



## REPORT

Report Date: February 12, 2020  
Contact: Allison Dunnet  
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Meeting Date: February 26, 2020  
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services  
FROM: General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services  
SUBJECT: 2020 Renter Services Grants and Renter Office Update

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council approve fourteen (14) Renter Services Grants totalling \$550,000, including recommended conditions on the grants, to the Agencies listed in Column 1 of Appendix A in the amounts recommended for each Agency in Column 3 of Appendix A. Source of funding is the 2020 Affordable Housing Operating Budget (EHT Allocation).
- B. THAT Council approve one (1) SRO Revitalization Grant totalling \$75,000, including recommended conditions on the grant, to the Downtown Eastside SRO Collaborative Society. Source of funding is the 2020 Capital Budget - SRO Upgrade Granting Program.
- C. THAT, pursuant to Section 206(1)(j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council deems any organization that is to receive a grant pursuant to the above recommendations and is listed in Appendix A, which is not a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency, to be an organization contributing to the health and welfare of the City.
- D. THAT Council authorize the General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services to negotiate and execute agreements to disperse the grants described in Recommendations A through C on the terms and conditions set out herein or such other terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services and the Director of Legal Services.

- E. THAT no legal rights or obligations will arise or be created by Council's adoption of Recommendations A through C unless and until all legal documentation has been executed and delivered by the respective parties.

Recommendations A and B require 2/3 affirmative votes of all Council members per Section 206(1) of the *Vancouver Charter*.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report brings forward the first year of recommended funding allocations under the new Renter Services Funding program approved in June 2019. Council directed staff to implement this funding program to improve housing outcomes for renters in Vancouver by investing in non-profit community-based programs that support renters and promote renter education and engagement across the City. The call for applications sought new opportunities that can empower Vancouver renters to understand their rights, pursue their rights, and/or secure their housing. This report recommends approval and disbursements of a total of 15 grants totalling \$625,000 for 2020. This report also provides an update on staff actions taken since June 2019 to further the establishment of a City of Vancouver Renter Office in coordination with other government and community partners.

### **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

On June 12, 2019 (RTS 13180), Council approved the creation of a multi-year Renter Services Funding Program to support non-profit advocacy and renter-serving organizations to help renters understand their rights, pursue their rights and secure their housing, allocating \$1.5 million to fund renter services and advocacy programs for three years from Empty Homes Tax reserve funds. In that report, Council also approved a vision for a community-based Renter Centre, the creation of a Renter Advocacy and Services Team, efforts to improve the quality of Tenant Relocation Specialists, and on-going engagement with key partner organizations (e.g. non-profit renter services and advocacy groups, Landlord BC, UDI, the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) and Provincial Government).

On June 11, 2019, Council approved Actions to Increase Renter Protection and Amendments to the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (RTS 13196) to offer increased supports to renters affected by redevelopment and actions to address renovations.

On December 4, 2018, Council approved Motion B.10: Protecting Renters from Renovations and Aggressive Buy-Outs, calling on City staff to report back on measures to strengthen protections for renters through improvements to City policy and through work with partners at the Province.

On November 14, 2018, Council approved Motion B.2: Creating a Renter Office at the City of Vancouver directing staff to report back on a recommended mandate to improve support for by creating a single-point of entry for renter issues.

On November 28, 2017, Council approved the *Housing Vancouver Strategy* and *Housing Vancouver 3 Year Action Plan 2018-2020*. The 10-year *Housing Vancouver Strategy* is intended to foster a diverse and vibrant city, and is founded on the following:

1. Creating the 'Right Supply' of housing and addressing speculative demand
2. Protecting and retaining the existing rental stock
3. Supporting renters and vulnerable residents

On October 24, 2014, Council approved goals, targets and indicators of the Healthy City Strategy 2014-2025 Phase I. On July 8, 2015, Council approved the first four-year action plan for the Healthy City Strategy.

On March 7, 1978, Council established the Community Services Grants program. On October 9, 2003, Council approved revisions to the Community Services Grants program, including the creation of three funding streams: Neighbourhood Organizations, Direct Social Services, and Organizational Capacity Building.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

The new Renter Services Grants program enhances opportunities for Vancouver renters and the organizations that support them to educate on and advocate for renter rights and directly support renters at risk of displacement from their homes and communities. This significant new investment focussed specifically on renter needs amplifies existing City investments in renter serving organizations through Direct Social Services (DSS) Grants. The recommended grants in this report can strengthen our community partners' ability to help make our city more equitable for renters, advance efforts to be a City of Reconciliation, and address the housing and homelessness crisis.

### ***REPORT***

#### ***Background/Context***

##### ***Renter Services Funding Program***

Vancouver City Council formally established the Renter Services Funding program on June 12, 2019 (RTS 13180) with the goal of enhancing non-profit advocacy and support services to Vancouver renters through grants and/or service contracts. Council approved the allocation of \$1.5 million over 3 years from Empty Homes Tax reserve, with \$550,000 allocated to the initial 2019-2020 funding cycle.

Renter Services Funding is envisioned as an investment package that can improve housing outcomes for individual renters and amplify the awareness of renter needs across the housing system. Renter Services Funding will support non-profit community-based programs that assist and empower Vancouver renters and aims to influence three primary outcomes for renters: (1) renters are empowered to understand their rights and what impacts them as renters under provincial and municipal jurisdiction, (2) renters are empowered and assisted to pursue their legal rights as renters, including provision of legal advice, assistance and representation, and (3) renters are empowered and assisted to secure their housing through services that support them to maintain their tenancies or find adequate rehousing options.

