

FE

FRPO'S **FAIR EXCHANGE**
RENTAL INDUSTRY NEWS

IT'S BETTER
TO BE A RENTER

SMALL LANDLORD, BIG PROBLEMS:
EVICTION FOR ILLEGAL ACTS

WHY PRE-PAID RENT IS
NOT (ALWAYS)
A NO-NO

SYRIAN REFUGEE
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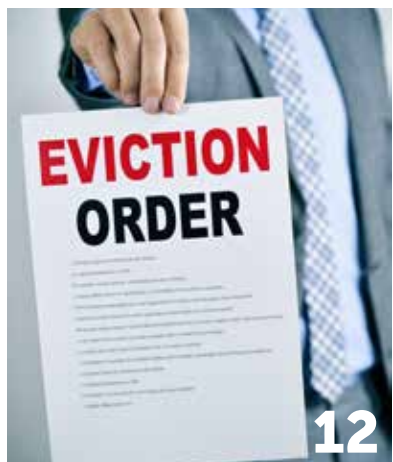




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RENTAL INDUSTRY NEWS

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FRPO'S FAIR EXCHANGE OF
RENTAL INDUSTRY NEWS

The voice of the Federation of
Rental-housing Providers of Ontario

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A PUBLICATION OF:



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BECAUSE IT'S

With only some hint of mild trepidation, I take on a new role starting this year as the Editor of FRPO's Fair Exchange magazine. I am looking forward to being able to further enhance the linkage between one of our premier member communication products and the vast number of activities across the industry.

As I was pondering the reasons behind my ideas for FE's continuous improvement plan, I found myself using an updated version of the Prime Minister's famous quote: Because it's 2016!

Our industry has never been more forward thinking than it is now, and I take inspiration from that enthusiasm in how FRPO continues in its pursuit of providing even better ways to support our members and enhance the brand of rental housing in Ontario.

A PROFESSIONAL RENTAL HOUSING INDUSTRY—BECAUSE IT'S 2016

So what does Justin Trudeau's quote have to do with rental housing? A lot actually. There are several important things about the vital business of apartment rental operations that we do – or don't do – because it's 2016.

Even our industry's strongest critics concede that rental housing in Ontario has vastly improved since Justin's father served as Prime Minister in the 1970s. Rental housing in Ontario reflects modern management practices, run by teams of professionals, with caring and dedicated staffs.

Companies who own and operate purpose-built rental housing reflect a mature outlook in the marketplace, focusing on both the current and future needs of their customers. The industry has pulled together over the last few years to demonstrate the potential of a much better alignment between public policy

objectives and the evolving best practices in the industry.

In 2016, concerns about absentee housing providers and improper eviction practices are no longer targeted against dedicated housing providers, but rather now focused on investor condo owners. It has never been more important for FRPO's members to distinguish themselves from the condo shadow rental market so that governments understand there's a difference.

And because it's 2016, governments can no longer act with contempt towards industries like ours who are a vital component of the economic and social fabric of the province.

FRPO AS A PARTNER IN BUILDING A BETTER ONTARIO

The collective time and effort to fix the image of the industry, and doing the right things for the right reasons, has shown that we are no longer just another business sector with a list of regulatory grievances against the government.

For the first time, FRPO and the industry are seen as an important partner in helping to advance Ontario's economic and social progress.

The industry is now starting to see the benefits of helping government to view policy changes through the lens of rental housing providers. Cabinet Ministers and MPPs appear to be developing a better understanding that greater industry investment does not come about through greater regulation and more interference in the market.

Getting governments to begin with the question "What problem do we need to solve?" rather than leaping to "What new regulation do we need to make?" is leaps and bounds ahead of where we were a decade ago. I saw proof of this at the Rental Housing Summit

2016

we hosted last September in the example we showcased from Vancouver to build more purpose-built rental housing.

We have reason to be optimistic about our future, and we will be much more of a player in shaping what that future looks like!

