Resident Engagement at Toronto Community Housing

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Who we are: Overview

• Canada’s largest social housing provider and the second largest in North America
  – 90% of public housing in GTA and 44% in Ontario

• Home to 58,500 households in Toronto in 2,200 buildings (same population as Prince Edward Island or St. Catharines)

• We are one of the largest residential developers in Canada

• We directly employ about 1,600 people
Resident Fast Facts

- Diverse population that includes many marginalized and vulnerable residents
- 94% of residents are living below the poverty line
  - RGI resident median income is $14,916 vs. $58,381 in Toronto
  - Up to 75% of households rely on social assistance as their primary source of income
- 38% Children & Youth / 25% Seniors / 37% Adults
- At least 69 Languages spoken
- Top 5 languages other than English
  - Chinese languages, Russian, Tamil, Somali, Spanish
- Over 22,000 family households with children
- 21,110 households with seniors living alone
- 29% of RGI households have a member with a disability (vs. 12% in Ontario
Vibrant Communities

We aim to create and foster opportunities that contribute to improved well being for residents and neighbourhood quality of life

We do this by:

• Creating Economic Opportunities for Residents
• Strengthening Communities and Resident Leadership
• Supporting Housing Stability
Creating Economic Opportunities for Residents

Focus is on:

• Connecting residents to economic opportunities
  – Small Business Development and Social Enterprise
  – Providing Employment Opportunities (jobs, internships, job fairs)

• Providing Residents with Employment Support
  – Employment Readiness (training)
  – Education Opportunities and Mentorship
Strengthening Communities and Resident Leadership

• Support leadership development at the local level
• Engage residents in the formal tenant engagement system (tenant councils, and issue based groups)
• Work with residents to support decision making about things that have direct impact in their lives (Participatory Budget program)
• Promote active living by providing sport and recreational programs for children and youth
Tenant Council System

- Meet monthly with active staff support
- Budget
- Capacity building and training
- Community development
Elections

In 2009, Toronto Community Housing held its first tenant representative election under the current Tenant Engagement System.

- A total of 726 candidates ran city-wide, marking the 2009 elections as the most successful held by Toronto Community Housing to date.
- Approximately 31% of tenants cast their votes in 189 polls portfolio-wide
- 416 tenants received a new three year mandate to represent tenants in their buildings.
Issue Based Groups

• Involved in governance issues related to TCH (Governance, Finance and Communications, TERC- Tenant Engagement Reference Committee)
  Or

• Advocate for change on a variety of issues:
  – Food security
  – Disability issues
  – Seniors Lens group
Support leadership development at the local level

- Resident leaders are best able to work with their communities to create change
- Animator Model
  - Safety ambassador program
  - Green Animators
  - Revite Animators
Appendix B: Proposed Structure of the Resident Engagement System

**City Wide Tables & Committees**

- As Defined by Residents

**Engagement System Governance Committees with specific mandate - Funding, Evaluation & Conduct Review**

- Joint staff and resident committees
- Committees provide governance support to the engagement system
- Focused on the fair and efficient operation of the system
- Embeds transparency into the system

**Scope:**
- Membership comprised of representation from Building Associations and Neighbourhood Associations and Resident Leaders
- Focus on learning and training, communication of corporate initiatives or local best practices
- Residents will be engaged to define geography of councils

**Resident Representatives, Building and Neighbourhood Associations**
- Focus on building level issues
- Direct relationship between with residents
- Direct accountability to residents
- Autonomous function
- Funding available for local initiatives

**City Wide level are comprised of elected member of the Engagement System and others.**
- Issues are focused on city wide issue advocacy, strategy and policy level
- Membership on tables or committees will take into account underrepresented groups such as seniors, youth, single family homes.
OUTCOMES

• Increasing resident engagement and local capacity across the city
• Increasing resident input at all levels of the organization (local, board)
• Improved services through effective local input and feedback
• Leveraging local capacity to attract resources
• Providing more autonomy for resident decision making at the local level
Thank you

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