Renter Services Funding is intended to:

- Respond to dynamic needs of renters in Vancouver;
- Reduce the impact of systemic factors that create conditions of vulnerability for renters;
- Facilitate partnerships and networks between the City, other levels of government, businesses, and non-profits;
- Inform and respond to Council priorities on supporting renters, including the provision of direct services that will improve housing outcomes for renters, and non-profit actions that will create positive systemic change for renters; and
- Demonstrably increase an organization's capacity to support and/or advocate for the needs of Vancouver renters.

### ***Vancouver's Housing Crisis and Impact on Renters***

Vancouver is experiencing a crisis of affordability and availability in its rental housing stock. Vancouver's purpose-built rental vacancy rate has been less than one per cent since 2014; over the same period, average rents in purpose-built rental have increased by over 25 per cent.<sup>1</sup> The ongoing crisis of rental affordability in Vancouver has meant significant challenges for Vancouver's renters. Over half (53% in 2016)<sup>2</sup> of Vancouver households rent their homes and renter households are found in every neighbourhood of the city. Vancouver renters have lower incomes than households that own their home.<sup>3</sup> Many renter households also experience intersecting barriers to finding and maintaining stable housing, including low incomes, insecure job status, and accessibility needs.

A significant challenge facing renters is the risk of displacement from their housing due to redevelopment, renovation or sale, which staff hear are impacting an increasing number of renters and undermining Vancouverites' confidence in renting as a viable housing option in the city. Renters have limited options if they are displaced from their existing housing, since there is very little rental available that is affordable to low and moderate income households.<sup>4</sup> The long-term risks of displacement are most acute for those with lower incomes, health issues, language barriers and/or who need specific housing options that are in low supply (e.g. family-sized apartments, accessible units, pet friendly homes). For those with the lowest incomes and greatest needs, displacement can result in homelessness. Vancouverites who identify as Indigenous, Black, or persons of colour experience systemic disadvantages and discrimination that contribute to their over-representation in poverty. The discrimination these groups face is an additional barrier to securing and maintaining rental housing.

When challenges arise for renters and their landlords, the Provincial Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) guides the resolution of those disagreements. The City has enacted innovative policies and practices to protect renters that work in conjunction with the RTA, including the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP), recently updated by Council in June 2019. However, renters can experience significant barriers to pursuing the rights afforded them under both provincial and municipal policy.

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<sup>1</sup> CMHC Rental Market Report 2018

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada Census 2016

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada Census 2016

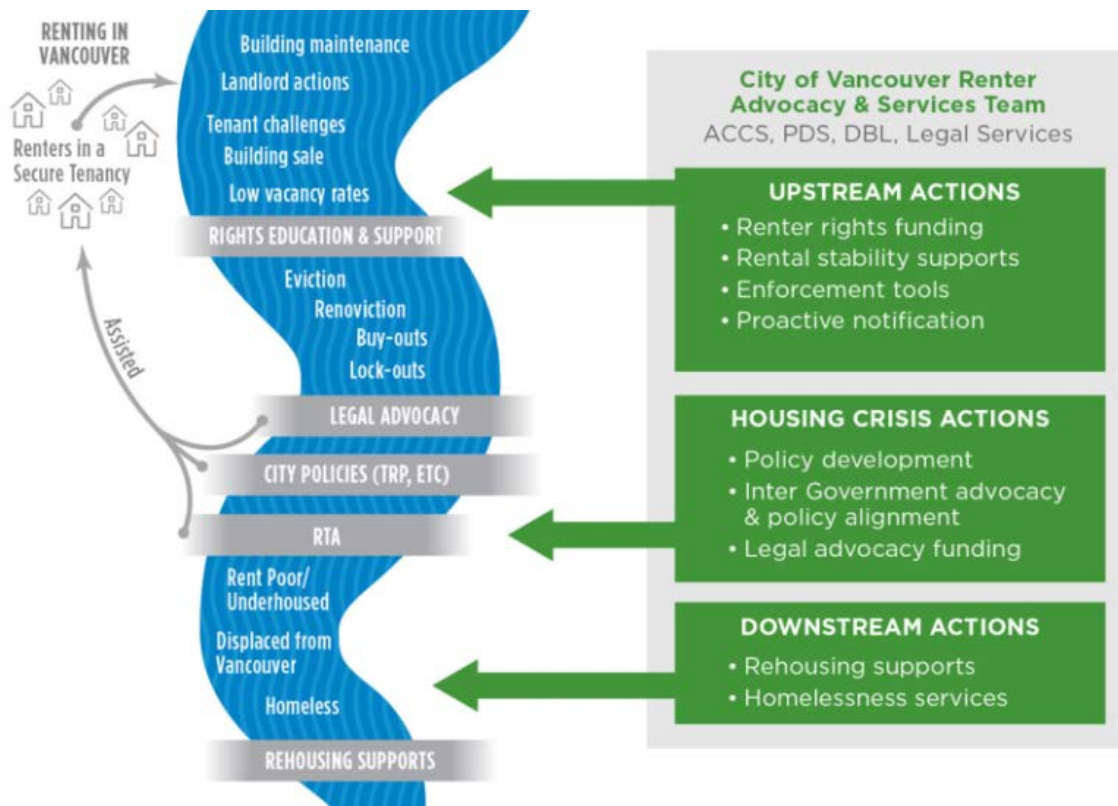
<sup>4</sup> According to the CMHC Rental Market Report (2019), in October 2019 the purpose built rental vacancy rate in the City of Vancouver was 0.5% for units between \$750 and \$1249 per month, and 0% rental vacancy for units renting below \$750 per month.

