



April 20th 2021

City Councillors
Strategic Priorities and Policies Committee
City of London

London ACORN members want to see the City of London step up and implement a real rent relief program to help the thousands of tenants who have fallen into rental arrears because of the pandemic. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.'s annual rental report the City of London clocked in with 8,130 units where tenants had fallen behind on rent. That's about 16% of all units in the London census metropolitan area (CMA), which covers London, St. Thomas, Strathroy and parts of Middlesex and Elgin counties. With \$7.6 million in unpaid rent and thousands of units in arrears; London has nearly topped a list of Ontario communities where people fell behind, second only to Toronto.

The City of Toronto has set a precedent of implementing a 3 million dollar rent grant program through the Toronto rent bank. This is something London City Council can certainly advocate for and implement; we just need the political courage of our city councillors to do so.

London ACORN members are suggesting that the City of London use a portion of the remaining Social Services Relief Funds (SSRF) provided from the Province to implement a rent grant program through the Housing Stability Bank. We have had meetings with Housing Stability Bank about changing the criteria for those who would be eligible since we are in unprecedented times and we need unprecedented solutions. However the Housing Stability Bank has yet to be proactive in making the necessary changes.

London ACORN members would like to point out that so far that most of the SSRF funding has gone towards the Winter Homeless Response effort, Hotel shelter and isolation space rooms, and the City affordable housing units. These are all great initiatives to use the funding for, however our members would like to point out that there has been no real rent relief benefit implemented from the federal or provincial government. Tenants have been left to dry with no real rent relief. The City of London has the opportunity to step to the plate and support London tenants.

We would like for this to be put on the agenda for the next SPPC meeting. We are reasonable and responsible tenants, and we look forward to having a direct line of communication with the decision makers on city council to implement a much needed rent relief program.

On behalf of ACORN London Members.

ACORN Staff Contact – Anna Badillo