



May 6, 2019

Selina Robinson
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

We are writing to request a meeting with you to discuss solutions to the deepening housing crisis that disproportionately affects ACORN's constituency of low-to-moderate income renters.

As you may be aware ACORN has been at the center of local fights against renovictions and demovictions. In Burnaby we now sit on the Mayor's Task Force on Housing, and hope our input brings about proper tenant relocation policies that would end the mass tenant displacement that has ravaged the city. But, the work at the municipal level only can take us so far if the province misses the opportunity to take leadership on the issue.

At the meeting we hope to discuss the findings of the Rental Housing Task Force with you.

Specifically we want to learn what your policy plans on rental housing are, discuss what our concerns are with the overall finding of the taskforce, and give you an opportunity to hear what our plans are campaigning on this issue moving forward.

We look forward to hearing back from you.

Please contact our staff person Joseph Bossy to arrange a meeting.

Noel Ouellette
BC ACORN Board Member



BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

Date: June 7, 2019

Prepared For: Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Title: Solutions to Housing Crisis

Issue: ACORN is requesting a meeting to discuss the findings of the Rental Housing Task Force, solutions to the housing crisis and tenant displacement from renovictions or demolitions in Burnaby.

Meeting With: ACORN Canada First on June 26, 2019.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **We share the concern about the impacts of evictions due to renovations or demolitions and the need to protect affordable rental housing in communities throughout British Columbia.**
- **The Province has accepted the recommendations of the Rental Housing Task Force, and staff in the Residential Tenancy Branch are looking into policy approaches to address reno/demovictions.**
- **Ministry staff has met with multiple jurisdictions regarding this issue and is committed to continue working together to find solutions.**

BACKGROUND:

ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) Canada is an independent national organization of low- and moderate-income families. We have over 130,000 members organized into twenty-four neighbourhood chapters in nine cities across Canada. BC ACORN is the British Columbia chapter of ACORN Canada. In BC, there are 5 chapters across Metro Vancouver and 19,000 members across the province. Their central purpose is to effectively represent and champion the interests of Canada's low- and moderate-income urban citizens on the critical issues of social and economic justice. ACORN is concerned about the affect of evictions due to renovations or demolitions in the Burnaby area.

In January 2019, the city of Burnaby formed a Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing to explore strategies for improving housing affordability. The Task Force will actively engage stakeholders and the community to identify issues and consider ways to improve housing affordability. A report of its findings will be made to City Council after the completion of these engagement activities. ACORN is a member of this Task Force.

On May 17, 2018, the *Residential Tenancy Act* was amended pertaining to the ending of tenancies for renovation, development or conversion. The following changes are in effect:

- Landlords must give four months' notice to end tenancy for demolition, renovation or repair, or conversion (previously two months' notice).
- Tenants have 30 days to dispute the notice (previously 15 days).
- A tenant has a right of first refusal to enter into a new tenancy agreement at a rent determined by the landlord if the landlord ends their tenancy to renovate or repair the rental unit. This right of first refusal applies only to a rental unit in a residential property containing 5 or more units. There are specific requirements for tenants and landlord regarding notifying each other.



- A landlord must compensate a tenant the equivalent of 12 month's rent if the landlord does not take steps to accomplish the purpose for ending the tenancy within a reasonable time after the tenancy ends.
- A landlord must compensate a tenant 12 months' rent if the tenant exercises a right of first refusal and the landlord does not fulfill their obligations in this regard.

DISCUSSION:

The Province has accepted the recommendations of the Rental Housing Task Force, and staff in the Residential Tenancy Branch are looking into policy approaches to address renovictions through the *Residential Tenancy Act*. s.13

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Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) provides support to renters and landlords in understanding and implementing the *Residential Tenancy Act*. RTB works closely with community-based renter-serving organizations such as Tenant Resource Advisory Centre (TRAC) and recently provided a grant to help TRAC build capacity to support renters.

Local governments have the authority to regulate the development of lands and the construction of buildings within their respective municipalities. This includes the issuing of development and building permits. In addition, some municipalities have implemented policies, unique to their communities, that require compensation above what is set out in the Act. Some examples of these include the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy created by the City of Vancouver.