### Investing in the Non-Profit Renter Services and Advocacy Sector

A network of non-profit organizations in the city and the region provide renter advocacy and support services for Vancouver renters encountering a challenge with their landlord or in their tenancy. The sector provides a breadth of professional, high-quality services, including education on tenant rights, direct legal advocacy, and supports to help people find housing and/or remain housed. In consultation with renter-serving organizations, staff learned earlier this year that existing non-profit services are challenged to meet demand, even with funding from external partners such as the Law Foundation, the Province, and others.

A visual ecology demonstrating the difficulties and barriers renters can experience in trying to pursue their rights and secure their housing is presented by the ‘stream’ in Figure 1. The visual aims to capture how a renter may find themselves in need of education, support services, or advocacy as a result of break down or changes in the tenancy or tenant-landlord relationship. Figure 1 also demonstrates that opportunities exist “upstream” as well as at the point of “housing crisis” and “downstream” for enhanced City investments to make a significant impact on the ability of renters to stabilize and secure their housing.

**Figure 1. Opportunities for Enhanced City Investments to Support Renters**



The Renter Services Funding program creates the opportunity for the City to work with community-based partners to help them better support individual renters and engage more renters in Vancouver. The funding can also encourage greater sector collaboration, proactive renter advocacy and research, and support long-term sector resilience.

### ***Development of Renter Services Grants Program***

The 2020 Renter Services Grants program was designed with guidance from staff in the Social Policy grants team and in alignment with Social Policy's established Direct Social Services (DSS) Grants program. An important starting principle was that this new investment by Council in Renter Services Grants would not result in a reallocation or loss of funding from the DSS Grants stream for those renter-serving organizations historically receiving existing DSS program funding. Those renter serving organizations continued to apply for this base funding through the DSS stream, as per previous years, and were invited to apply for Renter Services Grants funding for new initiatives that would elevate or enhance their existing capacity to support and advocate for renters in Vancouver.

Staff heard from the non-profit sector of the importance of providing multi-year funding to enable stability and long-term planning. The City's Cultural Services and Social Policy Departments are exploring moving to multi-year grant funding to achieve sustainability and improve effectiveness of services in the community but this has not yet been implemented in a programmatic way. In the initial call for grant proposals under the Renter Services Grants program, applicants were given the opportunity to make a request for project funding running from one to three years. While ultimately the recommendation in this report is for single year grants for 2020, the information applicants provided in multi-year proposals will help staff determine if moving to multi-year funding in 2021 is advisable.

### ***Application and Review Process for Renter Services Grants***

A grants information guide and application package specific to Renter Services Grants and aligned with DSS Grants were prepared and posted online on the City's Renter Services Grants webpage (<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/renter-services-grants.aspx>) in early Fall 2019. Email notifications with grant opening and deadline dates were sent to over 200 non-profit organizations in Vancouver, including grantees of all of Social Policy's grants programs. The Renter Services Grants team hosted an information session for interested organizations, allowing staff to clarify grant goals and respond to questions. Where necessary, staff arranged additional phone, email and in-person meetings to assist applicants in preparing their submissions.

As with DSS Grants, Renter Services Grants required applicants to provide governance and financial details, and applications were required to be signed by two members of the applicant organization's board of directors. Staff reviewed all applications for completeness and to ensure they met eligibility requirements (Appendix D). Staff conducted detailed reviews using grant program-specific criteria that were established in alignment with Council priorities, based on "good practice" for program and organizational management, and aligned with those of the DSS Grants evaluation process. Follow-up phone calls were conducted with applicants where additional information was required.

### ***Adjudication***

An interdepartmental adjudication team included staff from three departments of the City's Renter Services and Advocacy Team (RAST): Arts, Culture and Community Services (ACCS) (including staff from Affordable Housing Programs and Social Policy), Development, Building and Licensing (DBL), and Legal Services. Staff from Affordable Housing Programs also sat on the adjudication of Social Policy's DSS Grants, enabling them to learn from Social Policy's

adjudication process and to work closely with staff administering DSS Grants to maximize the collective impact of the City’s investments in renters. The recommendations for Social Policy’s DSS Grants program, including recommendations for grants to renter-serving organizations, are also being presented to Council on February 26 (RTS 13579).

### ***Strategic Analysis***

#### ***Evaluation and Investment Principles***

In evaluating the grant applications, staff gave priority consideration to projects or services that met a range of principles and priorities, including: (See Appendix C for full list of grant principles and priorities):

- To fund a diversity of applications to ensure all goal areas are addressed (understanding rights, pursuing rights, securing housing);
- To support projects whose primary focus is reducing conditions that create vulnerability for Vancouver renters;
- To consider equity and allocate funding so as to serve a range of marginalized renter populations across the city;
- To consider the sustainability of the proposed project and the applicant’s ability to expand capacity and leverage other investments and/or partnerships;
- To consider the level of innovation or enhancement to renter services; and
- To consider the overall quality of the proposal.

