open forums and workshops for landlords to gain information on barriers that tenants may face and what they can do to support tenancies
- Provide copies of tenant handbook/ handouts
- Develop easy to use online resources
- Develop plain language handouts
- Ensure all written materials are available in alternative and accessible forms
- Create culturally appropriate resources/ training
- Ensure workshops/training are accessible for those with disabilities
- Train case workers to screen for vulnerability
- Speed up referral processes
- Create a peer support program

- Make materials more plain language at LTB
- Create more plain language information about legal aid services included with eviction notices
- Establish a mobile legal support team
- Increase assistance for tenants to fill out forms and understand legal documents
- Add a housing worker at the LTB to provide eviction prevention support
- Train case workers across sectors to screen for vulnerability
- Social workers in hospitals and correctional institutions should screen for risk of eviction during intake and discharge procedures
- Establish a cross-sectoral eviction prevention table
- Encourage the formation of more tenant associations
- Offer translation services for landlords with tenants who speak a different language
- Increase access to rent payment methods (e.g. direct deposit for OW clients)

- Provide more financial assistance programs
- Reduce barriers to financial assistance programs
- Implement a flexible fund for housing issues (e.g. extreme cleaning and damages)
- Establish eviction prevention standards in social and co-operative housing through the SSHA's Raising the Bar Initiative
- Provide greater oversight on rent-gear-to-income (RGI) calculations and loss of eligibility notices
- Teach life skills such as budgeting to tenants
- Disseminate information and resources around accommodation measures for tenants with accessibility needs or issues related to mental health and addictions
- Review Housing Help services and the Tenant Defence Fund to ensure service coordination and referral pathways

LONGER-TERM

- Landlord licensing
- Incentives for private market landlords to rent to vulnerable tenants
- Advertising campaign of eviction prevention, legal rights and responsibilities and available resources
- Host an Eviction Prevention Week
- Greater linkages between the housing and homelessness sector and provincial institutions such as the Sheriff's Office, hospitals and correctional facilities
- Greater linkages between the housing and homelessness sector and legal services
- Increase funding for the TDCP and Legal Aid Ontario
- Boost the capacity of Tenant Duty Counsel Program to provide help at LTB
- Increase OW/ODSP rates, especially the shelter allowance
- Remove the exemption from the Residential Tenancies Act that does not apply rent control policies to buildings built after 1991
- Allow paralegals to be covered by legal aid certificates
- Regional service coordination
- Basic minimum income
- Eviction Prevention Framework Consultation Outline

APPENDIX B: EVICTION PREVENTION CONSULTATION OUTLINE

Introduction (15 minutes)

- Provide an overview and purpose of eviction prevention framework
- Outline the HSSP Strategic Direction
- Background - what we have done so far
- Share vision and principles
- Lay out the goals for consultation workshop

Exercise 1: Rank and Add (35 minutes)

- Placards with the 7 topic areas will be out on the tables, one per table.
- Ask participants to pick a table based on the topic area they want to contribute to.
- If their first choice table is full, ask them to find a different table.
- This is a two part exercise that will be completed together as a group.
- First, the table will review the existing list of actions for the topic area.
 - As a group, participants will rank the actions on Worksheet #1 in order of importance to help prioritize the actions. To rank, participants will use the following questions:
What is going to be most beneficial to clients?
What should the City start working on immediately?
What does the community/City have the capacity to take on?
- Second, the table will identify what actions are missing from the framework under their topic area.

- As a group, the participants will add other eviction prevention actions to a sheet of chart paper.
- Encourage participants to write legibly and leave a bit of space, more ideas will be added later.
- To assist in the brainstorming process, participants can use the following questions:
 - What other actions, outside of the list provided, could achieve the goals?
What actions have other agencies, groups, non-profits or jurisdictions been doing?

Exercise 2: Expand (30 minutes)

- Participants remain at the table they were at for Exercise 1
- Using the ranked list of actions, participants pick the top 2.
- As a group, participants expand and flesh out the top action using Worksheet #2.
- To expand on the actions, participants will answer the questions:
 - What could the essential components be?
 - What would be your role as a community partner in this action?
 - What are the challenges?
 - What support would be needed?

