

Local Initiative Funding for Tenants (LIFT)

Tenant questions & answers | July 2025

1. What is the LIFT Program?

LIFT stands for Local Initiative Funding for Tenants. It's a new program from Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) that provides money for tenants to organize activities, buy equipment, or run events that help build a stronger community.

2. Who decides how the money is used?

Tenants decide how money is used. Each building or community has a Tenant Circle, a group made up of tenants who come together at meetings 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.

3. 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.

4. What can LIFT funding be used for?

LIFT funding can be used for things like:

- Smaller equipment that supports social, recreational programming and enhancing community (e.g., gaming supplies, craft supplies)
- Food/refreshments for community events and re-occurring community gatherings (e.g., BBQs, monthly social tea)
- Equipment for events, recreational activities, and common spaces (e.g. cutlery, trolleys or serving platters)

- Portable items that can be kept in storage on site (i.e., locked in cupboards, cabinets, or closets)
- Tools, gardening supplies and gardening products (e.g., soil, seeds and plants)
- Decorative items and seasonal décor
- Recreational supplies and equipment (e.g., foosball tables, and ping-pong tables)
- Programming and/ or services provided by a third-party provider whose primary activity meets the identified need (ie. DJ, tutoring, dance or exercise classes etc.).
- Training and police checks

5. What can't LIFT money be used for?

LIFT funding cannot be used for:

- Alcohol or gifts
- Supplies or equipment which are for private use or private events
- Items that are not accessible to the wider community (e.g., video game consoles)
- Duplicating items which can be provided by partner agencies or TCHC staff (e.g., mop, bucket, vacuum cleaner)
- Transit or travel costs
- Costs to maintain activities beyond funding term
- Items for events outside the building premises

6. How do I take part in deciding what gets funded?

The priorities for most, if not all communities were established at the first Tenant Circle meetings held this year. 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.

7. What happens after we choose our priorities?

Building/communities' top priorities as determined by the Tenant Circle are defined in the Community Development Priority Plan. At a follow up meeting, tenants allocate their building/communities 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.

8. How are purchases made using LIFT funds?

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

For the time being, TCHC staff will be responsible for working with tenants to make purchases and will do their best to obtain the items or services requested by tenants. However, there may be times when a specific item or vendor is not available through our system, in which case, we will find a reasonable alternative.

9. 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.

When this happens, staff will communicate with the Tenant Circle and explore other possible options, such as:

- 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 or all of their amounts.

10. 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, so it's important that priorities are defined and funding is allocated to priorities.

11. 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.

12. Who can I talk to if I have questions?

You can speak with your building's Community Services Coordinator (CSC) – Engagement or email the Tenant Engagement team at tenantengagement@torontohousing.ca