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s.13 Staff are also working with stakeholders such as Landlord BC and TRAC to increase public education on this issue.

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PREPARED BY:

Christine Hunter, Junior Policy Analyst
Residential Tenancy Branch
(250) 882-4213

APPROVED BY:

Greg Steves, Assistant Deputy Minister
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

Kaye Krishna, Deputy Minister

DATE APPROVED:

June 4, 2019
Vanessa Gedney OBO

June 6, 2019
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From: [Gedney, Vanessa R MAH:EX](#)
To: [Henry, Molly MAH:EX](#)
Cc: [White, Christine MAH:EX](#); [Rayner, Jena MAH:EX](#); [Gardea, Daniela MAH:EX](#)
Subject: FW: MO REQUEST | ACORN Meeting Follow-Up
Date: July 16, 2019 12:52:51 PM
Attachments: [Compliance Unit Factsheet CEU106 V5.pdf](#)
[Shelter-Aid-For-Elderly-Renters-Brochure.pdf](#)
[Rental-Assistance-Program-Brochure.pdf](#)
[image001.jpg](#)

As requested:

From: Papadopoulos, Nikki OHCS:EX
Sent: July 16, 2019 12:00 PM
To: Gedney, Vanessa R MAH:EX
Cc: Paton, Susan MAH:EX ; Ramsay, Launa P OHCS:EX
Subject: RE: MO REQUEST | ACORN Meeting Follow-Up
My apologies for not getting this to you sooner.

Regards,

Nikki Papadopoulos | A/Executive Administrative Assistant
Assistant Deputy Minister's Office
Office of Housing and Construction Standards
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Office: 250 356-2115
Email: Nikki.Papadopoulos@gov.bc.ca



Offering acknowledgement in respect of the Lekwungen People, traditional keepers of this land on which I live, work and play.

From: Gedney, Vanessa R MAH:EX
Sent: July 9, 2019 2:06 PM
To: Papadopoulos, Nikki OHCS:EX <Nikki.Papadopoulos@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Paton, Susan MAH:EX <Susan.Paton@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: MO REQUEST | ACORN Meeting Follow-Up
Good afternoon Nikki, can you please advise if this was actioned by Greg?

From: Henry, Molly MAH:EX
Sent: July 9, 2019 2:03 PM
To: Gedney, Vanessa R MAH:EX <Vanessa.Gedney@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: FW: Follow up
Hi Vanessa – I didn't hear back from Greg on this. Can you find out if he initiated my request with staff?

From: Henry, Molly MAH:EX
Sent: July 4, 2019 3:52 PM
To: Steves, Gregory OHCS:EX <Gregory.Steves@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Follow up

Hi Greg,

I'm going to follow up with the staff member from ACORN based on our call last week to provide them with a package that has useful info for tenants. Can you send me information about the Compliance and Enforcement Unit (a 1-pager would be ideal) with contact info, as well as any other

materials that we would like to get into the hands of tenants. Keeping in mind their comment about internet access being a challenge for some residents, paper-based and phone numbers would be good wherever possible.

Give me a call if you want to discuss or clarify.

Thanks,

Molly

Molly Henry

Ministerial Assistant

Office of the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs

250-896-5731

Frequently asked questions

When will I start receiving assistance?

If you are eligible, your SAFER assistance will be effective the month your application is received in our office. For example, if an application is received on April 29, it will be effective for the month of April. The SAFER assistance is paid in arrears; payments are made at the end of each month. BC Housing contacts applicants by mail as soon as applications are processed.

How is the SAFER assistance paid?

Assistance is paid by direct deposit to your bank account on the last working day of the month. You will need to provide us with a VOID cheque or a Preauthorized Debit Form from your bank. If you do not currently have a bank account, you will need to open one.

Do I ever need to reapply to SAFER?

Yes. A reapplication form will be sent to you three months prior to your birthday each year. You must complete and return the form in order to continue receiving assistance.

Is there a minimum amount SAFER will pay me?

Yes. The minimum benefit is \$25 per month.

How is the rent assistance calculated if I pay room and board?

SAFER assistance does not cover board, cable, parking, laundry, or other personal services; therefore, 50 per cent of a room and board payment is considered to be the rent portion up to the maximum rent level.

