



## REPORT

Report Date: February 25, 2021  
Contact: Celine Mauboules  
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RTS No.: 14068  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: March 9, 2021

[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services  
SUBJECT: 2021 Renter Services Grants

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council approve eleven (11) Renter Services Grants totalling \$500,000, 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 2021 Affordable Housing Operating Budget (Empty Homes Tax 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 2021 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 second year of recommended funding allocations under the Renter Services Grants program approved in June 2019. Council directed staff to implement this grant 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 grant applications focused on identifying opportunities to empower Vancouver renters to understand their rights, pursue their rights, and/or maintain their housing. This report recommends approval and disbursements of a total of 12 grants totalling \$575,000 for 2021.

## **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

On June 12, 2019 (RTS 13180), Council approved the creation of multi-year funding for renter services to be allocated through grants or contracts to support non-profit renter-serving and advocacy organizations, 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 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 Renter Services Grants program enhances opportunities for Vancouver renters and the organizations that support them to educate about and advocate for renter rights and directly support renters at risk of displacement from their homes and communities. This significant investment focussing 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 and inclusive for renters, advance efforts to be a City of Reconciliation, and address the housing and homelessness crisis.

## **REPORT**

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

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

Vancouver City Council formally approved the creation of renter services funding 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 (2020-2022) from Empty Homes Tax reserve, with \$500,000 to be allocated to each 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. The 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 maintain 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 from 2014 to 2019; over the same period, average rents in purpose-built rental have increased by over 33 per cent<sup>[1]</sup>. In 2020, the city-wide average vacancy rate increased to 2.8%, following a reduction in demand that is likely temporary and tied to the pandemic period. However, the vacancy rate still falls short of the targeted vacancy rate of 3%, considered to be the minimum vacancy rate for a healthy rental housing system that balances the needs of landlords and renters. The average

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[1] CMHC Rental Market Report 2019

rent across all unit types in Vancouver was \$1,598 in 2020, increasing by 2% over 2019, despite higher vacancy and a province-wide rent freeze <sup>[2]</sup>.

The ongoing crisis of rental affordability in Vancouver has meant significant challenges for Vancouver's renters. Over half (53% in 2016) <sup>[3]</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>[4]</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 as a result of 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>[5]</sup>. With the pandemic and job losses disproportionately impacting low-income households, there are concerns about the housing situation for the city's lowest income renters in 2020 and in the near-future. 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 can be an additional barrier to securing and maintaining rental housing.

### ***COVID-19 and Impacts on Renters***

Little comprehensive data exists on the impacts of COVID-19 on Vancouver renters. To gain some understanding of these impacts, staff in the ACCS Renter Office began collecting and tracking statistics in March 2020 on the number and nature of COVID-related enquiries from Vancouver renters contacting the City's Renter Enquiry Line, and from five renter-serving and legal advocacy non-profits: Access Pro Bono, Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS), First United Church Advocacy, Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre (TRAC), and the Vancouver Rent Bank (VRB). All of them report an increase in enquiries from Vancouver renters since the beginning of the pandemic.

The data indicates that the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing challenges and inequities facing some Vancouver renters, particularly those with lower incomes and those experiencing intersecting barriers. In particular, staff and non-profits have noted heightened anxiety and stress of renters at risk of eviction as a result of pandemic-related job/income loss and inability to pay rent, of renters worried about debt accumulation from rent arrears and inability to repay, and of renters confused by the many amendments to the provincial Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) and implications on their tenancies. While COVID-19 disproportionately impacts the city's most marginalized residents, it has also revealed the precarious financial situation of many of

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<sup>[2]</sup> CMHC Rental Market Report 2020

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

<sup>[4]</sup> Statistics Canada Census 2016

<sup>[5]</sup> According to the CMHC Rental Market Report (2020), in October 2020 the purpose built rental vacancy rate in the City of Vancouver was 1.3% for units between \$750 and \$999 per month and 1.0% for units between \$1,000 and \$1,249 per month.

Vancouver's moderate-income earning renters – small business owners, single parents, service industry workers. In strong economic times, they survive, earning enough to pay monthly expenses, including rent. During a crisis like COVID, if they lose their income, they risk not being able to pay their rent and losing their home.