Exercise 3: Mapping Indicators (20 minutes)

- Participants will return to the table they choose in Exercise 1.
- As a group, the table will create a “mind map” of the topic.
- One individual will be responsible for drawing the map and scrap paper will be available for notes.
- An example of a mind map drawing will be placed at the front of the room.
- The topic’s principle will be written in the centre of the page, enclosed by a circle.
- Branching off from the principle, participants will write indicators that will show that the principle is being achieved.
 - Participants are encouraged to add details such as how to measure/track and form connections between branches.
- To assist in the brainstorming process, participants can use the following questions:
 - What should this principle look like in practice?
 - What could indicate that the City is successfully adhering to this principle?
 - What would show that an eviction prevention intervention is working?
 - What are some evaluation best practices?
- If time permits, once the table has completed the activity for their topic area (using large worksheet), they can complete the same activity for other topic areas they are interested in (using regular sized worksheets)

Exercise 4: Adding to Ideas (20 minutes)

- Each table will place the chart paper from Exercise #1 and mind map in an accessible location on the wall.
- Participants will walk around the room and read other mind maps.
- Using post it notes, participants will be asked add their own ideas of indicators and how to evaluate.

Wrap Up (15 minutes)

- Provide overview of process, timelines and next steps.
- Explain how information will be shared back with group.
- Hand out evaluation form to participants

APPENDIX C: ONLINE EVICTION PREVENTION FRAMEWORK SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to engage with the community to get input and feedback on the principles and potential actions in Shelter, Support and Housing Administration's Eviction Prevention Framework. The survey results will help to inform the development and implementation of a comprehensive eviction prevention strategy.

VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The vision of the Eviction Prevention Framework is to develop an integrated range of services to prevent those at imminent risk of eviction from becoming homeless. The following principles form the pillars of the Eviction Prevention Framework. They are the overarching values to help set a framework in place.

1. Accessible Information and Education
People need easy to access and up-to-date information about services and resources, as well as tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities.
2. Timeliness of Intervention
People need access to supports and services early enough to avoid crisis situations where they may lose their housing.
3. Access to Financial Supports
People need income supports and flexible financial assistance that is available, timely and comprehensive to help stabilize their housing.
4. Access to Legal Support
People need access to legal assistance and representation to safeguard tenancies to the greatest extent possible.
5. Building Effective Landlord Relationships
Building processes and partnerships with landlords can help resolve tenancy issues for people facing imminent eviction.
6. Coordinated Approach
A coordinated approach that includes system navigation and case management is a leading practice to link eviction prevention to other services.
7. System Level Support and Solutions
A systems approach to eviction prevention is most effective in preventing evictions

What is missing? What needs to be clearer?

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

The following actions have been identified as good practices for eviction prevention. Please rank the following actions based on which actions the City should start working on immediately as part of the Eviction Prevention Strategy. What is going to be most beneficial to clients?

1. Information and Education

- Explore a single point of access to eviction prevention and housing stability services, including opportunities that can be leveraged with the Tenant Hotline, Central Intake, Housing Connections, 211, 311 and the forthcoming integrated human services call centre at the City
- Increase availability of information on eviction prevention across the service system (e.g. newcomers centres, employment centres)
- Create a tenant school program to provide people with more information and training on tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities
- Identify opportunities to provide education/information on tenant rights and responsibilities to all housed in subsidized housing units at a minimum
- Promote landlord and tenant education about human rights and what constitutes discrimination, addressing specific client groups including Aboriginal people, LGBTQ, people with substance use and/or mental health issues

Are there “Information and Education” actions that are missing and should be added?

2. Timeliness of Intervention

- Increase responsiveness of services through a crisis response team for tenants and landlords
- Screen for risk of eviction and/or identify vulnerability at case management/intake processes in housing help centres, shelters and OW/ODSP offices
- Train housing workers in eviction prevention strategies

Are there “Timeliness of Intervention” actions that are missing and should be added?