Can I receive assistance from SAFER if I am in a long-term care facility or in a residence that is subsidized through another government agency?

No. Seniors residing in these situations are not eligible.

Why are there different maximum rents for different areas of the province?

The separate rent ceilings are used to reflect differences in rental markets in different areas of the province.

My family sponsored me to come to Canada. Am I eligible?

No. Seniors who are in Canada under a sponsorship agreement are not eligible for assistance while the agreement is still in place.

Do I declare my SAFER assistance on my annual income tax return?

No. SAFER is a non-taxable rent benefit.

Important

If your application is approved, please remember to inform BC Housing immediately if you move, your rent increases, or if you begin sharing accommodation with other people who were not included on the application, or if you or your spouse start to receive income assistance.

By providing this information promptly, we can adjust your assistance accordingly to ensure you are receiving the correct assistance and avoid possible overpayments.

For your information

BC Housing will audit some recipients. If you apply and become a SAFER recipient, you may be contacted and asked to prove your eligibility.

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* covers the collection and use of personal information by BC Housing.

For more information

Shelter Aid for
Elderly Renters

BC Housing
101 – 4555 Kingsway
Burnaby, B.C.
V5H 4V8

Metro Vancouver:
604-433-2218
Elsewhere in BC:
1-800-257-7756

Shelter Aid for
Elderly Renters

Make your rent more affordable

Find out if you are eligible at
www.bchousing.org/calculator

For more information:
www.bchousing.org/SAFER

www.bchousing.org/SAFER

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Frequently Asked Questions

When will my rental assistance be effective?

- ▶ If you are eligible, your assistance will be effective the month we receive your application. For example, if your application is received in our office on March 29, your application will be effective for the month of March.

Who is considered to be a dependent child?

- ▶ Any unmarried child, stepchild, adopted child or legal ward who is under 19 years of age, or under 25 and registered in full-time school or university, or a child of any age who is accepted as dependent for income tax purposes due to mental or physical disability.

How is rental assistance paid?

- ▶ Assistance is paid by direct deposit to your bank account on the last working day of each month. If you do not currently have a bank account, you will need to open one.

What if I haven't filed an income tax return?

- ▶ If you and your spouse have not filed a tax return you will not be eligible for the program.

How do I submit my income tax information?

- ▶ **OPTION 1:** Provide consent for Canada Revenue Agency to release information from your tax records to BC Housing. Consent can be provided by completing an income verification form available by contacting BC Housing or online at www.bchousing.org.
- ▶ **OPTION 2:** Provide copies of BOTH last year's income tax return and notice of assessment.

I have not received my notice of assessment back from Canada Revenue Agency yet. Can I still submit my application?

- ▶ Yes. Once your application has been received by BC Housing you will have up to 90 days to gather and submit missing documentation.

What if I have children or other family members 19 years or older living with me or I share with other adults?

- ▶ Depending on the number of adults living in the rental unit, a portion of the full monthly rent will be allocated to your household and this amount will be used when calculating assistance through the program.

My minor child (under age 19) has a part-time job; do I need to declare their income?

- ▶ No. The assistance through the program is based on the income of yourself and your spouse (if applicable).

How will I know the status of my Rental Assistance Program application?

- ▶ BC Housing will contact you by mail.

Is there a minimum level of assistance?

- ▶ The minimum level of assistance anyone can receive is \$50 per month or \$600 a year.

Do I declare my rental assistance on my annual income tax return?

- ▶ No. Rental assistance is a non-taxable rent benefit.

What is considered to be an asset?

- ▶ Assets are defined as stocks, bonds, term deposits, mutual funds, cash, and real estate equity (domestic and foreign), as well as business equity. Assets that are exempted from consideration include personal effects such as furniture, jewelry, vehicles, RESPs and RRSPs, and tools and equipment required for employment.

Important

If your application is approved you must inform BC Housing immediately if you move, your rent increases, your marital status changes, the number of people in your household changes, you are sharing your accommodation with other people, or if you or your spouse start to receive income assistance.

By providing this information promptly, we can adjust your assistance accordingly to ensure you are receiving the correct amount and avoid possible over payments.