### ***Regulation and Policy Protecting Renters***

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.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Provincial Government has taken steps to increase protections for renters impacted by the pandemic. The Government declared a Provincial State of Emergency on March 18, 2020 and on March 30 signed Ministerial Order M089 into law as a temporary amendment to the RTA to support renters and landlords during the state of emergency. Amendments included a ban on notices to end tenancy and on rent increases, the creation of the BC-Temporary Rent Supplement (BC-TRS), and a ban on landlords entering units without tenant consent.

In June, the Order was amended to allow evictions for reasons other than non-payment of rent, and the BC-TRS was extended to August 31. The Province lifted the ban on evictions for non-payment of rent on September 1 and put in place a repayment framework giving renters until July 2021 to repay unpaid rent as allowed under the COVID-19 Related Measures Act. On November 9, The Province extended the ban on rent increases to July 10, 2021.

Despite the existence of both provincial and municipal policy, renters can experience significant barriers to pursuing the protections and rights afforded them under policy.

### ***Role of 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 remain housed or find new housing. In consultation with renter-serving organizations, staff have learned that existing non-profit services are challenged to meet demand, even with the grant funding we have provided, as well as with funding from external partners such as the Law Foundation, the Province, and others.

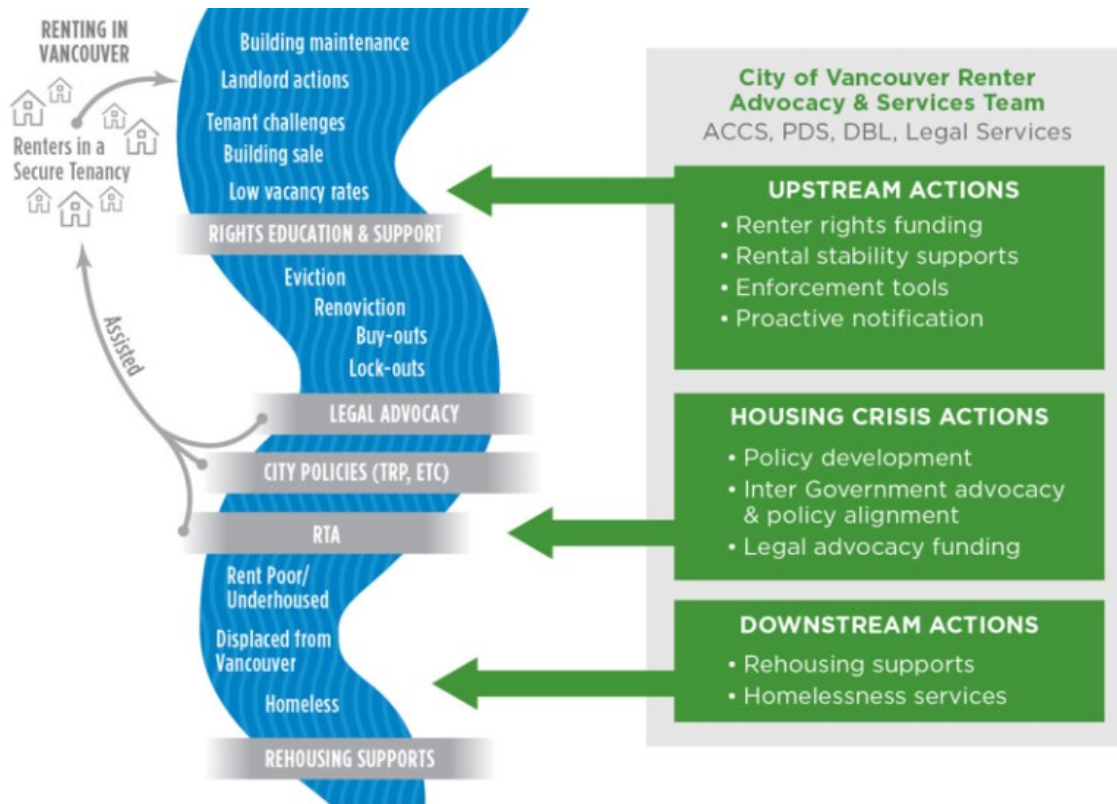
COVID-19 has placed significant additional demands on non-profit services. While we have seen incredible resilience within Vancouver's renter-serving and social service sector, we recognize the difficulty of planning and running programming during a pandemic. In a recent Vantage Point survey, 92% of Vancouver non-profit organizations reported that COVID-19 caused major interruptions to their projects, programs and services. Even so, organizations have quickly pivoted to respond to and meet community needs by mobilizing resources, adopting new technologies, and adapting approaches to service delivery. Of the organizations that received a 2020 Renter Services Grant, some immediately started their projects as planned, and others shifted quickly from in-person to online styles of service delivery so as not to impact clients. While some organizations delayed project start dates until it was safe and staff

