

Toronto has seen an unprecedented level of advocacy and direct support related to affordable housing and homelessness this year as result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the way it has exposed and exacerbated the city's pre-existing affordable housing & homelessness crises.

On Sunday, November 22nd Torontonians across the city are recognizing National Housing Day by organizing actions to highlight the issues impacting our city and showcase some of the important work people are doing in response to these issues.

On November 22nd, join us in demanding that every Toronto resident's right to housing is respected and realized.



Petition for Housing Justice for Jane-Finch and all Low-Income Residents of Toronto

Time and location: All day – online

Organizer: Jane Finch Housing Coalition

Description of action: Sign this petition for housing justice for residents of the Jane-Finch community and all low-income residents in Toronto: <http://chnng.it/sQXx6Y2gyg> The petition makes specific demands of the federal, provincial and federal governments to address the issues residents are facing.

About the issue:

The Jane-Finch community continues to be disproportionately impacted by housing issues in the city. As a community with the highest density of subsidized housing units in Canada, Jane-Finch is one of the lowest-income neighbourhoods in Toronto with most of its population being made up of struggling, working-class, racialized people. Jane Finch is also experiencing some of the highest rates of COVID-19 in the city. The members of this community face many barriers to survival – one of which is maintaining housing in a city where the cost of living continues to rise while the household income remains low.

Through our community consultations over the last two years, we heard that housing affordability and the yearly rising cost of rent are the biggest housing concerns in Jane and Finch, particularly for seniors and youth who are financially vulnerable. With a high concentration of vertical poverty, new research shows that Jane-Finch also has one of the highest eviction rates in Toronto. These rates run parallel with increasing property speculation, in conjunction with recent developments like the Finch West LRT. Between the years 2012-2016, just one apartment building complex in the Jane-Finch community was Ontario's fourth highest postal code for eviction applications placed as per the Landlord and Tenant Board. Most of the evictions were due to non-payment of rent.

Residents have also become the target of renovictions in which landlords are investing in cosmetic repairs to increase the cost of rent, and using AGI's as a tool to evict tenants and make profit. Some residents reported being asked to pay an additional \$300 for renovations or face being evicted. Meanwhile, landlords are ignoring the need for capital repairs and essential maintenance in these buildings. These unsafe and unsanitary living conditions are detrimental to the health of residents living in these buildings.

The COVID-19 pandemic will only exacerbate these housing challenges for an already disadvantaged community. Residents in Jane-Finch are affected by the loss of income and work are struggling to provide for their families. The situation surrounding COVID-19 continues to evolve each day and will continue to impact low-income families for many months after the pandemic has passed. All levels of government need to immediately act to ensure communities are supported and housed during this time of uncertainty and as we recover from this pandemic.

About the organizers: The Jane-Finch Housing Coalition (JFHC) is a coalition of residents, service providers and community organizers working towards housing justice and housing equity in the Jane-Finch area in Toronto. JFHC's focus is to bring awareness to ongoing and emerging housing issues, educate and empower community members to exercise their housing rights, as well as encourage engagement in urban/community planning processes and housing advocacy.

To learn more and get involved, visit: <https://janefinchhousingco.wixsite.com/home>

Inclusionary Zoning People's Consultation

Time and location: All day - online

Organizer: ACORN

Description of action: ACORN members are fighting for Inclusionary Zoning, which would hold big developers accountable and force them to include affordable units in their new buildings. John Tory, Doug Ford, and even our own city councillors have been trying to weaken our demands because they're listening to developers complain about lost profits. The City has just completed their formal public consultation process, but that process didn't allow for the people to be heard. There is still time for the City to hear from us. ACORN members are demanding that all new residential developments of 60 or more units are required to make 20% to 30% of their units affordable housing. **Take 2 minutes and complete the Inclusionary Zoning People's Consultation survey here: <https://bit.ly/IZConsult>**

About the issue: Developers will always build in Toronto - but housing is already unaffordable and it's only getting worse. The city has a major opportunity to get new affordable housing built in the city, through a strong inclusionary zoning plan. It's so important that people like us are able to afford to live in the city. A city without people isn't a city at all. The city's inclusionary zoning plan needs to put people before profit. Developers make massive profits, leading to unaffordable housing prices in Toronto. ACORN members want to see a strong inclusionary zoning by-law that requires 20 to 30% of the square footage of ALL new developments to be affordable housing, at minimum, that inclusionary Zoning requirements are applied to EVERY development with 60 or more units, that inclusionary Zoning applies to ALL parts of the city--Low & Moderate income neighbourhoods can't be left out, and that there is a mix of affordability levels, including DEEP affordability, so that low and moderate income people can actually afford to live in these units. The city's inclusionary zoning plan needs to put the right to housing above developers' right to profit. You can check out a report we put out here: <https://bit.ly/IZdemands>

