

Local Initiative Funding for Tenants (LIFT)

Tenant questions & answers | July 2025

Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) is launching a new tenant-activity funding program called Local Initiative Funding for Tenants (LIFT). We have created this document to answer tenant questions about this new program.

What is the LIFT Program?

LIFT is a new program from TCHC that gives tenants the money to organize activities, buy equipment, or run events that help build a stronger community.

Who decides how the money is used?

Tenants will decide how the money is used. Each building or community has a Tenant Circle, a group made up of tenants who come together at meetings. These Tenant Circles are open to everyone in the building. At these meetings, tenants decide on the community's top priorities and how the LIFT funding should be spent.

How much money does my building get?

Every TCHC building gets a LIFT funding amount based on the number of bedrooms in the building. No building gets less than \$1,000.

What can LIFT funding be used for?

LIFT funding can be used for things like:

- Hosting community BBQs, seasonal events, or movie nights
- Buying supplies for group activities like crafts or games
- Hiring instructors for programs like dance or exercise classes
- Purchasing small equipment for shared community use (like kitchen tools, decorations, or fitness gear)

What can't LIFT money be used for?

LIFT funding cannot be used for:

- Alcohol, gifts, or personal items
- Large equipment that exceeds \$1000 or requires regular maintenance for upkeep (including pool tables, larger exercise equipment like treadmills and more)
- Private events or items for individual use
- Transit costs or events held outside the community

How do I take part in deciding what gets funded?

Most, if not all, communities set their priorities at the first Tenant Circle meetings held this year (2025). In future years, the meetings will take place early in the year. Look out for posters in your building about the upcoming Tenant Circle meetings.

You can also speak with your Community Services Coordinator (CSC), Engagement, to find out when the next meeting will be.

What happens after we choose our priorities?

Building/communities' top priorities are defined in the Community Development Priority Plan. At a follow-up Tenant Circle meeting, tenants will allocate their building/community's funding amount to the previously established priorities. Then staff will work with you to organize purchases, events, or activities. All purchases go through TCHC's process to make sure funds are used responsibly.

What if we don't spend all the money?

LIFT funds must be used by the end of the year. They do not carry over to the next year. It's important that priorities are defined and funding is allocated to them.

How are purchases made using LIFT funds?

All purchases made through the LIFT program must follow TCHC's procurement process. This helps make sure we are tracking funds accurately.

For the time being, TCHC staff will be responsible for working with tenants to make sure purchases. They will do their best to get the items or services that Tenant Circles ask for. However, there may be times when a specific item or vendor is not available through our system. In those situations, we will find a reasonable alternative.

What happens if a priority identified by our Tenant Circle can't be funded through LIFT?

Some priorities may fall outside of what your LIFT amount can fund. For example, if the cost exceeds your local allocation, the activity doesn't meet eligibility criteria, or it requires resources beyond what TCHC can provide.

If this happens, staff will communicate with the Tenant Circle and explore other possible options. This can include:

- Adjusting the idea to meet LIFT guidelines
- Connecting with community partners or local organizations
- Exploring external funding or grants that could support the initiative

However, at the end of the year, there may be opportunities for unfunded priorities to access other LIFT funds where other communities have not accessed some/all of their amounts.

Why is LIFT replacing the old Tenant Action Funds (TAF)?

Tenants told TCHC that the old funding system needed improvements. LIFT is designed to be more flexible, inclusive, and community-led.

Who can I talk to if I have questions?

You can speak with your building's Engagement CSC, or email the Tenant Engagement team at tenantengagement@torontohousing.ca.

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