



ACORN



OUR CAMPAIGNS

- ✓ RENT CONTROL
- ✓ SECURITY OF TENURE
- ✓ LANDLORD LICENSING
- ✓ AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- ✓ TENANT UNIONS
- ✓ FAIR BANKING

WHAT IS ACORN?

ACORN Canada or Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now is a multi-issue, mass-based community and tenant union of low-to-moderate income people. The purpose of the union is to give power to people so that they can have their voices heard at the highest levels of the country. With chapters across the region, province, and across the country, ACORN is able to be both a local based union winning local campaigns, as well as a large organization combining forces to fight for policy changes at the national level.

SUPPLY IS ONLY PART OF THE SOLUTION TO THE HOUSING CRISIS

Developers are pushing for a build more housing ONLY solution. Developers were also recently quoted in the CBC saying "If people can't afford it, they should not live in the city. The city is made for the privileged" Scarce housing supply is a problem but that's not the entire solution to tackle the housing crisis. Data from the NHC shows that most of the housing created by the \$70 billion+ National Housing Strategy implemented since 2017 is unaffordable.

WE ALSO NEED

- Rent control
- Security of tenure
- Landlord licensing
- Elimination of REIT tax loopholes
- Apartment unit ownership limits
- Eviction Protections
- Vacancy Control
- Mandated disclosure of property ownership

CONTACT US

Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta are the only provinces without ANY rent controls



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WHAT IS A TENANT UNION

In Alberta, there's been a long standing culture of anti-union thought and action. It's hard for people that weren't born and raised in Alberta to understand just how anti-union Alberta really is... I really think that long term, this is the key to changing the situation in Alberta. People in Alberta need to understand that there's power in numbers, and if we can get more tenant unions organized in buildings, and get tenant unions working together, I think politicians will be more inclined to listen to us if the voices would only get louder and louder. Right now corporations run the government here . The lack of tenant protections in Alberta is a big byproduct of the fact that corporations have the power. They get what they want and tenants are just revenue streams for corporations. So we need to build a movement in Alberta. We need to organize tenant unions to pressure the government to really make life safer... We need to show tenants in Alberta that they can have a voice if they unify.

ELAINE, ACORN MEMBER



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A TENANT UNION IS EXACTLY WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE. A GROUP OF TENANTS WITH SOMETHING IN COMMON (THE BUILDING THEY LIVE IN, THE LANDLORD, THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, OR EVEN THE FACT THAT THEY'RE ALL TENANTS) COMING TOGETHER TO INCREASE THEIR POWER IN ORDER TO WIN CONCESSIONS FROM THE LANDLORD AND POLICY CHANGES FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

COMMON LANDLORD TACTICS

- **Divide and conquer:** Landlords will always try to deal with tenants individually, often claiming privacy reasons. We always recommended that interactions and meetings with the landlord are done as a group. It's easier to intimidate or influence an individual than a group.
- **Intimidation:** Threats of eviction are most common, lack of repairs and maintenance. Any form of intimidation is illegal and is something that ACORN can help address if happening
- **Buyouts:** Sometimes landlords will offer individual tenants money to move out. Know that the longer a tenant holds out, the larger buyouts usually become (Manor Village ACORN TU buyouts started at \$2000 per household and ended at \$65,000)

Tenant organizing needs to happen on 2 levels:

1. Hyper locally at the building level. Tenants who live in the same building or complex coming together to fight for changes and better communication from their landlord.
2. City and province wide to fight together for changes at the overarching policy level (Whether that is municipal, provincial, or federal)

STEPS TO FORM A TENANT UNION



1. **Talk to the people you know in the building** - even just 3 or 4 tenants - and develop your organizing team.
 - Choose a date and location for your first meeting
 - Reach out to ACORN for help, materials and guidance

2. **Develop an outreach strategy** to reach people in your building
 - Prepare a flyer with the date, time and location of your first meeting and some of the issues you have noticed in the building and start knocking on doors to inform everyone of the 1st meeting. Leave flyers underneath doors if there is no answer
 - Post flyers in common areas of your building and anywhere tenants will see them.

3. **Hold your first meeting!** Things to discuss:

- What is a tenant union and why you believe the building needs one
- Issues brainstorm - come up with a list of the issues tenants want to see addressed
- Choose a date/time and location for a monthly tenant union meeting



4. **Petition to form a tenant union**

- To legitimately form the tenant union you need to have 50% +1 support in the building (This is not a legal necessity but if you have less than 50% support it will make organizing difficult)
- Have tenants who attended the meeting sign the petition and do the math of how many more signatures you need
- Ask for volunteers to help get the remaining signatures
- Plan a date and time to go door to door to get remaining signatures
- The goal is to have 50% +1 signatures by the next meeting



TENANT UNION DOORKNOCKING RAP



ACORN

Hey - I'm ____ ! I live here in the building and i've been talking to lots of our neighbours who are tired of issues 1...23.

We are forming a tenant union so we have a united voice when dealing with the landlord.

Do you share those concerns? Have concerns of your own?

[get conversation going.]

NO BUILDING CONCERNS: That's good to hear! Whether you got problems or not, it's good to be organized in your building. Tenant unions give us a clear line of communication to the landlord / building management, and that is never a bad thing. (get acknowledgement and move on) **IF still no interest:** Fact is - lots of buildings in Calgary are being redeveloped. When that happens you really want to be organized. It can be the difference from staying in your home or being out looking for a new place. [get acknowledgement and move on]

IF THEY HAVE ISSUES: The same thing is happening all over the building. That's why the tenant union is being organized - so that tenants have a united voice when dealing with the landlord.

What do you think about that? (get agreement, answer questions)

Can you support the tenant union?

That's great! Fill out this quick Tenant Union Supporter Form.

[Hand clipboard over with pen]

TURNOUT Q: We're having a meeting in the lobby of your building tomorrow afternoon at 5:30 PM to go over what is needed to form a Tenant Union. Can we count on you to make it out?



DID YOU KNOW?

Ontario does not allow landlords to refuse tenants with pets or charge pet fees