About the organizer: Toronto ACORN was founded in 2004, with the first organized group in Canada being formed in Weston / Mt Dennis after tenants took their slum-lord to task and won \$250,000 in rent abatements. In the next ten years Toronto ACORN spread to every part of the city and has won significant victories including strengthening of the enforcement of apartment building standards. ACORN is currently fighting to stop predatory and COVID evictions, for a better Residential Tenancies Act, for Toronto to license all landlords. Toronto ACORN has local meetings in your neighbourhood and they are always open for new people to get involved. **To learn more and get involved, visit <https://acorncanada.org>**

Demand action on the acquisition of 214-230 Sherbourne St.

Time and location: All day - online

Organizer: The Regent Park Community Health Centre

Description of action: Community organizations operating in the downtown east end of Toronto are sending a letter to the City of Toronto and higher levels of government asking that they ensure the City follows through on its commitment to pursue the acquisition of 214-230 Sherbourne St. for the construction of desperately-needed social housing and ensure that 214-230 is included in any plan to acquire property. **Support this call for action by sending an email to:** Abigail.bond@toronto.ca (City's Housing Secretariat), councillor_wongtam@toronto.ca (Councillor, Ward 13), SMorrison-QP@ndp.on.ca (MPP Toronto Centre), and emarci.i.en@parl.gc.ca (MP Toronto Centre), asking them to ensure that the City follows through on its commitment to pursue the acquisition of 214-230 Sherbourne St. for social or rent-geared-to-income housing & to ensure funding is made available for this purpose.

About the issue: Just prior to COVID, many organizations had been advocating for a vacant lot at 214-230 Sherbourne to be turned into social, rent-geared-to-income, housing. In March of 2018, a motion was passed by City Council to investigate the acquisition or expropriation of the properties at 214-230 Sherbourne St. and in July of 2018, Council passed a motion to make a conditional offer on the properties should they become available. In December 2019, (PH11.10) Council authorized staff to initiate negotiations to acquire the properties and to identify funding possibilities for acquisition. Staff were directed to report back to the City's Planning and Housing Committee in April of 2020 and to the Create TO Board by the second quarter of 2020, however this process was disrupted by the sudden onset of COVID and there have been no updates. Meanwhile, the recently released City reports on the City's plan for housing (PH16.8) include a recommendation for new housing through acquisition, renovation and "shovel ready" projects. The effort to create housing at 214-230 Sherbourne is of even greater urgency in this new context we are facing, as this vacant property continues to sit empty in the midst of the homelessness crisis in the City. It is an important location to save from the further gentrification of this area. It is the location where on December 17th, 1985, a homeless woman named Drina Joubert, froze to death in the cab of an abandoned pick-up truck. It is the location where hundreds of people who are homeless struggle to survive. Action is needed to ensure this location brings housing and safety to so many who are in desperate need of it in this community.

Share your 2021 priorities for what the City of Toronto should do to support renters

Time and location: All day – online

Organizer: Housing Action Now

Description of action: The City of Toronto's Subcommittee on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing, which was set up last year to develop ways to prevent tenants from being illegally evicted by predatory landlords, has spent the last year working on ways to improve housing stability for renters. On Monday Nov. 23, at 7pm, the Subcommittee on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing is meeting. Staff are proposing creation of a new, permanent Tenant Advisory Committee that will inform the City's tenant-related policy, program, service, and consultation activities and would also develop a work plan each year for the Protection of Rental Housing. A draft workplan for 2021 has been provided, which includes the consideration of a Small Sites Rental Housing Acquisition Program, investigating possible anti-renoviction & anti-tenant-displacement policies, and developing a data strategy. **Take action today by sharing your priorities for what you think the City/Tenant Advisory Committee should work on next year. What should the City be doing to improve housing stability and housing affordability for renters and prevent eviction? To send in your suggestions, email phc@toronto.ca with "submission on item RH4.2" in the subject line.**

About the organizer: Housing Action Now began as a Toronto coalition of community organizations and individuals providing leadership to improve housing and homelessness policies and programs in Toronto. HAN, in various forms and under different names, has been advocating for affordable housing since the 1980s. The group aimed to work with all parties involved in Toronto's housing and homelessness sectors to implement solutions to Toronto's affordable housing crisis. At the moment, Housing Action Now exists solely as a Facebook group, where Toronto affordable housing and homelessness news, events, calls to action, and resources are shared.