3. Income/Financial Supports

- Explore options to improve financial assistance programs to prevent evictions due to rental arrears, including:
 - Review the Rent Bank program’s eligibility, loan conditions, and processes
 - With TESS, undertake a joint review of the HSF
- Create a new, coordinated, emergency financial assistance program with a broad scope to provide flexible funds to avoid evictions (e.g. repair minor damage in clients’ units)
- With TESS, identify solutions to increase housing stability for clients on OW such as enabling access to direct deposits/pre-authorized payments of rent

- Increase options for flexible and responsive housing allowances and other subsidies that may help households at imminent risk of eviction
- Review voluntary trusteeships, credit counselling and debt assistance and identify what the City can do
- Explore opportunities to work with partners to create labour market opportunities and secure more stable sources of income for homeless and at-risk clients
- Explore the feasibility of a pilot program for seniors through Service Canada's Supporting Homeless Seniors Program
- Request the Government of Ontario (Province) to increase OW/OSDP rates, including the shelter component of social assistance to more accurately reflect the living costs of high rent areas such as Toronto

Are there "Income/Financial Supports" actions that are missing and should be added?

4. Legal Support

- Establish linkages between the housing and homeless sector and Legal Aid Clinics
- Request the Province to increase funding for tenant duty counsel and tenant legal aid
- Request the Province to improve tenants' legal recourse for discrimination in tenancy

Are there "Legal Support" actions that are missing and should be added?

5. Landlord Relationships

- Explore options for building stronger relationships with private market landlords, including links with Landlord Strategy and Landlord Advisory Group
- Develop standards related to eviction prevention through Social Housing Unit's Raising the Bar initiative, such as requiring all social housing providers to inform the Social Housing Unit when a loss of eligibility notice is issued to tenants, and to provide information/resources with every notice of eviction

Are there "Landlord Relationships" actions that are missing and should be added?

6. Coordinated Approach

- Review tenant support programs, including the Tenant Defence Fund and Tenant Hotline, to assess mandate, program model and sector's capacity to meet the needs of tenants
- Review the Housing Help Sector, including Community Based Housing Help and Support Services and Housing Help and Support Services for Shelter Clients, to identify opportunities related to sector operation and improve service delivery
- Work with social workers in hospitals and correctional institutions to initiate screening on housing stability/risk of eviction earlier, to prevent discharge into homelessness

- Leverage peer support and ensure meaningful involvement of people with lived experience in eviction prevention services and supports
- Ensure tenant input into the development of an eviction prevention strategy

Are there “Coordination Approach” actions that are missing and should be added?

7. System Level Support and Solutions

- Explore options to integrate eviction prevention with Human Services Integration. e.g. integrated human services call centre, coordinated needs assessment and service navigation, integrated case management, documenting referrals
- Explore links between the development of an eviction prevention strategy with the City’s Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Link the development of an eviction prevention strategy to provincial and federal government action to reduce homelessness
- Request the Province to monitor and report on data on hearings concerning evictions under the RTA, including results of LTB mediation (whether or not an eviction was prevented) and number of evictions that are carried out by the Sheriff’s office

Are there “System Level Support and Solutions” actions that are missing and should be added?

APPENDIX D: EVICTION PREVENTION FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS

PRINCIPLES

1. Accessible Information and Education
Easy to access, up-to-date information about services and resources, as well as tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities.
2. Timeliness of Intervention
People need access to supports and services early enough to avoid crisis situations where they may lose their housing.
3. Access to Financial Supports
People need income supports and flexible financial assistance that is available, timely and comprehensive to help stabilize their housing.
4. Access to Legal Support
People need access to legal assistance and representation to safeguard tenancies to the greatest extent possible.
5. Building Effective Landlord Relationships
Building processes and partnerships with landlords can help resolve tenancy issues for people facing imminent eviction.
6. Coordinated Approach
A coordinated approach that includes system navigation and case management is a leading practice to link eviction prevention to other services.
7. System Level Support and Solutions
A systems approach to eviction prevention is most effective in preventing evictions.

