

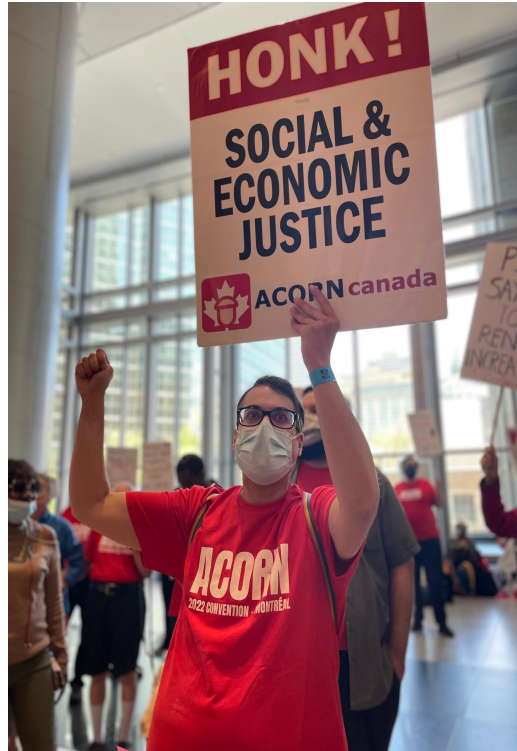
London ACORN Tenant Rights

How to make a complaint to the City & the fight for landlord licensing!



Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions
- What is ACORN - history, how we work
- Tenant Rights to safe, adequate housing 101 & how to file a complaint
- Questions
- Wrap up/Announcements



What is ACORN?

- Local and national community organization of low and moderate income people **fighting for social justice**
- We work on issues like affordable & livable housing, disability rights, predatory lending, expensive internet AND MORE!
- We've been organizing AND **WINNING** in Canada since 2004, in London since 2020
- We have **160,000+ members across the country** organized democratically into 24 neighbourhood chapters in 9 cities
- **Examples of big wins:**
 - \$10/month internet for 220,000 low income families with the federal Connecting Families program
 - Municipal regulations against payday lenders and provincially lowering the interest rates from \$21 to \$15 on a \$100 loan
 - Landlord licensing in Toronto
 - \$60 million for affordable housing in Ottawa since 2019
 - Hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of repairs in our members' units and stopping renovations

How we work

- **Membership driven**
 - Members decide what issues we work & are elected to our boards
- **Multi-issued**
 - No single issue is the goal. This way we can engage with more people.
- **People POWER**
 - Landlords, the banks, corporations exercise power through \$. What we have that they don't is our strength in #s
- **Actions are the lifeblood of the organization**
 - Actions WORK!
- **Dues- based**
 - Whoever controls the \$ of a group, also controls the agenda. Dues gives members ownership & control over the organization
- **If you're not growing, you're dying**
 - Constantly engaging new people into local groups to build power
- **Meet people where they're at - on the doors!**
 - Low income people often don't have access to reliable internet or devices. Social media engages mostly those already politically engaged. Doorknocking is key.
- **Turn members into leaders**
 - Members run meetings, actions, talk to the press & lobby politicians
- **Unique role of the Organizer**
 - They motivate people to fight for change, develop members' skills, do strategic research, logistics, fundraising, campaign mapping, & organize meetings/actions

Tenants rights - Landlord's Responsibilities

Landlords are responsible for keeping rental properties in a “good state of repair”. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Electrical, plumbing, and heating systems
- Appliances:
 - If something no longer works due to normal wear and tear or because it breaks or wears out, the landlord must repair it so it works properly again, or replace it.
 - Landlords CAN legally provide a used appliance as replacement, so long as it works properly
- Carpets in the unit or common areas
- Walls, roofs, ceilings
- Windows, doors, locks, lighting,
- Garages, Laundry rooms, patios, walkways or pools

Tenants rights - Landlord's Responsibilities

- A landlord must keep the rental property clean. This includes the lobby, halls, elevator, laundry room, pool, and parking lot or garage.
- A landlord must also take steps to control pests such as cockroaches and mice



Tenant Rights: How To Force Your Landlord To Do Repairs!



Tenant Rights: How To Force Your Landlord To Do Repairs!

- STEP 1 - Document the issue. Take pictures of the maintenance or repair issue and save them to a file
- STEP 2 - Write a formal letter or email to your landlord detailing the issue you are facing with as much detail as possible. Make sure to date this letter, and keep a copy.
- STEP 3 - If you don't hear back within a reasonable time frame (can now be less than 2 weeks), send the same letter to the City of London by-law enforcement division along with evidence (pictures etc). Include the date of your original letter to your landlord.
 - Email is enforcement@london.ca.
 - OR you can submit a complaint to the City by calling 519-661-4660 and ask for a property standards inspection. The operator will forward your request to an officer to then follow up with you.