To learn more and get involved, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/housingactionnow>

Doug Ford: All we want for Christmas is to Keep our Homes!

Petition to Reinstate the Eviction Ban

Time and location: All day – online

Organizer: Federation of Metro Tenants Associations – FMTA

Description of action: Tell Doug Ford to immediately reinstate the eviction ban by adding your voice to this petition:

<https://www.torontotenants.org/evictionban>

About the issue:

#NoCOVIDEvictions

You can't shelter in place if you don't have a home. While Ontario is tightening COVID-19 restrictions across the province tomorrow, nothing has been said about the thousands of tenants facing eviction due to job loss and health challenges as a result of the pandemic. The Landlord and Tenant Board is a disaster, with many tenants being evicted without even knowing that they had a hearing, or getting to talk to a lawyer. Homeless encampments are growing while landlords continue to see increasing profits. The CERB has run out, and winter is coming. Today, on National Housing Day, on the eve of a cold and uncertain Canadian winter the FMTA is calling on the Government, the Premier and the Minister to protect the rights of Ontarians of all backgrounds and beliefs to safe and secure housing over the holidays and for the duration of the pandemic.

About the organizer: The Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations (FMTA) is a non-profit organization which advocates for better rights for tenants. Founded in 1974, we are the oldest and largest Tenant Federation in Canada. The FMTA is comprised of affiliated Tenant Associations and of individual members. We have over 3,000 members and continue to grow.

To learn more and get involved, visit: www.torontotenants.org

South Etobicoke National Housing Day: Online movie & Q&A

Time and location: 7pm online

Organizers: LAMP Community Health Centre, Lakeshore Affordable Housing Advocacy and Action Group, and Humber College

Description of action: Participate in an online Screening of Us & Them + Q&A: A movie about a woman who sets out to help people experiencing homelessness, but they end up helping her. Sign up for one of the 50 free tickets here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/us-and-them-film-screening-tickets-129904085617>

The link to the online screening will be emailed on Sunday during the day to all who sign up via Eventbrite. The Q&A will be from 8:30-9:30pm after the movie.

About the organizer:

We are a partnership between an advocacy group, a community health centre, and Humber college, all located in South Etobicoke. Together, we're advocating for deeply affordable housing in South Etobicoke through outreach and research.

To learn more and get involved with the Lakeshore Affordable Housing Advocacy and Action Group, visit them on Twitter: https://twitter.com/LAHAAG_SE **LAMP** and on **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/lahaagetobicoke>.

To learn more and get involved with LAMP, visit them on Twitter:

https://twitter.com/LAMPCHC_info and **Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/LAMPCHEALTHC>

Housing for All, Houses not Cages Banner Drop

Time and location: 11am at 338 Dundas St. East

Organizer: Street Health

Description of action: Banner drop

About the organizer: Here at Street Health we understand that housing is a right for all and that health outcomes of our communities are directly linked to safe, affordable, appropriate housing. We work with our clients every day to secure shelter beds and to secure and maintain permanent housing. In these troubling times of COVID-19, we are having increased difficulty finding emergency shelter space within the city. We need more beds now as winter is quickly approaching. Congregate living spaces are not appropriate given the proven widespread community transmission of the virus. We are advocating for the city to meet this need and immediately expand the physical distancing hotel program by adding 2000 beds, and to also add Urgent Public Health Need Sites (Overdose Prevention Sites) in all hotel and shelter spaces so People Who Use Drugs have a safer space to consume substances. No more opioid poisoning deaths. We need action now.

To learn more and get involved, visit: <https://www.streethealth.ca>

Winterizing Encampments Shelter Build

Description of action: We will be building sleeping structures for people living in encampments that will provide extra warmth during the winter months. This action will provide an emergency solution to the harshness of the winter cold for those living in encampments and will bring attention to the life or death situation for people experiencing homelessness and the need for the City of Toronto to properly house the 1500+ people living in encampments.

About the organizer: We are a group of organizers and builders who are passionate about ending homelessness and reducing harm for those forced to live in encampments.