A TRANSFORMED INDUSTRY

Because it's 2016, rental housing providers are transforming apartment buildings into the condo-quality homes that Ontarians are demanding. Never before has the industry been so focused on the issue of housing affordability, and working to put real and viable practices in place to deliver housing that families can afford.

FRPO members are investing more than ever into training and education for their staff, and providing them with better tools and technologies to deliver superior service. FRPO's Certified Rental Building (CRB) program represents the best practices for the industry, and a set of quality assurance standards that are second to none in North America.

FRPO and the rental housing industry in Ontario have a bright future ahead. And I could not be more excited to be part of this journey. And welcome to 2016!

LYNZI MICHAL

Editor, FE magazine
Director of Membership & Marketing,
FRPO

ENHANCING THE INDUSTRY'S IMAGE

- Showcasing the \$18.3 billion in economic activity from rental housing
- Promoting common solutions to government for both profit and non-profit housing providers
- Developing a collaborative solution for *Housing That People Can Afford*
- Using evidence to influence better government decision-making

FRPO UPCOMING EVENTS

For information or to register for any of these events, please visit: www.frpo.org/event_category/upcoming-events

RTA SEMINARS

FRPO will hold its very popular RTA Seminar Series again this April in several locations. These half day seminars will cover various aspects of the Residential Tenancies Act. The RTA seminar registration will open in early February. Please check our website.

April 6th – Toronto
Old Mill Inn

April 12th – Cambridge
Cambridge Hotel and Conference Centre

April 14th – Ottawa
Ottawa Events and Conference Centre

April 21st – Thunder Bay
Italian Cultural Centre

April 26th – Chatham
Retro Suites Hotel

April 28th – Toronto
Old Mill Inn

SPRINGFEST TRADE SHOW
April 7th, 2016
8:00am to 4:00pm
Metro Toronto Convention Centre
www.springfesttoronto.com

FRPO SPRING SOCIAL

Date and Time: April 7th, 2016
4:00pm to 7:00pm
Joe Badali's, Toronto

CFAA RENTAL HOUSING CONFERENCE 2016

June 7th, 2016 8:00am
to June 10th, 2016 5:00pm
Toronto



HERE'S TO NEW BEGINNINGS

On behalf of MediaEdge Communications, I'm proud to present our first issue of *Fair Exchange* as the new publisher and partner with FRPO. What an exciting way to kick-off 2016!

Having spent several years immersed in the apartment industry, I am personally very excited to be working closely with FRPO and our team of writers and designers in an effort to enhance your FE Magazine experience and strengthen the powerful voice FRPO has on behalf of Ontario's rental-housing providers.

Our promise is to continue delivering the same quality content and information you're accustomed to, but contained in a fresh new look. That said, we are always looking for ways to make the reader experience a better one, so feel free to reach out to us with any questions or feedback and we'll do our best to address them in a timely fashion.

On another note it was wonderful to be a part of the FRPO MAC Awards Gala in December, 2015. The industry is doing some amazing things and it was great to witness the celebration up close.

I am looking forward to many future issues of FE, and getting to know you, the valued membership, through our social networking channels.

MITCHELL SALTZMAN

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SCOTT ANDISON
President & CEO, FRPO

TAKING BACK THE

By working together as an industry, real results can be achieved

I would first like to wish all of you a Happy New Year, and a very prosperous 2016. I hope that everyone started the year off right by spending it with family and friends.

I am enthusiastic about what lies ahead for FRPO in 2016 as we continue to build on the success of our integrated engagement strategy throughout this past year. With your support, FRPO continued to grow and enhance the brand value of both the association and the industry in the eyes of government, tenants, other industry groups, and of course the public as a whole.

In 2015, we structured a very proactive engagement strategy focused on taking back ownership of our future. Our interaction at all levels with the Ontario government emphasized our value in being part of structuring solutions up front rather than having to react to government decisions after they are made.

Regular readers of FE Magazine will recall coverage on some of our most recent initiatives, such as:

If a new level of government is going to be taking part in discussing the future of rental housing in Ontario, it is even more critical that FRPO has a seat at this table to help ensure we have the right plan for our industry, and our customers.

