



TENANT ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM VOLUNTEER POLICY

Policy Owner: Operations

Approval: Executive Leadership Team

First Approved:

Effective Date:

1.0 Policy Statement

The Tenant Engagement System (TES) empowers Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) tenants to volunteer and participate in local decision-making processes that impact their community. TES Members play a vital role by advocating for the needs of their neighbours and buildings. These opportunities allow TCHC to improve service delivery and create a more positive tenant experience.

Tenants who participate in the TES do so as volunteers. TCHC acknowledges and recognizes the invaluable contributions that TES Members make as tenant volunteers to building vibrant communities and the integral role they play in assisting TCHC deliver its mission.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a mechanism through which tenants are elected, acclaimed or appointed as volunteers in the TES and can get involved in their communities;
- outline TCHC's responsibilities towards TES members and to provide an overview of the support and learning opportunities that will be made available to TES members; and



- govern the relationship between TES Members and TCHC staff by holding both parties accountable to the associated TES procedures and any other applicable TCHC policies and procedures.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all TES Members who volunteer and represent other tenants in formal roles within the TES. This includes the following roles:

- Tenant Circle members
- Tenant Council members
- Citywide Tenant Advisory Committee members
- Tenant Community Action Table members
- Tenant Directed Fund related member (ie. Tenant Action Fund Table)
- Ad-hoc committees (ie. Tenant-Staff Working Groups) and other roles created within the TES as deemed necessary

This policy does not apply to non-TES Members or tenants volunteering on behalf of TCHC outside the TES. This includes but is not limited to:

- Tenant interest groups (i.e. gardening clubs), tenant led programs and services (i.e. food bank, clothing banks), tenant associations, youth programs (i.e. Rookie League, Kickstart)
- Tenants and tenant-led groups using TCHC non-residential spaces for community and programming activities including: breakfast clubs, religious groups, one-time use of space for private events
- Individuals who are not tenants of TCHC that donate their time, skills and experience as a volunteer with TCHC;
- Students who are pursuing volunteer placements as part of their studies;
- Tenants who have been hired as interns by TCHC;
- Tenants who are actively volunteering in their community on behalf of other organizations; and
- Independent tenant-led groups, tenant interest groups and tenant associations.



TES members, non-TES Members or tenants volunteering on behalf of TCHC outside the TES must adhere to the Governing and Applicable Legislation and TCHC Specific Policies & Procedures.

3.0 Values

The TES Volunteer policy is guided by the following values:

- **Respect:** Mutual respect between all involved
- **Equity:** Ensuring equitable treatment for all involved
- **Informative:** Ensuring all involved have the capacity to make informed decisions
- **Inclusive:** Inclusive and representative of all TCHC tenants
- **Collaborative:** Working together as partners
- **Innovative:** Continue to foster innovation and change
- **Accountability:** TES Members must abide by all relevant procedures, including the TES Code of Conduct. TCHC will maintain procedures, codes of conduct and any other applicable terms of reference to support TES members, and will monitor compliance with the policy and with the supporting materials.
- **Accessibility:** TCHC is and will continue to be committed to providing accessible service. This includes meeting its duty to accommodate disabilities under the Human Rights Code, and the standards set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

4.0 Definitions

Ad-Hoc Committees: Committees that are implemented based on needs of TES and programs. These committees have a defined mandate, terms of reference and operate within a specific timeline.

Anti-Black racism: The term anti-Black racism is defined by the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit as policies and practices that are embedded in Canadian institutions that reflect and/or reinforce prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and/or discrimination directed at people of African



descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization.

Anti-Social Behaviour: A tenant engaging in any behaviour in their tenancy (other than accumulating arrears) that causes TCHC to take or consider taking legal action against the tenant at the Landlord and Tenant Board or another tribunal. Anti-Social Behaviour includes illegal acts, threats, intimidation and/or harassment towards other TCHC tenants or staff and any other behaviour that puts the health, safety and/or wellbeing of other TCHC tenants and staff at risk.

CABR Strategy: In 2020, TCHC established a Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Strategy team to develop a company-wide confronting anti-Black racism strategy approved in 2021. The strategy and its 8-Point Plan aim to identify systemic barriers, provide recommendations to address anti-Black racism issues embedded in TCHC policies, programs, and service delivery, and help create a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment for tenants and staff.

Children: for the purpose of this policy, children will be defined according to the Age of Majority and Accountability Act, R.S.O., 1990, chapter A.7, as being below the age of 18.

Citywide Tenant Advisory Committee member: A group of tenants who will represent the broader tenant community and provide input on the overall tenant engagement system, as well as corporate policies and initiatives. These tenants will be selected through an open-call application process.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) Strategy: is a corporate wide framework to assist in understanding and addressing the unique and diverse needs of residents and staff at TCHC and embed equity, diversity and inclusion in the culture and practices of TCHC.

Engage Together: Tenant Engagement System model that promotes tenants to take an active role in shaping their communities. There are multiple avenues for participation ranging from the building level to city-wide level. These include Tenant Circles, Tenant Councils, Citywide Tenant Advisory Committee and Tenant Community Action Tables.

Local Initiative Funding for Tenants (LIFT): The Local Initiative Funding for Tenants (LIFT) are resources available to tenants to fund projects and initiatives that foster community development.

Support from TCHC staff: Includes but is not limited to TCHC providing support in the form of system navigation, connection to external resources (ie. funding -



grants; partnerships - Neighbourhood Committees), information sharing related to the TES, fostering engagement opportunities within the TES.

Tenant Action Fund members: Members of the Tenant Action Funds Tables include TCHC tenants from across the city. They review tenant funding requests for community projects and initiatives that respond to tenant-identified priorities. This is to be retired when the Local Initiative Funding for Tenants is launched in June 2025.