were ready and trained, all 2020 grant projects were underway by the early fall with minimal impacts on the renters they serve. Some have reported that they have in fact increased the number of renters served to respond to increased demands as a result of the pandemic, for instance women and girls fleeing abusive situations seeking urgent tenancy and housing assistance.

**Enhancing City Investments in Non-Profit Renter Services**

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**



Funding for renter services creates the opportunity for the City to work with and support community-based partners to help them, in turn, better support 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.

### ***Renter Services Grants Program***

The Renter Services Grants program was created as a mechanism for disbursing renter services funding to non-profit partners. It was designed in 2019 and updated in 2020 in coordination with the Social Policy grants team and in alignment with Social Policy's established Direct Social Services (DSS) Grants program. An important principle is that this new investment by Council in Renter Services Grants does 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 can continue to apply for this base funding through the DSS stream, as per previous years, and will be invited to apply for Renter Services Grants funding for new initiatives that can elevate or enhance their existing capacity to support and advocate for renters in Vancouver.

The first round of Renter Services Grants were approved by Council on February 26, 2020 (RTS 13412) and a total of \$625,000 was awarded to 15 non-profits (\$500,000 from 2020 Affordable Housing Operating Budget EHT reserve funds, \$75,000 from the SRO Upgrade Granting Program, and a one-time amount of \$50,000 from a previously approved EHT reserve allocation to renter services). This year, the total allocation to 2021 Renter Services Grants is \$575,000 (\$500,000 from EHT reserve and \$75,000 from the SRO Upgrade Granting Program).

In March, 2020, the Renter Office coordinated with Social Policy on an early response to the pandemic by enabling organizations to re-purpose core grant funding to address impacts of COVID-19. On March 18, 2020 (RTS 13786), Council approved accelerated disbursements of already-approved funding, and allowed organizations to use their City grants, including 2020 Renter Services Grants, to help mitigate the impacts of the virus, or help prevent its transmission within the population and communities that these organizations served. The 2021 Renter Services Grant process included a report back of COVID-related activities supported by 2020 funding. Most organizations reported having used City funding quickly and successfully to continue their work in new, COVID-context appropriate ways.

Going forward, staff will continue to work with other City granting programs, including Social Policy's Community Services grants, to look for ways to improve responsiveness to the community's key and evolving concerns. This includes the evolution toward a more equitable grant program, streamlining the application process through an online grants management system, and the introduction of multi-year funding.

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

Prior to the creation of Renter Services Grants, 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 in 2019 to create a new Renter Services Grants program was partially in response to the growth of social serving organizations that include renter education, advocacy or supports as a service area accompanying their core mission. As the housing and homelessness crisis has deepened, many on the front line who support communities and individuals to thrive have found the lack of stable housing to be 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, the City invested approximately \$382,000 via DSS Grants (RTS 12912) into organizations identifying renter services and advocacy as a core function of their work (Table 1). In 2020, the City's investment into renter services and advocacy increased to \$1 million with the addition of \$625,000 in Renter Services Grants (RTS 13180). This year, the proposed combined investment via Renter Services Grants and DSS Grants again represents 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 1. COV Investments in Core Services and Advocacy for Renters 2019-2021**

| <b>Grant Stream</b>    | <b>2019<br/>COV Investment in<br/>Core Services for<br/>Renters</b> | <b>2020<br/>COV Investment in<br/>Core Services for<br/>Renters</b> | <b>2021<br/>COV Recommended<br/>Investment in Core<br/>Services for Renters</b> |
|------------------------|---|---|---|
| DSS Grants             | \$382,000   | \$382,000   | \$404,000   |
| Renter Services Grants | n/a   | \$625,000   | \$575,000   |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>\$382,000</b>  | <b>\$1,007,000</b>  | <b>\$979,000</b>  |

Staff note that Table 1 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 that might be supporting renters; however, DSS and OCB Grants that referenced renter needs and supports as a secondary area of service for 2019 and 2020 was approximately \$400,000 (RTS 12912 and RTS 13579 respectively) and is recommended to be approximately the same for 2021 (RTS 14269).

### ***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 2020. 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 co-hosted two online information sessions with the DSS Grants team for interested organizations, allowing staff to clarify grant goals and respond to questions. In total, 73 representatives from 18 organizations attended. 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 or WebEx meetings were conducted with applicants where additional information was required.



## **Adjudication**

An interdepartmental adjudication team included staff from the five departments of the City's Renter Services and Advocacy Team (RAST): Arts, Culture and Community Services (ACCS) (including staff from Affordable Housing Programs and Homelessness Services), Development, Building and Licensing (DBL), Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (PDS), Legal Services, and Corporate Communications. Staff from Affordable Housing Programs worked closely with Social Policy's DSS Grants team 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 March 9 (RTS 14269).

## **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;
- To consider the overall quality of the proposal.

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

Staff received a total of 19 applications to the 2021 Renter Services Grants program, requesting a combined total of \$ \$1,104,373. This report recommends approval of a total of 12 grants totalling \$575,000 (Table 2) (See Appendix A for specific grant recommendations).

**Table 2. Summary of 2021 Renter Services Grant Recommendations**

| <b>SOURCE OF FUNDING</b>                 | <b># GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED</b> | <b>TOTAL \$\$ REQUESTED</b> | <b># GRANTS RECOMMENDED</b> | <b>TOTAL \$\$ RECOMMENDED</b> |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2021 Affordable Housing Operating Budget | 18                                   | \$1,029,373                 | 11                          | \$500,000                     |
| Capital - SRO Upgrade Granting Program   | 1                                    | \$75,000                    | 1                           | \$75,000                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>19</b>                            | <b>\$1,104,373</b>          | <b>12</b>                   | <b>\$575,000</b>              |

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

The 12 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 maintaining 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, and low-income Chinese seniors,; and
- A focused investment in SRO tenants, including education, supports, and advocacy.

The amount of funding requested far exceeded the 2021 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.

Nine applications are being recommended for full funding and three are being recommended for partial funding. In instances where staff are recommending partial funding, there was a careful and balanced analysis of what level of funding would be the most effective. Staff will work with unsuccessful applicants to provide feedback on their applications and, where applicable, identify opportunities to support networking and collaboration between partners to explore ways to address unfunded areas of need.

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

### ***Monitoring and Reporting***

Monitoring and reporting requirements were built into the 2020 Grant Agreements signed by all grant recipients. Based on the reports from 2020 grant recipients for services provided between April and October 2020, the following was achieved:

- 1,000 Vancouver renters contacted renter legal advocacy organizations for assistance to pursue their rights,
- 720 Vancouver renters received support services in navigating and maintaining their housing, and
- 2,000 Vancouver SRO tenants were educated on their tenancy rights.

In total, the 2020 Renter Services Grant recipients have supported over 3,700 Vancouver renters within a seven-month period, surpassing the total number of renters that the projects intended to serve.

Staff will work with 2021 grant recipients to develop schedules for monitoring and reporting back on their proposed activities, performance indicators and intended outputs.

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

***Financial***

The total \$500,000 funding recommended in this report for 2021 Renter Services operating Grants is included in the 2021 Affordable Housing Operating Budget (EHT Allocation).

Staff recommend that a request of \$75,000 to continue to support an enhanced SRO Hub to support tenants in SRA-designated buildings be funded from the 2021 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 \$575,000 (Table 3).

Grant funds will be released in two payments, unless otherwise indicated, with the first instalment expected to be disbursed in March 2021.

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

| <b>Source of funds</b>                        | <b>2021 Investment</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| 2021 Affordable Housing Operating Budget      | \$500,000              |
| Capital Budget - SRO Upgrade Granting Program | \$75,000               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                  | <b>\$575,000</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 maintain 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 their housing. The grants being recommended in this report for 2021 Renter Services funding reflect Council's commitment to enhancing advocacy and support services for renters across the city.

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**2021 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>2021 REQUESTED</b> | <b>2021 RECOMMENDED</b> | <b>PROJECT TITLE</b>  | <b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>  | <b>CONDITIONS &amp; COMMENTS</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Access Pro Bono Society of BC     | \$40,800              | \$40,000                | Vancouver Renter Legal Services Project                                       | Provides 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 in the BC Supreme Court.   |                                  |
| Atira Women's Resources Society   | \$80,000              | \$40,000                | Legal Advocacy Program  | Offers low-income women (inclusive of trans-women) in the DTES free legal services in a safe and confidential, women's only space. The project aims at improving housing outcomes of the women through legal advice, advocacy and representation.   |                                  |
| Aunt Leah's Society               | \$24,500              | \$24,500                | Friendly Landlord Network (FLN)   | Supports a network of homeowners and property managers who rent suites to youth and families transitioning from government care, along with the support of 21 local partner organizations. Landlords receive market rent and on-going tenancy support, including monthly in-person check ins by partner support worker, renters receive tenancy support and training. |                                  |
| Battered Women's Support Services | \$48,152              | \$48,152                | How to Survive a Housing Crisis   | Provides a weekly educational workshop series and one to one support and advocacy of a housing specialist to women and girls who are experiencing or have survived Gender Based Violence.   |                                  |
| Disability Alliance BC Society    | \$70,000              | \$50,975                | Right Fit: Supporting and Building Capacity of Housing Providers in Vancouver | Addresses the crisis in wheelchair accessible housing in Vancouver, offers a streamlined service delivery model to connect indoor wheelchair users with affordable housing, and focuses on the supply side and seeks to build the capacity of housing providers in Vancouver.   |                                  |

| AGENCY   | 2021 REQUESTED | 2021 RECOMMENDED | PROJECT TITLE  | PROJECT DESCRIPTION   | CONDITIONS & COMMENTS |
|--|----------------|------------------|--|---|-----------------------|
| DTES SRO Collaborative                         | \$75,000       | \$75,000         | The SRO Hub  | Assists and empowers SRO tenants through training/workshops on topics like overdose, COVID-19 and eviction prevention, knowledge sharing through community building, a newsletter, and a resource library; and through building relationships with stakeholders who share the goal to improve the habitability and affordability of private SROs. |                       |
| First United Church Community Ministry Society | \$32,450       | \$32,450         | First United Legal Advocacy Support 2021                         | Serves about 1,500 low-income clients each year, predominantly in the areas of tenancy issues, income security, and Employment Insurance and provide free service from legal info and advice to full legal representation.  |                       |
| Helping Spirit Lodge Society                   | \$35,580       | \$35,580         | Journey Home Program   | Provides housing support to episodically and chronically homeless individuals and families, in particular those who are Indigenous, elders, people with disabilities, and women and children fleeing abuse. The program follows a housing first model which advocates for housing people first regardless of their housing readiness.             |                       |
| Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre (TRAC)       | \$80,000       | \$80,000         | Legal Representation for Vancouver Renters Impacted by COVID-19  | Provides direct advocacy to Vancouver renters, particularly those with lower incomes, being negatively impacted by COVID-19. This will include full representation services at Residential Tenancy Branch dispute resolution hearings.  |                       |
| Watari Counselling & Support Services          | \$68,343       | \$68,343         | YEAH! Youth Excelling in Achieving Housing for Parenting Program | Provides pregnant/parenting youth in Vancouver with access to food, dignified housing, appropriate health care, and support. It provides support to up to 25 youth with addiction and / or mental health issues who are pregnant or parenting young children and are precariously housed, leaving an abused relationship, dealing with MCFD, etc. |                       |

| AGENCY                                       | 2021<br>REQUESTED | 2021<br>RECOMMENDED | PROJECT<br>TITLE                    | PROJECT DESCRIPTION   | CONDITIONS &<br>COMMENTS |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Whole Way House Society                      | \$ 100,000        | \$50,000            | Seniors Supportive Housing Services | Partners with additional residential buildings in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and furthers the abilities to offer supportive housing services to buildings to address social isolation among vulnerable seniors through Community Building Programs and one-on-one Tenant Support. |                          |
| Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice | \$30,000          | \$30,000            | Renter Services for Chinese Seniors | Provides outreach, casework support, and educational opportunities to low-income Chinese senior renters who are facing language barriers and living in the Chinatown, DTES, Strathcona, and to a lesser extent Downtown and Hasting-Sunrise neighbourhoods.                           |                          |
| <b>Total = 12</b>                            | <b>\$684,825</b>  | <b>\$575,000</b>    |                                     |   |                          |

**2021 RENTER SERVICES GRANTS**  
**Renter Services Grants NOT Recommended**

| AGENCY                                  | 2021<br>REQUESTED | 2021<br>RECOMMENDED | PROJECT<br>TITLE                      | PROJECT DESCRIPTION   | CONDITIONS<br>&<br>COMMENTS   |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Collingwood Neighbourhood House Society | \$74,632          | \$0                 | Staying Housed in Renfrew Collingwood | Supports renters in Renfrew-Collingwood who are at risk of losing housing by building their capacity and developing connections to community. Creating individual tool kits with resources to keep them housed and out of crisis. They will learn about their rights, have available advocacy and legal aid and create a plan to re-integrate in the community. | <b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b><br>Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities |
| Kitsilano Neighbourhood House           | \$30,151          | \$0                 | Housing Information and Referral      | Provides a service to residents living on the Westside of Vancouver who are needing information and referral on housing related issues, such as: where and how to apply for housing, understanding the resources available, rights of a renter and how to navigate systems to ensure housing security   | <b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b><br>Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities |
| McLaren House Society                   | \$25,000          | \$0                 | Living for Excellence (LIFE) Program  | Provides outreach/housing stability support to over 152 low-income individuals/families living with a stigmatizing, isolating, and long-term episodic health issue: HIV/AIDS. Many are aging, isolated, and may live with mental health & addiction issues. Some are at-risk of losing their housing. Many also identify as LGBTQIA2+.                          | <b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b><br>Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities |

| AGENCY                                    | 2021<br>REQUESTED | 2021<br>RECOMMENDED | PROJECT<br>TITLE   | PROJECT DESCRIPTION  | CONDITIONS<br>&<br>COMMENTS   |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House        | \$55,000          | \$0                 | Rent Together  | Builds on our placed-based values and our commitment to social justice to amplify rental sustainability in our local neighbourhoods by utilizing a multi-pronged approach to increase the capacity for renters to pursue their rights through resources to secure and maintain housing, educational workshops and advocacy.  | <b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b><br>Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities |
| Seniors Services Society                  | \$87,765          | \$0                 | Seniors Housing and Support Navigation Services                    | Provides one-on-one housing and support navigation services to prevent Vancouver seniors aged 60+ from becoming homeless and assists them to secure and maintain affordable and appropriate rental housing by empowering them to understand and pursue their rental rights and enhancing SSSBC's existing Vancouver Seniors Outreach Program.                              | <b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b><br>Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities |
| Vancouver Native Housing Society          | \$101,400         | \$0                 | Aging in Place Program   | Supports the aging adult and seniors' populations in our singles' housing portfolio, especially those who suffer from mental health and addictions who are in great need of in-home and outreach support in order to maintain their health, finances and living conditions. This need is growing rapidly, and we are not currently funded to provide this type of support. | <b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b><br>Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities |
| Westside Anglicans Neighbourhood Ministry | \$45,600          | \$0                 | Equipping Volunteers for Service to Homeless and Vulnerable People | Offers care, compassion and practical assistance to homeless and vulnerable people; helps clients access housing, income, disability, and other supports, including medical services - carried out by volunteers; enhances quality and sustainability of services by investing in training, collaboration, mentorship opportunities for volunteers.                        | <b>NOT RECOMMENDED:</b><br>Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities |
| <b>Total = 7</b>                          | <b>\$419,548</b>  | <b>\$0</b>          |  |  |   |



## 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 maintain/secure their housing**. Renter Services grants are intended to augment and enhance, not simply maintain, an organization's capacity to support renters. Renter Services grants:

- Respond to dynamic needs of renters in Vancouver;
- Address equity by reducing the impact of systemic barriers 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 provide funding for projects that address 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 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;
  - Please note that if you are not registered as one of the above you may partner with a fiscal sponsor who is a registered non-profit society or registered charity in order to meet this requirement.
- 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-diverse 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;
- Be in compliance with the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) and the [British Columbia Human Rights Code](#);
- 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 Projects and Expenses

- 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/groups 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.