

17 Paton Road Focus Group three-pager

1) the 8 requests

- 1) Applicants get their final *entitlement* for a specified amount of allowance/benefit before they start looking for a place. The entitlement then serves as proof of income for landlords. In process, this means that applicants are tested on identity and income, but they do not need an address, do not need to know what their future rent will be, do not need the signature of a landlord for their application to be fully processed. No test on rent. No rent cut-off.
 - 2) The programs are conceived and funded so that the allowance/benefit amounts secure housing without compromising food and basic needs security.
 - 3) Applicants are supported to budget their choice of housing independently from their applications for the allowance/benefit. Because housing allowance/benefit programs push people into tenancies that they can't afford, applicants should be offered support to assess risk and budget their future. That support however cannot come in the guise of rent cut-offs that limit eligibility. It comes as clear support, in a second phase, when applicants know how much allowance/benefit they are entitled to.
 - 4) Housing allowance/benefit programs do not replace the building of more social housing stock.
 - 5) The rules of access to the programs and our local priority rules of urgent access to social housing are revised to increase access and avoid homelessness.
 - 6) Housing allowance/benefit programs secure responsive and long-term housing as bridges towards social housing.
 - a) If income decreases, allowance/benefit amount increases.
 - b) Yearly reviews are conceived with housing security as top priority.
 - c) Recipients are promised a Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) unit for when their program will end.
 - d) Recipients of the Canada-Ontario-Housing Benefit (COHB) are not taken off the Centralized Waiting List.
 - 7) Decision making is local, closer to the reality of applicants, and is significantly streamlined.
 - a) The City reclaims full decision authority from the Province.
 - b) The City considers hiring staff to process all applications directly.
 - c) Proof of Canadian Status is relaxed to include a guarantor's signature, OHIP and ON ID cards
 - d) Individuals are given the option to give consent that their Canada Revenue Agency account be consulted to check their income instead of filing their tax return and providing proof of income.
 - 8) The programs are bi-annually reviewed from the client's experience and data is shared with the public.
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2) the integrated vision

| HOUSING ALLOWANCES PROVIDE WHAT PEOPLE NEED | |
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| LONG-TERM HOUSING SECURITY | <p>Toronto builds social housing again and considers housing allowance and benefit programs as a stop-gap measure.</p> <p>All recipients of allowances are bridged into rent-geared-to-income when their housing allowance ends. No program ends before such bridging is possible. Annual reviews of housing allowance entitlement are meant with housing security in top priority. COHB recipients are not taken off the Centralized Waiting List.</p> |
| APPROPRIATENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS | <p>As they are calculated/allocated now, housing allowances can be so limited that recipients enter into food or basic needs insecurity after they get housed. It is also reported that a lot of applicants abandon their applications partly out of fear that this will be the case. The only real solution is to calculate the allowances with an approach similar to RGI:</p> <p>Housing allowance = difference between 100% AMR and 30% of income</p> |

| PROGRAMS EMPOWER CLIENTS AND ENABLE THE RIGHT TO HOUSING | | |
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| APPLICATION PROCESS IS REVERSED | <p>CLIENTS ARE EMPOWERED</p> <p>Implementation means:</p> <p>Eligibility is client-centered</p> <p>No added discrimination by landlords</p> <p>Right to self-determination</p> <p>Allowance amount is client-centered</p> | <p>Housing seekers get written proof of their entitlement*** to an allowance + written proof of the exact amount for the allowance before they start looking for housing</p> <p>Eligibility to apply does not depend on the future rent; it depends only on income and status.</p> <p>No need of “proof of address”, no need of a willing landlord's signature on the “Intent to Rent”/”Rental Promise” form; no need of that form.</p> <p>Entitlement can be used as proof of income for landlords; housing seekers can be creative about their housing choice</p> <p>Calculation/choice of the allowance by the City does not depend on the future rent and thus, no need of a “rent cap”, no need of an “AMR”</p> |
| | THEY RECEIVE RIGHT SUPPORT AT RIGHT TIME | If the housing seeker is new to budgeting and needs assistance to know what maximum rent they could afford, that assistance is provided after the entitlement and the amount of the allowance have been given |
| PROCESS IS INCLUSIVE | ACCESSIBILITY | The programs are made more accessible |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local priority rules are revised to increase access to housing allowances, RGI and housing and diminish housing precariousness and homelessness - Proof of Canadian status is relaxed to include a guarantor's signature, OHIP and ON ID Cards - Individuals are given the option to allow their worker to contact CRA directly to check their T4s and such instead of having to fill their tax returns |
| | TRANSPARENCY | All programs are made transparent |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All programs and their rules are described on the City's website - With clarity on who takes the decisions and how the amount of the allowances are calculated - The data from programs' reviews is published on the website too |