My Landlord Wants To Enter Into My Unit

Landlords have limited reasons for why they can enter the unit:

- Repairs & Maintenance
- Inspection
- Showing unit to potential new tenants

To enter your unit, landlords must provide:

- Minimum 24-hour notice in writing (letter, text message, email)
- This letter must include:
 - The reason why the landlord wants to enter
 - The date the landlord will enter
 - A specific time of entry between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Landlords can enter without notice for emergencies only

Things your landlord is not allowed to do even if you owe rent

Even if you owe rent, it is against the law for your landlord to do, or threaten to do, any of these things:

- take or hold anything that belongs to you
- put your belongings out of your apartment
- change the locks to your apartment or to other areas of the building without giving you a new key right away
- cut off any important service, such as electricity, gas, water, or heat

If your landlord does or threatens to do any of these things, try to get legal help right away.

You could also call the Rental Housing Enforcement Unit (RHEU). The RHEU is part of the Ministry of Housing. Its job is to try to make sure landlords and tenants follow the law.

You can call the RHEU at the following number:
Toll Free Phone Line: 1-888-772-9277

MY LANDLORD IS HARASSING ME! HELP!

- Threats and harassment are **unacceptable**.
- The ***Residential Tenancies Act*** governs residential tenancies in Ontario. Provides protection for tenants to live free from harassment and threatening behaviour from their landlord and their landlord's representatives.
- If your landlord is harassing/threatening you and/or neglecting repairs, **ORGANIZE** - it's likely they're also harassing their other tenants. Let us know and we can help organize your building to fight back.
- If your landlord is harassing you:
 - **document your landlord's behaviour** and keep a copy of any written correspondence, such as emails or texts, with your landlord.
- Unless there is an emergency, the landlord should not show up at your unit without 24 hours written notice. If they insist on showing up, record any interactions where it's possible to do so safely.
- If your landlord calls the police, do not be afraid or intimidated.

Rights under the RTA:

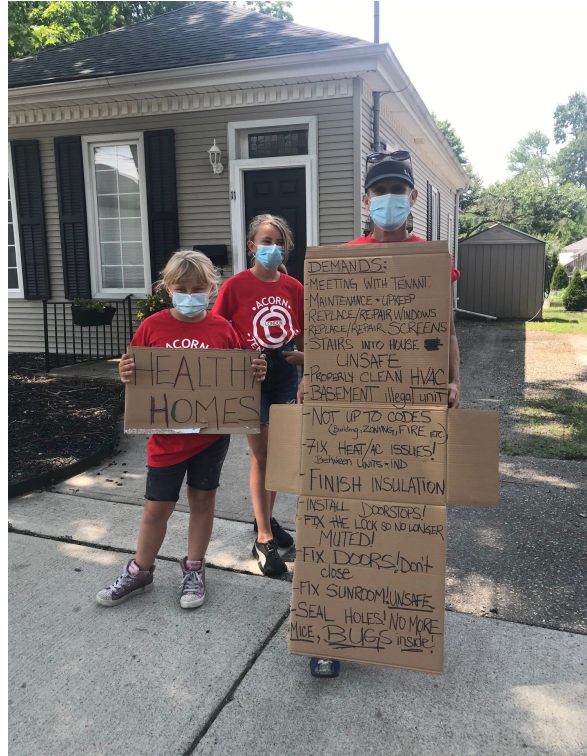
Tenants have the right to reasonable enjoyment of the space including:
Environment free from harassment or threat of violence

ACORN's Landlord Licensing Campaign

The city must commit to implement a strong Landlord Licensing program in London.

- Require all landlords to register and this information should be made available in a publicly available database.
- Proactive inspections of apartment buildings, including outreach to tenants to ensure in-suite issues are addressed.
- A cost recovery model that ensures the cost of inspections, are paid for by the landlord through an annual per-unit-fee (in Toronto this fee is only about \$10 per unit per year!)
- Clear display of problems found during inspection in public areas, similar to DineSafe program for restaurants.
- Hire by-law inspectors to carry out inspections.
- Active tenant engagement and tenant awareness regarding the by law so that tenants can file complaints.

ACORN's Landlord Licensing Campaign



Questions?

Announcements



Next Chapter Meeting on Tuesday, November 14th at 6:30PM at the London Central Library and on Zoom!

Carling-Stoneybrook ACORN holding a tenants' rights workshop on evictions on Thursday October 26th at 6:30PM at the Beacock Library (1280 Huron St) All are welcome!

"Spooky because it's true!" Outreach event Saturday Oct 28 2pm at Proudfoot Old Oak buildings

If you're not a member yet, join today!

Tenants rights - Landlord's Responsibilities

Landlords CANNOT interfere with vital services for their tenants

- "Vital services" are hot or cold water, fuel, electricity, gas and, during certain months of the year, heat.
 - If a landlord provides heat, it must be kept at a minimum temperature of 20 degrees Celsius from September 1 to June 15.
 - If a landlord provides any vital service to a tenant, the landlord cannot withhold the reasonable supply of it. This rule applies even if the tenant's rent is overdue, or the tenant has damaged the property.