#### ***Grants Recommended in this Report***

Staff received a total of 23 applications to the 2020 Renter Services Grants program, requesting a combined total of \$1,425,054. This report recommends approval of a total of 15 grants totalling \$625,000 (Table 1) (See Appendix A for specific grant recommendations).

**Table 1. Summary of 2020 Renter Services Grant Recommendations**

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDING</b>	<b>NO. of GRANTS RECOMMENDED</b>	<b>TOTAL \$\$ RECOMMENDED</b>	<b>No. of GRANT APPLICATIONS</b>	<b>TOTAL \$\$ REQUESTED</b>
2020 Affordable Housing Operating Budget	14	\$550,000	22	\$1,350,054
Capital - SRO Upgrade Granting Program	1	\$75,000	1	\$75,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>\$1,425,054</b>

#### ***Overview of Grants Being Recommended***

The 15 grants being recommended in this report encompass a range of services, programs and activities that support Vancouver renters. Each one addresses one or more of the three

outcomes the grant program aims to influence: understanding rights, pursuing rights, and/or securing housing. Combined, the grants aim to impact all Vancouver renters in need of support or education, and support the needs of a diversity of low-income, marginalized and at-risk renter populations across the city. Activities supported by the grants include:

- Enhanced opportunities for Vancouver renters to understand their rights and improve and stabilize their rental housing;
- Increased legal assistance and advocacy for renters, with direct investment in supporting women who are marginalized, DTES residents, and renters in non-profit housing;
- Increased housing support services for people facing barriers / marginalization, including youth exiting care, people with disabilities, people who identify as Indigenous, low-income Chinese seniors, and people who are homeless or at risk; and
- A focused investment in SRO tenants, including education, supports, and advocacy.

The amount of funding requested far exceeded the 2020 budget, so unfortunately not all programs are able to be recommended for funding. While all applications met some of the eligibility criteria, the adjudication committee determined that those applications being recommended in this report more strongly support the goals and criteria set out in the proposal call, respond to some of the most urgent needs, and have the greatest potential for innovation and system-wide changes in the future.

Six applications are being recommended for full funding and nine are being recommended to be funded partially. In instances where staff are recommending partial funding, there was a careful and balanced analysis of what level of funding could be effective. Staff will work with unsuccessful applicants to build capacity for applications in future years and support networking and collaboration between partners to address unfunded areas of need.

The Table in Appendix A summarizes the applications received and the recommended funding level of each.

### ***The City's Investment in Renters***

Of the fifteen (15) organizations being recommended for Renter Services Grants in this report:

- Twelve (12) are also being recommended for 2020 Direct Social Service (DSS) Grants or Organizational Capacity Building (OCB) Grants. Of those 12:
  - Eight (8) report housing/tenant supports as their core service, similar to the core services provided by the recommended Renter Services Grants, and
  - Four (4), by nature of their work and the populations they serve, incorporate tenant supports as part the overall supports they provide, but not as the core function of their work.
- Three (3) did not apply for 2020 DSS or OCB Grant funding.

Prior to the creation of the Renter Services Grants program, the City was already making significant annual investments in programs and services supporting renters through Social Policy's Direct Social Services (DSS) Grants and Organizational Capacity Building (OCB) Grants. The recommendation to create a new Renter Services Grants program was partially in response to the growth of social serving organizations that include renter education or supports as a proposed service area to accompany their core mission. As the housing and homelessness crisis has deepened, those on the front line trying to support communities and individuals to thrive find the lack of stable housing a counter pressure to their work. For example,



organizations serving seniors report increased demands to assist with housing affordability and other tenancy issues facing seniors living on modest fixed incomes.

In 2019, nine (9) organizations identifying renter services and advocacy as a core function received in aggregate approximately \$382,000 in DSS Grants (RTS 12912) (See Table 2 below). In 2020, those nine organizations (eight of which are being recommended for 2020 Renter Services Grants) are again being recommended for \$382,000 in DSS funding (RTS 13579). The proposed Renter Services Grants recommendations represent an opportunity to build and strengthen the existing sector and identify new opportunities to reach organizations where renter services have not been a core focus in the past or that are new applicants to the City.

**Table 2. COV Investments in Core Services and Advocacy for Renters 2019-2020**

<b>Grant Stream</b>	<b>2019 COV Investment in Core Services for Renters</b>	<b>2020 COV Recommended Investment in Core Services for Renters</b>	<b>% Increase 2019-2020</b>
DSS Grants	\$382,000 <i>(to 9 organizations)</i>	\$382,000 <i>(to 9 organizations)</i>	
Renter Services Grants	n/a	\$625,000 <i>(to 15 organizations)</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$382,000</b>	<b>\$1,007,000</b>	<b>164%</b>

Staff note that Table 2 does not include the many DSS and OCB Grants for organizations that make some mention of serving low-income renters who are marginalized and/or at risk of displacement, but whose primary focus is not on renters. Given the multi-focal nature of the work conducted by these agencies, it is impossible to determine the percent of funding of their overall grant that might be supporting renters; however, DSS and OCB Grants that referenced renter needs and supports as a secondary area of service for 2019 was approximately \$400,000 (RTS 12912) and is recommended to be the same for 2020 (RTS 13579).