3) the endorsements

ORGANIZATIONS

17 Paton Road Focus Group

17 Paton Road Tenant Association

Shelter and Justice Health Network (SHJN)

Sanctuary

Workman Arts, arts organization that promotes a greater understanding of mental health and addiction issues through creation and presentation

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP)

Open Policy

Toronto Neighbourhood Centres

Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC)

ODSP Action Coalition

ALAB Resource Clinic

All Saints Church-Community Centre

Social Assistance Coalition Scarborough (SACS)

Health Providers Against Poverty (HPAP)

Red Dress Production, community arts organization

INDIVIDUALS

claude wittmann, ODSP and TTHAP recipient, artist and PhD in science with lived experience of 6-month housing crisis, coordinator of the creation and delivery of the requests and of the 17 Paton Road Focus Group

Alan Beattie, Executive Director, Sanctuary

Greg Cook, outreach worker, Sanctuary

Lorraine Lam, outreach worker, Sanctuary

Angie Hocking, Director of Outreach, Church of the Redeemer

Melissa Goldstein, housing policy analyst and advocate

Simone Schmidt, member of Encampment Support Network

Josh Barndt, Executive Director of the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust (PNLT)

Arash Giassi, Lawyer

Mac Scott, Carranza LLP Law Firm, member of No One is Illegal and of the Ontario Coalition against Poverty (OCAP)

Dorota Dziong, one of the relocated tenants from 17 Paton Road

Jenine Marsh, artist and instructor, one of the relocated tenants from 17 Paton Road, recipient of TTHAP and bridging grant

Katie Pretti, visual artist, one of the relocated tenants from 17 Paton Road, recipient of TTHAP and bridging grant

Jennifer Murphy, visual artist, one of the relocated tenants from 17 Paton Road

Alex Durlak, one of the relocated tenants from 17 Paton Road, recipient of TTHAP and bridging grant

David Golden, one of the relocated tenants from 17 Paton Road

Nadia Belerique, one of the relocated tenants from 17 Paton Road
Adriana Disman, performance and visual artist, close support of one of the 17 Paton Road relocated tenants
Tristan Whiston, sound and community-based artist, close support of one of the 17 Paton Road relocated tenants

Elaine Stewart, artist living with disabilities
Cara Spooner, artist and Public Programming & Partnerships Manager at Workman Arts
Kelly Straughan, Executive Artistic Director of Workman Arts
Cynthia Rozeboom, Executive Director of Tangled Art + Disability Gallery, Toronto
Ana Teresa Portillo, Community Benefits Organizer, Parkdale People's Economy, Parkdale Community Economic Development (PCED) Project
Trevor Manson, Advocate; Secretary, ODSP ActionCoalition; ODSP client
Lucy Costa, Deputy Executive Director of The Empowerment Council, CAMH
Simon Beck, Consultant
Julie Scrivener, Multidisciplinary Artist
Dorothy Laxton, Multidisciplinary CathArtist
Hanan Hazime, Multidisciplinary Artist & Arts/Writing Instructor
Naomi Hendrickje Laufer, ethereal artist
Michael Scrivener, works in film
Leena Raudvee, visual and performance artist living with disabilities
Leslie-Ann Smith, artist affiliated with Workman Arts
Heath Soave, Anti-Poverty Paralegal at Scarborough Community Legal Services
Suganthine Sivakumar
Bee Lee Soh, Individual with lived experience of housing crisis/homelessness, housing advocate John Stapleton, Open Policy
Trevor Manson, ODSP client paying market rent
Rob Horwath, network of social service organizations active in service provision and advocacy around affordable housing and homelessness
Nicole Tollenaar, relief drop-in worker at All-Saints
Celina Dycke, Social Worker
Meredith Laver, Community Support with ALAB Resource Clinic
Melody Grant, Harm Reduction Outreach Coordinator, PQWCHC
Lanadee Lampman
Alison Falby, Priest-Director, All Saints Church-Community Centre
Anonymous, Frontline homeless shelter staff, lived experience of poverty and mental health
Danny Beaton, Elder from Turtle Clan Mohawk Nation
Samantha Dangubic
Serena McCarroll: I am being evicted. I live on ODSP. I have an EPIC worker and will be applying for a housing allowance.
Sarah Silverthorn. Mental Health RN
Mary Boulos, Medical student
Claudia Wong, health care provider

[Link to original 8-pager rationale and reality check \(October 2020\)](#)

[Link to comparative research \(February 2021\)](#)