For your information

BC Housing will audit some recipients. If you apply and become a Rental Assistance Program recipient, you may be contacted and asked to prove your eligibility.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act covers the collection and use of personal information by BC Housing.

For more information:

Rental Assistance Program

BC Housing
101 – 4555 Kingsway
Burnaby, B.C.
V5H 4V8

Metro Vancouver:
604-433-2218
Elsewhere in BC:
1-800-257-7756

Rental Assistance Program

Make your rent more affordable

Find out if you are eligible at
www.bchousing.org/calculator

For more information:
www.bchousing.org/RAP

www.bchousing.org/RAP

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The **Rental Assistance Program** provides eligible, low-income, working families with assistance to help with their monthly rent payments in the private market. The program provides rent assistance to low income working families. Effective September 2018 the maximum income increases to \$40,000.

The Rental Assistance Program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia



Eligibility

You may be eligible if:

- Some or all of your annual income comes from employment.
- You have a gross (before tax) household annual income of \$40,000* or less.
- You have one or more dependent children.
- You have less than \$100,000 in assets.
- You file an annual income tax return.
- You pay more than 30 per cent of your household income towards rent for your home or pad rental for a manufactured home (trailer) that you own and occupy.
- You have lived in B.C. for the full 12 months immediately prior to the date of your application.
- You meet the program's residency requirements.

You will not be eligible if:

- You or your family receive income assistance under the *B.C. Employment and Assistance Act* or the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* (excluding the Medical Services Only plan which provides specific health supplements to certain categories of former recipients of assistance).
- Your gross household annual income is more than \$40,000*.
- You live in subsidized housing.
- You live in co-operative housing and are a shareholder.
- You do not meet the program's residency requirements.

* Effective September 2018

How to Apply

There are three ways to apply:

- 1 Download an application form from www.bchousing.org/RAP
- 2 Call BC Housing at 604-433-2218 or 1-800-257-7756 (outside Metro Vancouver) to have an application mailed to you.
- 3 In person at any BC Housing office.

Applications must include:

- Proof of identity for all family members.
- Proof of residency for all family members.
- Information from last year's income tax return. You can either provide consent for Canada Revenue Agency to provide the required information or submit copies of your detailed income tax return and notice of assessment. If the tax return does not include income from employment, attach proof of current employment income from all sources.
- Proof of all assets.
- Proof of rent.
- A blank cheque marked "VOID" for direct deposit of assistance or a pre-authorized debit form.

For more information:

More information on specific requirements is available online at www.bchousing.org/RAP or on the Rental Assistance Program checklist included on the application form. If further information is required, BC Housing will contact you.

How is assistance calculated?

The Rental Assistance Program reimburses part of the difference between 30 per cent of your total income and your rent. The program has a sliding scale that gives the most money to people with the least income. The amount of assistance is calculated taking into account your household size, income, rent, and where you live.

Regardless of your actual rent, assistance will only be calculated based on amounts up to a maximum rent level.

For an estimate of what you may be eligible for, visit www.bchousing.org/calculator.

Maximum Rent Ceilings as of September 2018*

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Family of 3 or less	\$1,108	\$1,086	\$1,067
Family of 4 or more	\$1,250	\$1,136	\$1,117

*please visit www.bchousing.org/RAP or contact BC Housing for the Maximum Rent Ceilings in effect before September 2018.

How do I know what Zone I am in?

For a list of which zones are included in communities across the province, please visit www.bchousing.org/RAP.

Find out if you are eligible at www.bchousing.org/calculator

To qualify:



Household income of \$40,000 or less (effective September 2018) +



Have at least one dependent child. +

Employed in the last year.



The **Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters** (SAFER) program helps make rents affordable for B.C. seniors with low to moderate incomes. SAFER provides monthly assistance to eligible B.C. residents who are age 60 or over and who pay rent for their homes in the private market. Seniors who pay pad rental fees for owner-occupied manufactured homes (trailers) may also be eligible.

SAFER is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.