### ***Initial Reflections and Learnings***

The grants being recommended for 2020 Renter Services funding reflect Council's commitment to enhancing advocacy and support services for renters across the city. While learnings and improvements will be continuous, this first cycle of grant adjudication has identified potential opportunities to improve granting systems and processes for 2021, as well as areas for discussion with key partners about coordination of investment. Initial learnings include:

#### **Identify opportunities to increase system collaboration**

Staff will look to and work with the sector, including non-profit renter-serving organizations, funders and others, to identify opportunities for greater coordination, collaboration and partnerships on grant proposals. Staff will try to stimulate applications for more innovative projects that can leverage additional resources and increase the potential for collective system-wide impact.

*Refine and decolonize application and adjudication processes to enhance equity*

Staff will seek guidance on ways to structurally embed the City's pending equity and decolonizing frameworks into future grant application and adjudication processes, with the goal of promoting equitable opportunities for groups to apply and investing funding to support a more equitable rental and renter services sector.

*Explore prevalence of homeless outreach funding requests*

This year, over 50% of grant requests identified homeless outreach as the core service needing funding. Staff are interested to explore this trend with the City's Homelessness Services outreach team and with BC Housing which currently funds Provincial Homelessness Services and Programs.

***Monitoring and Reporting***

Staff will work with grant recipients to develop key performance indicators and schedules for monitoring and reporting back on their proposed activities and intended outputs.

***Update and Next Steps on Other Work of the City of Vancouver Renter Office***

The following is an update on staff actions taken since June 2019 to further the creation of a City of Vancouver Renter Office.

*Renter Services and Advocacy Team (RAST)*

This internal cross-departmental team was established to coordinate efforts to improve City responsiveness to renter issues. The Team is led and convened by ACCS Renter Office, with participation from Development, Building and Licensing (DBL), Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (PDS), Legal Services, and Corporate Communications. These departments regularly interface with renters and are responsible for policy and City practice that impact renters and renting in Vancouver. Since June, the following newly funded positions have been filled to support the Renter Office and the RAST: Planner I and Planning Analyst in ACCS and a Communications Coordinator in Corporate Communications. PDS, DBL and Legal Services are in the process of filling their new positions.

The RAST Team meets periodically to coordinate on key renter issues and initiatives. From day to day, staff coordinate to respond to renter issues and opportunities as they arise. For example, in order to support a low-income renter facing displacement, staff may need permitting or property use information and support from DBL, policy interpretation from PDS, and/or rehousing support from Homelessness Services in ACCS. The RAST has identified the interconnectedness of renter-related work across the departments and the importance of collaborating to improve experiences and outcomes for renters.

*Renter Enquiry Line*

ACCS Renter Office staff continue to receive daily email and phone messages via the Renter Enquiry Line set up in December 2018 to provide a point of entry for renters and those advocating for renters to bring their questions and concerns to the City, and for staff to assist in triaging enquiries and coordinating responses via the RAST. The Renter Office also receives a significant volume of enquiries from Council on the status of individual renters and building-related issues. A significant portion of the enquires

coming in remain related to active Tenant Relocation Plans (TRPs) and these cases are referred to the specific Housing Planner with responsibility for regulating and monitoring that TRP. Cases unrelated to a TRP are managed by Renter Office staff.

Between December 2018 and January 2020, the Renter Office received inquiries from 345 individuals. The most commonly asked questions are those related to the RTA and renter rights under provincial legislation (50%), followed by questions about TRPs and City policy (46%), evictions (33%), landlord issues (32%) and displacement (32%). Staff note that while there continue to be multiple entry points to the City for renters, the Line has clearly become an important tool for renters seeking assistance and information.

#### *Consultation and Engagement*

Staff continue to engage key sector partners to identify opportunities to enhance, elevate and improve services for renters. Quarterly meetings hosted at City Hall with non-profit renter advocacy and services organizations provide an opportunity for interested groups to network, discuss relevant issues, provide feedback to the City, and obtain City information. Staff in the Renter Office also have responsibility for supporting the City's Renters Advisory Committee.

#### *Renter Centre*

Council directed staff to develop a plan for a community-based Renter Centre that can provide a single point of entry and assistance for renters and that can co-locate City, Provincial and non-profit community renter services in one location. 900 Howe Street, a City-owned site that will be available in Spring 2021, has been identified as a proposed location. Staff spoke in December of 2019 with staff of the Provincial Residential Tenancy Branch to begin exploring the possibility of coordinated services and outreach in Vancouver. With the completion of the new Renter Services Grants program and the on-boarding of the remaining Renter Advocacy and Services staff team, the development of this Centre will be a key priority of 2020.

#### *Tenant Relocation Specialist*

Council directed staff to take actions to improve the availability and quality of third-party market Tenant Relocation Specialists to support the implementation of Tenant Relocation Plans (TRPs). In the months after the adoption of the new 2019 Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP), staff undertook a general review of market availability of Tenant Relocation Specialists and found, through discussions with sector organizations and review of active TRPs, that there are currently few organizations or individuals providing this important service in the market, and that there has been some loss of more experienced specialists from retirement and staff turnover. Staff are moving directly to an RFQ process to source an appropriate consultant or organization to explore with non-market and market housing operators, BC Housing, renter services, Landlord BC, and other organizations on how and where to best situate a Tenant Relocation Specialist training program for success.

***Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)******Financial***

The total \$550,000 funding recommended in this report for 2020 Renter Services operating Grants is included in the 2020 Affordable Housing Operating Budget (EHT Allocation).

Staff recommend that a request of \$75,000 to support an enhanced SRO Hub to support tenants in SRA-designated buildings be funded from the 2020 Capital Budget - SRO Upgrade Granting Program, and that monitoring, oversight and future grant requests are managed by the SRO Strategy implementation team in ACCS.

The combined total of grant funds being recommended is therefore \$625,000 (Table 3).

Grant funds will be released in two payments, unless otherwise indicated, with the first instalment expected to be disbursed in March 2020.

**Table 3. Sources of Funds of 2020 Renter Services Investment**

<b>Source of funds</b>	<b>2020 Investment</b>
2020 Affordable Housing Operating Budget	\$550,000
Capital Budget - SRO Upgrade Granting Program	\$75,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>

***CONCLUSION***

The services, programs and organizations being recommended for funding are part of a network of non-profits working to support and influence the ability of renters to understand their rights as renters, pursue their rights, and secure their housing. City grants provide core and project funding to activities that can make a significant impact on long-term resilience in renter advocacy and supports and on the ability of renters at risk of displacement from their homes and communities to stabilize and secure their housing.

\* \* \* \* \*

**2020 RENTER SERVICES GRANTS**  
**Renter Services Grants Recommended (Recommendations A - B)**

*The Renter Services Grants will support non-profit advocacy and renter serving organizations to help renters understand and pursue their rights, to provide direct services to support renters to maintain their tenancies, and to enable renters to find adequate rehousing options.*

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>2020 REQUESTED</b>	<b>2020 RECOMMENDED</b>	<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>CONDITIONS &amp; COMMENTS</b>
Access Pro Bono Society of BC	\$45,000	\$40,000	Vancouver Renter Legal Services	Will enhance and extend APB's capacity to provide expert legal assistance and representation to low- and modest-income Vancouver renters confronting tenancy-threatening legal problems in and out of Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) hearings and BC Supreme Court.	
Atira Women's Resources Society	\$80,000	\$40,000	Legal Advocacy Program	Will enhance the organization's capacity to improve housing outcomes of low-income women, including trans women, in the DTES by supporting them to understand and pursue their rights through legal advice, advocacy, and representation.	
Aunt Leah's Society	\$24,500	\$24,500	Friendly Landlord Network	Will enhance the program's capacity to successfully support youth and families transitioning from government care into private market housing through connections and collaboration between non-profit services agencies and landlords, thereby increasing the housing options for youth and families transitioning from care to independence.	
Battered Women's Support Services	\$48,152	\$24,182	How to Survive a Housing Crisis	Will provide weekly educational workshops and one-to-one support and advocacy of a housing specialist for women and girls who are experiencing or have survived Gender Based Violence.	
Disability Alliance BC Society	\$116,213	\$70,000	The Right Fit	Will build the capacity to support people with disabilities who have housing needs. The program is designed to address the crisis in wheelchair	

AGENCY	2020 REQUESTED	2020 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
				accessible housing by matching scarce affordable, accessible homes and independent living supports for people with disabilities.	
DTES SRO Collaborative	\$75,000	\$75,000	The SRO Hub	Will assist and empower SRO tenants through new initiatives to understand their rights through educational programming, share that knowledge through community building, newsletters and a resource library, and improve and stabilize their rental housing by bringing together the stakeholders of the SRO housing sector.	
First United Church Community Ministry Society	\$14,236	\$14,236	First United Legal Advocacy	Will enhance and extend the capacity of First United's Legal Advocacy program to provide legal advocacy services on tenant issues to low-income renters.	
Helping Spirit Lodge Society	\$35,580	\$35,580	Journey Home	Will enhance the capacity of the program to support homeless individuals and families in Vancouver, with special focus on Urban Indigenous Peoples who are chronically or episodically homeless, to stay housed permanently in affordable and safe housing and to prevent and reduce homelessness by providing direct support.	
Seniors Services Society of BC	\$72,000	\$59,425	Vancouver Seniors Housing Navigation Services	Will enhance the capacity of Seniors Services Society to provide one-on-one housing navigation services for homeless Vancouver seniors and assist them to secure and maintain affordable and appropriate rental housing and empower them to understand and pursue their rental rights.	
Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre (TRAC)	\$73,000	\$40,000	Legal Representation for Renters in Non-Profit Housing	Will provide low income Vancouver renters living in non-profit housing with direct advocacy, including full representation at Residential Tenancy Branch dispute resolution hearings.	
Vancouver	\$94,550	\$40,000	Building	Will build the infrastructure of VTU chapters to	<b>Condition:</b>