To participate and/or contribute, email: naum.mann@gmail.com

Housing Matters Email Campaign

Time and location: All day - online

Organizer: The Anglican Diocese of Toronto

Description of action: Parishes across the Anglican Diocese of Toronto are invited to send letters to their municipal and provincial governments urging the province to 1) institute an immediate moratorium on residential evictions; and their municipality to 2) institute a moratorium on clearing encampments and instead 3) provide necessary survival supplies/hygiene facilities to people living in encampments and expedite flexible housing options (i.e. hotel rooms/vacant units/modular units) to provide shelter for unhoused people that does not require them to shelter in congregate settings. **Information about the Housing Matters campaign, including email templates are available at:**

www.toronto.anglican.ca/sjac

About the issue: Read the campaign backgrounder here: <https://bit.ly/36TOUGY>

About the organizer: The Anglican Diocese of Toronto consists of over 200 congregations in 180 parishes in a 26,000 sq. km area from Peel to Peterborough and Collingwood to Brighton. Affordable Housing and Homelessness is one of our 3 key social justice priorities, motivated by our call to love our neighbours as ourselves and engage faithfully with the world. We understand housing as both a basic need and a human right. Many of our parishes and ministries serve homeless and precariously-housed individuals and we are concerned for their welfare especially in light of the current pandemic.

To learn more and get involved, visit: www.toronto.anglican.ca/sjac

Friends of Kensington Market: Email blast and support for ESN

Time and location: All day - online

Organizer: Friends of Kensington Market

Description of event: We will use our online presence and membership to ask our members and the broader public to email the mayor and Mike Layton and make a donation to the Encampment Support Network.

About the organizer: Friends of Kensington Market is a group of citizens who love Kensington Market and want to preserve its unique character and place in the fabric of the city. As a deeply diverse community, we have become a place where many who have been displaced can call home. We support our unhoused neighbours in Scadding Court and Alexandra Park. All of our neighbours deserve the dignity of adequate housing. **To learn more and get involved, visit: www.fokm.ca**

Mobilizing for National Housing Day online

Time and location: All day - online

Organizer: Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Toronto Housing Working Group

Description of action: We are encouraging our members to share messages of solidarity through social media.

About the organizer: We are a women's advocacy group - self funded and non partisan. We have over 700 members in Toronto and clubs across Canada, We advocate for women's and social justice issues. Housing is one of our priorities. Our current activities: Writing MPs, MPPs and Councillors to advocate for social housing as well as issues affecting homelessness: evictions, gentrification, etc. Currently we are blitzing the Councillors re specific Toronto related issues such as the need to support those in encampments and increasing the shelter capacity. We also hold educational sessions for our members with speakers involved in this issue and attend rallies. **To learn more and get involved, visit: <https://cfuwontcouncil.org>**

What is National Housing Day?

November 22nd, 1998 was the day the Big City Mayors Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities endorsed the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee's declaration that homelessness was a national disaster. Each National Housing Day we come together to demand an end to homelessness and housing precarity by calling for a national housing program.

To learn more, visit <https://bit.ly/2HhvelU>.

Why a Toronto Day of Action?

In solidarity with the many individuals, groups and organizations currently taking action to address our affordable housing and homelessness crisis, the Shelter and Housing Justice Network (SHJN) is coordinating a Toronto Day of Action to showcase the many issues impacting our city and some of the important work being done by concerned members of the community in response to these issues. These efforts are just a snapshot of the critically important work people are doing all across the city to support their neighbours facing eviction, experiencing homelessness, and/or struggling with housing insecurity. We encourage Torontonians to participate in the National Housing Day Toronto Day of Action on November 22nd by joining in as many of these actions as possible, where it's possible. While these actions are important, there are opportunities each and every day to support your community and work in solidarity with those struggling with housing precarity and homelessness and we urge all Torontonians to contribute as they can, whether that is through financial donations, donations of goods and services, by providing direct support, through actions in solidarity with those who are struggling, and/or through political advocacy.

Who is the Shelter and Housing Justice Network (SHJN):

SHJN is a collective of homelessness and housing advocates, shelter providers, healthcare professionals, faith leaders, legal workers, and researchers who have come together to address the issue of homelessness in Canada on a local, provincial, and national level. Responding to the homelessness crisis through a humanitarian approach, SHJN seeks to raise awareness and demand change as it relates to emergency shelter, social housing, and the protection of human rights. Operating under the mantra of "shelter rights, housing rights, human rights" SHJN seeks immediate action and long-term sustainable solutions in the shelter and housing sectors.

To learn more and get involved, visit www.shjn.ca and [@SHJNetwork](https://twitter.com/SHJNetwork) on Twitter