Tenant Association: Tenant associations are independent membership-based tenant groups. They are independent from TCHC and do not have representation at the City-Wide Tenant Committee. A community can choose to have a tenant association in addition to engaging in the refreshed Tenant Engagement System. This is outside of the TES.

Tenant Circle member: All tenants can join their building or townhouse community's Tenant Circle. Members will focus on the community's development priorities and decide how tenant funding is spent on projects and initiatives.

Tenant Community Action Table (TCAT) members: All tenants are invited to participate in the regional TCATs. Spaces will be provided to share knowledge, discuss what is working well, and learn from each other. These Tables will give members more opportunities to engage with subject matter experts like TCHC staff, community partners, and service providers. Members will also be able to provide feedback on tenant-related processes and policies.

Tenant Council member: Elected tenant leaders from each building or townhouse who comprise of subregional Tenant Councils. These councils will focus on leadership development, community development priorities, and initiatives.

Tenant Engagement System (TES): The TES is the formal system of engaging tenants living in TCHC, with the goal to increase tenant participation in local decision making.

Tenant Engagement System (TES) member: A TCHC tenant that participates in the activities, programming or committees of the TES.

Tenant Interest Groups: A group of tenants who advocate for changes within TCHC. This is outside of the TES.



Tenant-Led Group: A group of tenants who gather to organize activities to support and/or engage tenants within their TCHC community. This is outside of the TES.

Tenant-Staff Working Groups: A group of tenants and staff that collaborate to make recommendations that support the operations of TCHC. This is a formal TES Group.

Tenant Volunteer: any tenant of TCHC who is not a member of TES and gives their time to performing a defined task directly on behalf of TCHC on an unpaid basis and/or is in receipt of a stipend or honorarium from TCHC for their volunteer efforts

The Centre: The Centre for Advancing the Interests of Black People ("The Centre") was established to lead the organization in implementing the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Strategy to focus on cultural reform at TCHC. The strategy and the Centre work to effectively and sustainably support TCHC toward improving outcomes for Black staff and tenants.

Vulnerable individuals: persons who, because of their age, disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, are (a) in a position of dependence on others; or (b) are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by persons in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

5.0 Policy Details

Recruitment and Elections

TCHC provides opportunities for tenants to get involved in their communities through formal roles in the TES. TCHC has a formal election process where TES Members will be elected by tenants for the following roles: Tenant Council Member.

TES Members will have a selection process for the following roles: Tenant Council members, Citywide Tenant Committee member, Tenant Action Fund Table member, and Ad-hoc Committee members.

It is the responsibility of TCHC staff to understand the role of the TES volunteers and to ensure that the successful TES Member is aware of the roles and responsibilities of the position, which may include referring TES Members to applicable Roles and Responsibilities document.



Training and Orientation

TCHC will provide training as required to all TES Members who interact with tenants, the public or other third parties on TCHC's behalf. All TES Members are required to participate in mandatory trainings. This includes training on the Ontario Human Rights Commission and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Additional training opportunities may be identified for TES Members to enhance their existing skills and support them in fulfilling their volunteer roles. Where relevant to their role, TES Members will be provided with an orientation on applicable TCHC policies.

TES Members will not be recruited to replace, displace or substitute work performed by TCHC staff.

Recognition

TES Members make invaluable contributions towards building vibrant communities and are at the centre of TCHC's TES. TCHC will acknowledge TES Members annually through a variety of methods (i.e., annual appreciation events, certificates, awards, thank you cards, etc.)

TCHC may provide an honorarium to TES Members for a nominal amount for participation on a project or ad-hoc committee that has terms of reference and a term of less than two years, and where an application process was used to recruit tenant committee members.

6.0 Compliance and Monitoring

TCHC Operations will monitor compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures and will request periodic evaluations from TES Members on their experience as volunteers. Tenants who participate in and represent other tenants within the TES will be required to adhere to TCHC's Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy. TCHC will not tolerate, ignore or condone any form of discrimination, harassment or hate activity towards other tenants, staff or agents of TCHC. TES Members will also adhere to the TCHC Code of Conduct, TES Code of Conduct and not engage in anti-social or behaviours falling under the Eviction for Cause Policy before or during their time as a TES Member.



TES Members working with vulnerable groups or children will be required to complete a Vulnerable Sector Check or other appropriate Police Record Checks such as Criminal Record Check or Criminal Record and Judicial Matters Check. Failure to complete an appropriate check will result in a volunteer being removed from consideration as a TES Member.

TCHC has committed to confront and address all forms of discrimination, including anti-Black racism through the development of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Strategy, the establishment of the Centre for Advancing the Interests of Black People (the Centre), the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, and expanding the EDI team. Staff will ensure that every TES Member has the right to equitable treatment and opportunity to volunteer with TCHC without discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed or religion, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family status.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a removal of a TES member through the Addressing a Breach of the TES Code of Conduct procedure.

7.0 Governing and Applicable Legislation

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Residential Tenancies Act, 2006

8.0 Related Policies and Procedures

TCHC Specific Policies & Procedures

- Accessibility Policy
- Eviction for Cause Policy
- Eviction for Cause Procedure
- Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy



- Non-Residential Use of Space Policy for Tenants and Tenant-Led Groups
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Tenant Charter
- Tenant Funds Distribution Policy

TES Specific Policies & Procedures

- Breach of the Tenant Engagement System Code of Conduct
- Tenant Engagement System Code of Conduct
- Tenant Engagement System Elections Procedure
- Tenant Engagement System Guide for Responding to Anti-Black Racism toolkit
- Tenant Engagement System Terms of Reference
- Tenant Engagement System Volunteer Policy

9.0 Commencement and Review

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Approval
First Approval		New	Operations

Next Scheduled Review Date: