



REPORT

Report Date: February 14, 2022
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RTS No.: 14763
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: March 1, 2022
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services
SUBJECT: 2022 Renter Services Grants

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve twelve (12) Renter Services Grants totalling \$500,000, including recommended conditions on the grants, to the Agencies listed in Column 1 of Appendix C in the amounts recommended for each Agency in Column 3 of Appendix C. Source of funding is the 2022 Affordable Housing Operating Budget (EHT Allocation).
- B. THAT Council approve one (1) SRO Revitalization Grant totalling \$75,000, including recommended conditions on the grant, to the Downtown Eastside SRO Collaborative Society. Source of funding is the 2022 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 C, 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 – 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 third year of recommended funding allocations under the Renter Services Grants program approved in June 2019. The call for grant applications focused on identifying opportunities to empower Vancouver renters to understand their rights, pursue their rights, and/or retain their housing. This report recommends approval and disbursements of a total of 13 grants totalling \$575,000 for 2022.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Please see Appendix H for all Council Authority and Previous Decisions.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

Renter Services Funding

Vancouver City Council formally approved funding to support Vancouver renters 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 (EHT) reserve, with \$500,000 to be allocated to each funding cycle. This is the final year of approved EHT funding. Funding for future years will need to be considered as part of the annual operating budget process.

The Non-profit 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 continue to be challenged to meet increasing demand, even with multiple funding sources, including the City, the Law Foundation, the Province, and others.

Two years of the COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant additional demands on non-profit services. While there has been incredible resilience within Vancouver's renter-serving and social service sector, non-profits face difficulty of planning and running programming during an ever changing pandemic. In a recent Vantage Point survey, 78%¹ of Vancouver non-profit organizations reported that the pandemic caused major interruptions to their projects, programs and services. Even so, organizations pivoted to respond to and meet community needs by mobilizing resources, adopting new technologies, and adapting approaches to service delivery.

¹ UNRAVELING Report, The Vantage Point, 2021

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 Core Support Grants (CSG) (formerly Direct Social Services 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 CSG Grants stream for those renter-serving organizations historically receiving existing CSG program funding. Those renter-serving organizations can continue to apply for this base funding through the CSG stream, and can also apply for Renter Services Grants funding for new initiatives that elevate or enhance their existing capacity to support and advocate for renters in Vancouver.

A summary of 2020 and 2021 Renter Services Grant funding (RTS 13412 and 14068 respectively) and of the City's overall investment in renters via Renter Services Grant and CSG funding can be found in Appendices E and F respectively.

2022 Renter Services Grants

The COVID-19 pandemic has burdened the already stretched non-profit sector and disproportionately impacted populations marginalized by systemic inequities who need these services the most. Acknowledging the hardship on the non-profit sector and renters who are marginalized, and to better align with Council's priorities (City of Reconciliation, Equity Framework) to further decolonize our granting processes, ACCS grant teams worked together to develop more streamlined funding processes.

In recognition of these challenges, alongside the implementation of the online Grants Management System (GMS), staff created a simplified and more streamlined application process for all ACCS granting groups with the goal of reducing barriers to accessing funding for the non-profit sector, particularly organizations serving equity-denied and disproportionately impacted communities that have been historically underserved by grants programs. Feedback from most users applying for Renter Services Grants has been positive with applicants noting the ease of use, the ability to reuse base information for multiple applications, and the one-stop nature of the system.

Application and Review Process

A Renter Service Grants information guide and application package were prepared and posted online on the Renter Services Grants webpage (<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/renter-services-grants.aspx>) in early Fall 2021. Email notifications with grant opening and deadline dates were sent to over 200 non-profit organizations in Vancouver. The Renter Services Grants team co-hosted two online information sessions with the Core Support Grants team for interested organizations. In total, 172 representatives from 106 organizations attended. Where necessary, staff arranged additional meetings to answer questions and assist applicants.

Staff reviewed all applications for completeness and to ensure they met eligibility requirements (Appendix B). 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 CSG evaluation process. Follow-up phone calls or meetings were conducted where additional information was required.

Adjudication

An interdepartmental adjudication team included staff from four departments of the City’s Renter Services and Advocacy Team (RAST): Arts, Culture and Community Services (ACCS), Development, Building and Licensing (DBL), Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (PDS), and Corporate Communications. Renter Services Grants staff leads worked closely with Social Policy’s CSG team to maximize the collective impact of the City’s investments in renters. The recommendations for Social Policy’s CSG program, including recommendations for grants to renter-serving organizations, are also being presented to Council on March 1 (RTS 14837).

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 A 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, retaining 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 22 applications to the 2022 Renter Services Grants program, requesting a combined total of \$1,275,961. This report recommends approval of a total of 13 grants totalling \$575,000 (Table 2) (See Appendix C for specific grant recommendations).

Table 2. Summary of 2022 Renter Services Grant Recommendations

SOURCE OF FUNDING	# GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	TOTAL \$\$ REQUESTED	# GRANTS RECOMMENDED	TOTAL \$\$ RECOMMENDED
2022 Affordable Housing Operating Budget	21	\$1,195,271	12	\$500,000
Capital - SRO Upgrade Granting Program	1	\$80,690	1	\$75,000
TOTAL	22	\$1,275,961	13	\$575,000

Overview of Grants Being Recommended

The 13 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 retaining 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, newcomers, and low-income seniors; and
- A focused investment in SRO tenants, including education, supports, and advocacy.

As in all granting calls, the amount of funding requested far exceeded the 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.

Ten applications are being recommended for partial funding and three are being recommended for full funding. In instances where staff are recommending partial funding, there was a careful and balanced analysis of what level of funding would be 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 C summarizes the applications received and the recommended funding level of each.

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring and reporting requirements were built into the 2021 Grant Agreements signed by all grant recipients. Based on the reports from 2021 grant recipients for services provided between April and October 2021, the following was achieved:

- More than 1,600 Vancouver renters contacted renter legal advocacy organizations for assistance to pursue their rights,
- Approximately 1,200 Vancouver renters received support services in navigating and maintaining their housing, and
- 600 Vancouver SRO tenants were educated on their tenancy rights.

In total, the 2021 Renter Services Grant recipients have supported over 3,000 Vancouver renters within a seven-month period, surpassing the total number of renters that the projects intended to serve.

Staff will work with 2022 grant recipients to develop schedules for monitoring and reporting back on their proposed activities, performance indicators and intended outputs.

Update on Other Renter Office Work

An update on other pieces of work conducted by the Renter Office is provided in Appendix G.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk

Financial

The total \$500,000 funding recommended in this report for 2022 Renter Services operating Grants is included in the 2022 Affordable Housing Operating Budget (EHT Allocation). This is the final year of approved EHT funding. Funding for future years will need to be considered as part of the annual operating budget process. Allocation of EHT funding will need to be considered within the EHT policy definition of 'affordable housing initiatives'.

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 2022 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 2022.

Table 3. Sources of Funds of 2022 Renter Services Investment

Source of Funds	2022 Investment
2022 Affordable Housing Operating Budget	\$500,000
Capital Budget - SRO Upgrade Granting Program	\$75,000
TOTAL	\$575,000

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 retain 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 2022 Renter Services funding reflect Council's commitment to enhancing advocacy and support services for renters across the city.

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RENTER SERVICES GRANTS: POLICY FRAMEWORK, PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

Policy Framework: Our Statement of Intent

Renter Services Grants are investments that contribute to improving rental 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 retain 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 inequity and mitigate 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 (noted above);
- 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 barriers to equity; OR
 - Systemic or individual advocacy aimed at securing services and protecting rights; OR
 - Community development which empowers and involves equity denied renters 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
 - 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 that 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 staff member can be a voting member of the board or executive;
- Demonstrate accommodation, welcomeness and openness to people of all ages, abilities, sexual orientations, 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.

2022 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.

AGENCY	2022 REQUESTED	2022 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
Access Pro Bono Society of BC	\$50,000	\$40,000	Vancouver Renter Legal Services Project	The Project will continue to enhance and extend APB's capacity to provide expert legal assistance and representation to low- and modest-income Vancouver renters confronting tenancy-threatening legal problems in and out of Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) hearings and in the BC Supreme Court.	
Atira Women's Resources Society	\$50,000	\$40,000	Tenancy Specialist	Legal Advocacy Program offers low-income women (trans & two-spirit inclusive) in the DTES free legal services in a safe, confidential, women's only space. This project improves housing outcomes for women by supporting them in understanding and pursuing their rights through legal advice, advocacy, and representation.	
Aunt Leah's Society	\$24,500	\$24,500	Friendly Landlord Network (FLN)	A network of homeowners and property managers who rent suites to youth and families transitioning from government care, along with the support of 27 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	\$24,500	\$24,500	How to Survive a Housing Crisis	How to Survive a Housing Crisis program will provide a weekly educational workshop series and 32 hours per week of one to one support and advocacy of a housing specialist to women and girls who are experiencing or have survived Gender Based Violence.	

AGENCY	2022 REQUESTED	2022 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
DTES SRO Collaborative Society	\$80,690	\$75,000	The SRO Hub	The SRO Hub project assists and empowers SRO tenants through training/workshops on topics like overdose, COVID-19 and eviction prevention, facilitates knowledge sharing through tenant committees, newsletters, and a resource library; and builds relationships with stakeholders who share our goal to improve the habitability and affordability of private SROs.	
First United Church Community Ministry Society	\$45,000	\$39,000	First United Legal Advocacy 2022-2023	For nearly 50 years, First United has provided free legal advocacy for marginalized people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Serving approximately 1,500 clients each year, low-income tenants remain our largest represented group. Our advocates provide free service from legal info and advice to full legal representation.	
Helping Spirit Lodge Society	\$35,580	\$35,580	Journey Home Program	Journey Home supports all the homeless individuals and families within the Greater Vancouver area with the primary goal of helping them to stay housed permanently in the affordable and safe housing. The program operates through the highly effective network of other organizations, shelters and the relevant government departments.	
Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House	\$40,000	\$30,000	House2Home	Supporting the rental needs of seniors and newcomers in the Mount Pleasant and Little Mountain neighbourhoods by offering first language workshops and one to one supports. We will help to ensure these populations feel empowered and understand the rental landscape and feel confident to seek support when needed.	
Rainbow Refugee Society	\$45,621	\$40,000	Q-HINNT (Queer Housing Information and Navigation for Newcomers Timely)	Rainbow Refugee is aware of the urgent need for sexually diverse and gender diverse newcomers to be housed in safe, affordable and accessible/adequate housing. Q-HINNT will connect LGBTQI newcomers and refugees with individual supports and housing navigation services to improve their well-being in Vancouver and will work closely with stakeholders.	

AGENCY	2022 REQUESTED	2022 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
Seniors Services Society of BC (SSSBC)	\$76,261	\$39,000	Vancouver Housing and Supports Navigation Services for Seniors	SSSBC provides 1:1 housing and support navigation services to Vancouver seniors to prevent older adults 60+ from becoming homeless by securing affordable and appropriate rental housing, providing supports and outreach to maintain housing and, empowering older adults to understand and pursue their rental rights to remain housed.	COMMENT: Grant funding to support Vancouver senior renters in private market rental housing.
Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre (TRAC)	\$81,600	\$80,000	Legal Representation for Low Income Vancouver Renters	TRAC will provide direct advocacy to vulnerable and disadvantaged Vancouver renters - particularly those with lower incomes living in non-profit housing. This will include full representation services at Residential Tenancy Branch dispute resolution hearings.	
The Kettle Friendship Society	\$75,000	\$39,000	Mental Health Advocacy	The program objective is to assist persons with mental health issues effectively resolve their legal problems, providing assistance in three distinct areas: Residential Tenancy, the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD), and The MSD. We empower our clients to fully understand and exercise their rights should issues arise.	
Watari Counselling & Support Services	\$69,710	\$68,420	YEAH! Youth Excelling in Achieving Housing for Parenting Program	Giving pregnant/parenting youth in Vancouver access to food, dignified housing, appropriate health care, and support, The Program 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.	
Total = 13	\$698,461	\$575,000			

2022 RENTER SERVICES GRANTS
Renter Services Grants NOT Recommended

AGENCY	2022 REQUESTED	2022 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre	\$50,000	\$0	Housing supports for vulnerable women in the DTES	The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre Housing Outreach Program works to advocate for access to housing opportunities for hard-to-house women and their children. We work to decrease barriers to housing and provide supports to assist women to obtain and maintain their housing through housing loss prevention and housing case management.	NOT RECOMMENDED: Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Jewish Family Services	\$10,000	\$0	Housing Care Manager	Housing Care Manager	NOT RECOMMENDED: Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Kurdish Society	\$273,000	\$0	First Steps for young adults	As youth move towards independence from their parents and guardians, they need a reliable source to guide them in proper housing, rental agreements, steady employment, and financial management and nutritious values. This will encourage our youth to contribute to the society socially and economically.	NOT RECOMMENDED: Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities

AGENCY	2022 REQUESTED	2022 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
Kitsilano Neighbour-hood House	\$5,000	\$0	Seniors Tenancy Support	To provide tenancy information primarily to Seniors especially around renovation, affordable housing and related issues.	NOT RECOMMENDED: Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Lookout Housing and Health Society	\$50,000	\$0	Assisting Reduction in Clutter and Hoarding (ARCH)	Hoarding Disorder (HD) and accumulated clutter have been identified as a public health and fire safety risk. Through a resident-centred harm reduction, approach our dedicated decluttering team will assist with trauma informed methods of intervention to improve housing retention, support residents' mental health, and reduce problems related to hoarding.	NOT RECOMMENDED: 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)	LIFE Program prevents homelessness by providing housing stabilization to 100 HIV+ renters in Vancouver, mainly seniors and long-term HIV+ survivors who have no family support, are isolated, living on low income in non-profit rental housing. Our intervention strategies support high-risk renters from losing their housing and becoming homeless.	NOT RECOMMENDED: Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
West End Seniors' Network	\$4,500	\$0	Rental Housing Navigation information Sessions	WESN will engage with multiple key organizations in the housing/rental sector to arrange education sessions for older adult community members (e.g. Residential Tenancy Branch, TRAC and SAIL, St Paul's Advocacy, Christ Church Cathedral, Jewish Family Services, Brightside). Sessions will work to include one or more organizations presenting.	NOT RECOMMENDED: Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities

AGENCY	2022 REQUESTED	2022 RECOMMENDED	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS & COMMENTS
Whole Way House Society	\$110,000	\$0	Seniors Friendly Visits Program	Provide community-building programs and tenant support services onsite to isolated low-income senior renters to ensure they are safe and healthy, and have access to outside community resources. Assist seniors with COVID navigation and recovery into community settings in a safe fashion to avert ripple effects of isolation on seniors.	NOT RECOMMENDED: Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice	\$50,000	\$0	Renter Services for Chinese Seniors	Renter Services for Chinese Seniors employs two Outreach Workers who are responsible for providing outreach, casework support, and educational opportunities to low-income Chinese seniors facing language barriers in regards to renting. They operate in Chinatown, the DTES, Strathcona, and to a lesser extent Downtown and Hasting-Sunrise neighbourhoods.	NOT RECOMMENDED: Meets eligibility criteria but funding not recommended as grants budget is limited and other applications rated higher in addressing City priorities
Total = 9	\$577,500	\$0			

SUMMARY OF 2020 AND 2021 RENTER SERVICES GRANT FUNDING

The first round of Renter Services Grants was 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). 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.

Council approved the second round of Renter Services Grants on March 9, 2021 (RTS 14068) and a total of \$575,000 was awarded to 12 non-profits (\$500,000 from 2021 Affordable Housing Operating Budget EHT reserve funds, and \$75,000 from the SRO Upgrade Granting Program). 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.

Table 1. 2020 and 2021 Renter Services Grants

Year	No. of Grantees	Amount Awarded	Source of Funds
2020	15	\$625,000	- Affordable Housing Operating Budget EHT reserve funds (\$500,000) - Previously approved EHT reserve allocation (\$50,000) - SRO Upgrade Granting Program (\$75,000)
2021	12	\$575,000	- Affordable Housing Operating Budget EHT reserve funds (\$500,000) - SRO Upgrade Granting Program (\$75,000)

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 - since renamed Core Support Grants (CSG) - 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, non-profit health providers report increased demand to assist low-income clients with securing housing and other tenancy issues.

In 2019, prior to the establishment of the Renter Services Grants program, the City invested approximately \$382,000 via DSS Grants (now CSG) (RTS 12912) into organizations identifying renter services and advocacy as a core function of their work (Table 1). In 2020 and 2021, the City’s investment into renter services and advocacy increased to approximately \$1 million each year with the addition of \$625,000 in Renter Services Grants in 2020 (RTS 13180) and \$575,000 in 2021 (RTS 14068).

For 2022, the proposed combined investment via Renter Services Grants and CSG 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 2019-2022

Grant Stream	2019 COV Investment in Core Services for Renters	2020 COV Investment in Core Services for Renters	2021 COV Investment in Core Services for Renters	2022 Recommended COV Investment in Core Services for Renters
CSG (formerly DSS Grants)	\$382,000	\$382,000	\$404,000	\$436,000
Renter Services Grants	n/a	\$625,000	\$575,000	\$575,000
Total	\$382,000	\$1,007,000	\$979,000	\$1,011,000

Staff note that Table 1 does not include the many CSG 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, CSG and OCB Grants that referenced renter needs and supports as a secondary area of service for 2019, 2020 and 2021 were approximately \$400,000 (RTS 12912, RTS 13579 and RTS 14269 respectively), and is recommended to be approximately the same for 2022 (14837).

UPDATE ON WORK OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER RENTER OFFICE

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

Renter Services and Advocacy Team (RAST)

This internal cross-departmental team was established to coordinate efforts to improve City responsiveness to renter issues. The Team is led and convened by ACCS Renter Office, with participation from Development, Building and Licensing (DBL), Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (PDS), Legal Services, and Corporate Communications. These departments regularly interface with renters and are responsible for policy and City practice that impact renters and renting in Vancouver. In 2021, a new Planning Analyst position in PDS was filled to support the existing Planner III, Planner II, Planner I and Planning Analyst positions in ACCS and the Communications Coordinator position in Corporate Communications. DBL and Legal Services are in the process of filling their new positions.

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

Renter Enquiry Line

ACCS Renter Office staff continue to receive daily email and phone messages via the Renter Enquiry Line (REL) set up in December 2018 to provide a point of entry for renters and those advocating for renters to bring their questions and concerns to the City, and for staff to assist in triaging enquiries and coordinating responses via the RAST. Depending on the nature of enquiries, staff also refers callers to external partners including renter-serving non-profits and the provincial Residential Tenancy Branch.

In 2021, REL staff responded to 436 enquiries from 412 individuals, compared to 454 enquiries from 404 individuals in 2020, and 485 enquiries from 299 individuals in 2019. Staff knowledge of and response time to renter issues has improved since 2019, and, as other departmental staff have become increasingly familiar with the purpose and processes of the Renter Office, interdepartmental coordination and responsiveness have improved as well. The 37% increase in the number of renters contacting the REL since 2019 indicates greater renter awareness of Renter Office services.

While there are some overlaps of enquiries between provincial and municipal jurisdictions, such as maintenance issues, issues related to renovations/demolitions, the majority of enquiries continued to be those related to the RTA and renter rights under provincial legislation (65%). This includes evictions and threat of evictions (21%), complaints about landlords (20%), maintenance & repairs issues (12%). The majority of the City-related enquiries were about the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP), permits and other policies and programs (42%), followed by requests for help seeking housing (12%).

Consultation and Engagement

Staff continue to engage key sector partners to identify opportunities to enhance, elevate and improve services for renters. During the pandemic, staff have transitioned quarterly in-person meetings with non-profit renter advocacy and services organizations to an online virtual platform. Meetings provide an opportunity for interested groups to share knowledge, strengthen relationships, discuss key issues related to renters, and learn about and provide feedback on relevant City policies and programs. Staff in the Renter Office also have responsibility for supporting the City's Renters Advisory Committee.

Renter Services Centre

Council directed staff to develop a plan for a Renter Services Centre, as a community hub that provides a point of entry for Vancouver renters to access services and supports, with non-profit organizations, City staff and, potentially, Provincial services co-located onsite. A location for the Centre has been identified at a City-owned site at 900 Howe St. From April to October 2021, staff conducted community engagement with renters and renter-serving non-profit organizations to determine how a Renter Services Centre could best meet the needs of Vancouver renters. Engagement methods included an online survey, focus groups, workshops and interviews. Currently, a consultant is finalizing a Feasibility Study for the Centre based on analysis of engagement findings and with input from a community-based Project Advisory Committee. The Feasibility Study will identify a vision for the Centre and identify and evaluate options to achieve that vision. A memo summarizing findings and next steps will be brought to Council in late March 2022.

Tenant Relocation Specialist

Council directed staff to take actions to improve the availability and quality of third-party market Tenant Relocation Specialists to support the implementation of Tenant Relocation Plans (TRPs). Through a general review of market availability of Tenant Relocation Specialists and discussions with sector organizations and review of active TRPs, staff found that there are currently few organizations or individuals providing this important service in the market, and that there has been some loss of more experienced specialists from retirement and staff turnover. In Q2 of 2022, staff will begin to explore with housing operators, BC Housing, renter services, Landlord BC, and other organizations on how to develop and where to best situate a Tenant Relocation Specialist training program for success.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On July 10, 2021, Council approved the *Equity Framework* to address systemic racism and to reduce barriers for those who have historically experienced the most exclusion, violence and harm in Vancouver.

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.

On March 9, 2021 (RTS 14068), Council approved the disbursement of \$625,000 in Renter Services Grants 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)

On February 26, 2020 (RTS 13412), Council approved the disbursement of \$575,000 in Renter Services Grants to 12 non-profits (\$500,000 from 2021 Affordable Housing Operating Budget EHT reserve funds, and \$75,000 from the SRO Upgrade Granting Program).

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 14, 2018, Council approved a Motion for staff to develop a *City-wide Plan* to determine how to best address key city-wide challenges like housing affordability, densification to accommodate growth and demographic changes.

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.