AGENCY	2020 REQUESTED	2020 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
Tenants Union (VTU)			Neighbourhood Based Infrastructure Renter Education, Advocacy & Mutual Support	rapidly expand Vancouver renters' access to renter rights information, create local entry points to legal advocacy and develop mutual support to stop evictions, achieve maintenance standards in rental buildings and prevent homelessness.	Quarterly payments contingent on program update of work accomplished to the satisfaction of the Managing Director of Homelessness Services and Affordable Housing Programs
Watari Research Association	\$68,343	\$68,343	Transition to Independence Program	Will enhance the capacity of Watari to support pregnant/parenting youth in Vancouver gain access to dignified housing and other supports. This transitional housing program consists of a monthly rent supplement provided by BC Housing and support services provided by a trained and dedicated youth housing outreach worker.	
Westside Anglicans Neighborhood Ministry	\$64,600	\$26,600	Equipping Volunteers for Service to Homeless & Vulnerable People	Will enhance the capacity of volunteers to assist homeless and vulnerable people on Vancouver's Westside to access housing, income, disability, and other supports by investing in training, collaboration and mentorship opportunities for volunteers.	
West End Seniors Network	\$50,000	\$50,000	Roommate Pairing Service for Older Adults	Will support the implementation of a new and innovative roommate pairing service that will connect older adults with other Vancouver residents of all ages in need of affordable accommodation.	<b>Comment:</b> staff note that Council allocated, as part of Housing Vancouver in 2018, \$50,000 to support an initiative to

AGENCY	2020 REQUESTED	2020 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
					connect seniors in underutilized homes with renters in need of affordable housing.
Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice	\$30,000	\$17,134	Renter Services for Chinese Seniors	Will enhance Yarrow's capacity to address service gaps and reduce language and other barriers faced by low-income Chinese senior renters in DTES and Strathcona by assisting and empowering them to achieve housing security through advocacy, education and outreach.	
<b>Total = 15</b>	<b>\$891,174</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>			



**2020 RENTER SERVICES GRANTS**  
**Renter Services Grants NOT Recommended**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>2020 REQUESTED</b>	<b>2020 RECOMMENDED</b>	<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>CONDITIONS &amp; COMMENTS</b>
Atira Women's Resources Society	\$45,000	\$0	Homelessness Prevention & Housing Outreach	Will enhance the program's capacity to assist women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside to secure safe and affordable long-term housing and provide ongoing support to the women in maintaining their housing.	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b> Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Carnegie Community Centre Association	\$35,880	\$0	Renters' Rights in Supportive & Program Model Housing	This project would explore how supportive and transitional housing models impact housing security through Residential Tenancy Act exemptions. Activities include "Know Your Rights" resource creation, peer-led research into the experience of tenants in supportive or program-model housing, and feedback for BC Housing and other government actors.	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b> Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Collingwood Neighbourhood House Society	\$80,000	\$0	Staying Housed in Renfrew Collingwood	Aims to enhance capacity to support renters in Renfrew-Collingwood who are at risk of losing housing by addressing social determinants of health. Will connect folks with one-on-one support and resources to support their health and wellness, support finances, build support networks with community partners, and liaise with housing providers to keep renters at home.	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b> Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS)	\$50,000	\$0	Human Rights & Rental Housing in Vancouver	Through this research project, CLAS will create systemic recommendations and develop targeted strategies for their implementation to support human rights in Vancouver's rental housing. These	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b> Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications

AGENCY	2020 REQUESTED	2020 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
				recommendations will involve law reform, public education, and improving access to mechanisms for addressing discrimination.	rated higher in addressing City priorities
Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS)	\$70,000	\$0	Renters' Rights Ad Campaign	This billboard and media campaign will bring housing rights advice to the public in accessible ways by providing short, easy to understand messages in ways that will reach those most in need. The ads will direct people to CLAS and to the Renter Services Group at the City of Vancouver to assist people wishing to pursue their rights.	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b> Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
EMBERS	\$100,000	\$0	Workforce Rental Savings & Support	The grant will fund a workforce housing initiative, providing a dedicated housing coordinator and a matched savings program to help our workers both secure and maintain permanent housing.	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b> Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
McLaren House Society	\$57,500	\$0	MHS Community Support Program	The program focuses on housing stability, sustainability and addressing social isolation. Our program provides staffing resources and support services for the many challenges and barriers clients face that negatively impact their housing, leading to housing instability and homelessness. Fundamentally, this is a homelessness prevention program.	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b> Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House	\$95,500	\$0	Our House	This project includes three Vancouver Neighbourhood Houses. We will amplify rental sustainability in our local neighbourhoods. It includes a multi-pronged approach to increase the capacity	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b> Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b><i>2020 REQUESTED</i></b>	<b>2020 RECOMMENDED</b>	<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>CONDITIONS &amp; COMMENTS</b>
				for renters to pursue their rights through resources to secure and maintain housing.	rated higher in addressing City priorities
<b>Total = 8</b>	<b><i>\$533,880</i></b>	<b>\$0</b>			

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## RENTER SERVICES GRANTS: POLICY FRAMEWORK, PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

### Policy Framework: Our Statement of Intent

Renter Services grants are investments that contribute to improving housing outcomes for renters in Vancouver. They support non-profit community-based programs that assist and empower Vancouver renters to **understand their rights, pursue their rights, and/or secure their housing (i.e., maintain their tenancies or find adequate rehousing options)**. Renter Services grants are intended to elevate and enhance, not simply maintain, an organization's capacity to support renters. Renter Services grants:

- Are co-developed and governed collaboratively with and by the communities and individuals they serve;
- Respond to dynamic needs of renters in Vancouver;
- Reduce the impact of systemic factors that create conditions of vulnerability for renters;
- Facilitate partnerships and networks between the City, other levels of government, business and non-profits;
- Inform and respond to Council priorities on supporting renters, including the provision of direct services that will improve housing outcomes for renters, and non-profit actions that will create positive systemic change for renters; and
- Demonstrably increase an organization's capacity to support and/or advocate for the needs of Vancouver renters.

### Principles: Principles for Grant Making

- **Accountability:** We embrace ongoing feedback loops with partners to understand City investments and how they influence change.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** We strive to build equity in our communities by making grant processes accessible, especially for groups that experience exclusion.
- **Transparency:** We are open, transparent, and consistent with our grant making processes.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** We inform our grant making using evidence-based research, and consider data sources, both formal and informal.
- **Balanced Investment Approach:** We balance short, medium and long-term investments so that, while addressing immediate concerns, we never lose sight of our goal of effecting lasting systems change.
- **Diversity and Reconciliation:** Our grants recognize the unique strengths of our many diverse communities by fostering relationships, helping heal the past, and moving forward with shared understanding and respect – working within the context of Vancouver as the unceded homeland of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Our grants demonstrate alignment with Council priorities for renters and related strategies and initiatives.
- **Partnerships:** Our relationships with our community and funding partners are based on trust, respect and transparency.

## **Renter Services Grants Priorities**

Renter Services grants are designed to support projects whose primary focus is reducing conditions that create vulnerability for Vancouver renters. Priority consideration is given to projects or services that meet the following:

- Align with the Renter Services Grants Statement of Intent;
- Reinforce or support the goals of Council-approved actions to support Vancouver renters;
- The primary function is to provide supplemental supports and/or remove barriers to ensure equal access to services and opportunities for renters in Vancouver;
- The primary focus is directed to renters who are experiencing social, physical, and/or economic disadvantages and/or who face discrimination;
- Use one or more of the following approaches to improve housing outcomes for renters:
  - Service-oriented, and aimed at reducing the effects of disadvantage; OR
  - Systemic or individual advocacy aimed at securing services and protecting rights; OR
  - Community development which empowers and involves renters experiencing marginalization in solving social problems, bringing about positive social change, and extending participatory democracy.
- Use one or more of the following strategies to improve housing outcomes for renters:
  - Organizing/mobilizing volunteer resources; OR
  - Developing mutual support (e.g. coalition building, collaborative projects) among groups, individuals and group support systems, or cross-cultural support networks; OR
  - Facilitating improved access to renter services; OR
  - Building the capacity of individuals or families who rent to address the causes of rental housing instability; OR
  - Developing or supporting new service delivery models; OR.
  - Delivering community-based workshops, conferences, or other non-formal educational opportunities for renters and/or renter advocates; OR
  - Undertaking focused research to better understand systemic challenges experienced by renters and opportunities for system change.

Applicants must demonstrate that the approaches and strategies proposed will demonstrably increase an organization's capacity to support and/or advocate for improved housing outcomes for renters. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to identify the measurable potential impact their project will have on the broader renter community in Vancouver.

## **RENTER SERVICES GRANTS: ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligibility**

An organization must:

- Be a registered non-profit society, community service co-op or social enterprise wholly owned by a non-profit and in good standing with the Registrar of Companies; OR be a registered charity, in good standing with the Canadian Revenue Agency; OR a First Nations Band;
- Have an independent, active governing body composed of volunteers. The by-laws must have provisions that no Board director can be remunerated for serving as a director and that no staff member can be a voting member of the board or executive;
- Demonstrate accommodation, welcomeness and openness to people of all ages, abilities, sexual orientation, gender identities (including trans\*, gender-variant and two-spirit people), ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, religions, languages, under-represented communities and socio-economic conditions (including people experiencing or at risk of homelessness) in its policies, practices and programs, except in instances where the exclusion of some group is required for another group to be effectively targeted;
- Have the demonstrated functional capacity and sufficient resources to deliver the programs to which the City is being asked to contribute;
- Show costs that are reasonable and on par with other similar programs;
- Deliver the funded program in Vancouver to Vancouver residents.

Exceptions to the above may be approved at the discretion of the Managing Director of Homelessness Services and Affordable Housing Programs.

### **Ineligible Programs**

- Those which fall wholly or primarily within the mandate of other government departments, e.g. (but not limited to):
  - Direct healthcare programs (such as health self-help groups, health information programs, medical treatment, maintenance or rehabilitation programs);
  - Employment training;
  - Initial settlement programs.
- Direct welfare supports, including food banks, meal programs and provision of clothing;
- The capital costs of housing and or rent payments or rent supplements;
- One-on-one counselling with licensed psychologists, social workers or registered clinical counsellors;
- Projects which are primarily recreational (formal recreation programs such as clubs or teams), or formal educational projects leading to a credential (Note: non-formal educational projects that do not lead to a formal educational credential are eligible);
- Travel expenses, attendance at, or fees for, conferences, workshops or other forms of training;
- Transportation expenses, except those that allow users or potential users to access services;
- Legal fees;
- Payment of: City property taxes; capital expenses, operating or capital deficits;

- Act in the capacity of a funding body for, or make grants to any other group or organization;
- Projects directed to the preservation of any particular ethnic or cultural heritage, except in instances for Reconciliation initiatives;

Organizations receiving a Renter Services grant may provide one or more of the programs noted above, but the City's grant cannot be used to support those activities. Exceptions to the above may be approved at the discretion of the Managing Director of Homelessness Services and Affordable Housing Programs.