Eligibility

You **may be eligible** if you meet all of the following conditions:

- You are age 60 or over.
- You and your spouse (with whom you are living):
 - Have lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months prior to your application and
 - Meet one of the following citizenship requirements:
 - Canadian citizen(s)
 - Authorized to take up permanent residence in Canada
 - Convention refugee(s)
- You pay more than 30 per cent of your gross (before tax) monthly household income towards the rent of your home, including the cost of pad rental for a manufactured home (trailer) that you own and occupy.
- Your gross (before tax) monthly household income does not exceed the program income ceiling based on where you live in the province.

Maximum Income effective September 2018

	Zone 1	Zone 2 and 3
Singles	\$2,550	\$2,446
Couples	\$2,750	\$2,666

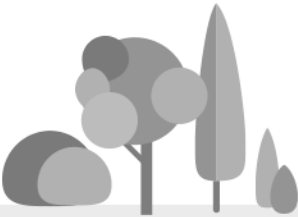
How to Apply

1 Download an application form from www.bchousing.org/SAFER

Eligibility

You **are not eligible** for the program if any of the following are true:

- You are under the age of 60.
- You live in subsidized housing or a residential care facility funded by the Ministry of Health.
- You live in co-operative housing and are a shareholder.
- You or your spouse receives income assistance the *B.C. Employment and Assistance Act* or the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* (excluding the Medical Services Only plan which provides specific health supplements to certain categories of former recipients of assistance).
- You do not live in British Columbia.
- You have not lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months preceding your application.
- You do not meet the citizenship requirements.
- You are in Canada under a private sponsorship agreement.



2 Call BC Housing at 604-433-2218 or 1-800-257-7756 (outside Metro Vancouver) to have an application mailed to you.

How is SAFER calculated?

SAFER reimburses part of the difference between 30 per cent of your total income and your rent. The program has a sliding scale that gives the most money to seniors with the least income. The amount of assistance is calculated taking into account your household size, rent, and where you live.

If your actual rent is higher than the maximum rent level, you may still be eligible for the program. However, SAFER will use a maximum rent amount when calculating your assistance:

Maximum Rent Ceilings as of September 2018

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Singles	\$803	\$767	\$734
Couples	\$866	\$836	\$800

For an estimate of what you may be eligible for, visit www.bchousing.org/calculator.

How do I know what Zone I am in?

For a list of communities for each zone, please visit www.bchousing.org/SAFER.

3 In person at any BC Housing office.

Residential Tenancy Branch

Compliance and Enforcement Unit



COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

UNIT STEPS:

- Citizen completes complaint intake form -with all evidence
- Compliance and Enforcement Unit assess complaint; determines if it meets criteria, may conduct investigation
- Unit informs subject of complaint of the allegations against them.
- Issues advisory or warning; educates and inform the subject about their responsibilities
- Monitors for compliance
- Review
- Administer penalty/fine

KEY INFORMATION

- The Compliance and Enforcement Unit (CEU) is **not** an alternative to the Residential Tenancy Branch information and dispute resolution services nor to existing mechanisms to enforce orders through the courts.
- The unit will conduct investigations of repeated or serious and deliberate non-compliance with the tenancy laws or with decisions or orders.
- The function of the unit is separate and distinct from information and dispute resolution services.
- The unit has the authority to issue warnings to ensure compliance and if necessary, administer penalties of up to \$5000.00 per day.
- The unit does not take anonymous complaints.
- Members of the public who report an issue to the unit do not receive any portion of any monies collected through this process, nor are they informed about the status of the complaint.

Compliance and Enforcement Unit Objectives:

- Education and awareness.
- Ensure compliance with tenancy laws.
- Investigation of repeated or serious and deliberate non-compliance with tenancy laws.
- Issue warnings, monitor actions, and issue penalties

Resources:

- www.gov.bc.ca/landlordtenant/compliance-and-enforcement
- Complaint submission form ([CEU-1](#))
- Policy Guideline 41 – Administrative Penalties (updated)

Contact information

RTB Compliance and Enforcement Unit
Email: RTBCompliance@gov.bc.ca

Greater Vancouver: 604-660-1020
Victoria: 250-387-1602
Elsewhere in BC: 1-800-665-8779
Burnaby office: 400-5021 Kingsway

Residential Tenancy Branch

Office of Housing and Construction Standards
#CEU-106 (2019/07)