- Producing third-party evidence on how to significantly reduce the number of appeals on property tax assessment values for multi-residential buildings after each reassessment, and working with MPAC and the Ontario government on reducing the amount of information property owners must provide to MPAC every year;

- Working with the Landlord and Tenant Board in modernizing how hearings are conducted and on reducing the administrative burden for rental housing providers in serving defendants with tribunal documents;
- Influencing the government's direction in an update to the *Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy* through the release of an extensive policy paper in June 2015, followed up with a well-attended Housing Summit in September featuring the approach taken in Vancouver on incenting the development of 5,000 new market rent units in the city.
- Demonstrating the rental housing industry's commitment to energy conservation and green community living through the continued expansion of the standards that make up FRPO's Certified Rental Building program and the *Living Green Together* initiative.

These actions, along with a multitude of other activities undertaken by FRPO, show very clearly that the most effective results are achieved when an industry is able to design and invest in initiatives focused on delivering real results. This is different from the case when an industry is forced to respond to a growing regulatory environment that is often based on a public communications objective rather than encouraging real improvements that generate real and measureable results.

In 2016 we will also continue to build on the new membership services infrastructure that was introduced in previous months to continue to expand and enhance the services we provide

FUTURE

directly to you, our members. You will have already seen the new look and functionality of our web site at www.frpo.org where you are able to access member benefit programs, track the activities of our government relations and advocacy initiatives, register for training and events, purchase products online, and follow our work with other industry and community partners. We have also seen significant growth in activity on FRPO's Certified Rental Building Program (www.crbprogram.org) since the launch of expanded online services for tenants, members, and the public last year.


Recently, on your behalf, FRPO reached out to senior government officials to once again proactively offer our assistance in helping to plan the best possible response by the industry to relocate 10,000+ Syrian refugees to Ontario in 2015/16. Unfortunately, the government ultimately elected not to act on FRPO's advice on how to best streamline access to available rental units across the province. Despite this, FRPO provided members with practical tools to promote best practices when reviewing leasing applications and produced key public messages to promote a helpful and consistent storyline on what challenges exist from the unique circumstances of such a large and sudden influx of inquiries about available rental housing units. These are the types of services that you can count on from your association to help you navigate unique circumstances such as the Syrian refugee settlement issue.

One of the best metrics any association has is growth in the level of demand and

degree of member participation in any of the products and services it offers. I am humbled by the level of growth we have seen in many of FRPO's cornerstone programs and events, including:

- Breaking through the 1,000 attendance barrier at FRPO's MAC Awards Gala on December 4, 2015 held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre;
- Record-breaking attendance at FRPO's Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) Seminars held in locations around the province to help members stay current in their legal obligations under the Act;
- In response to plans by the Government of British Columbia to implement a government-mandated regulatory scheme on the rental housing industry, Landlord BC was successful in getting FRPO's support to expand our Certified Rental Building (CRB) Program into BC to provide a much more reasonable alternative. Based on the current success of the CRB program in Ontario, the BC government discarded its plans to implement its own industry program.

I look forward to sharing with you in subsequent issues of FE Magazine the details of our plans and emerging results throughout 2016. Together, we will continue to grow the value of our brand, and the benefit FRPO brings to the rental housing industry across the province.

Once again, my very best wishes to you in 2016. 



WHY PRE-PAID RENT IS NOT (ALWAYS) A NO-NO

BY JOE HOFFER, COHEN HIGHLEY LLP

A recent decision of the Divisional Court (*Corvers v. Bumbia*, 2014 ONSC 985) has affirmed the legality of a housing provider accepting “pre-paid rent” as long as the housing provider does not “require” it as a condition of tenancy. The case vindicates a position often taken by housing providers at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB), without success, where Board Members have routinely treated most pre-paid rent arrangements as “illegal charges”. In some cases housing providers have even been prosecuted and fined for accepting pre-paid rent.

In Ontario, housing providers are careful to ensure that tenancy applicants are properly

screened for their creditworthiness and tenancy history. If a housing provider is not careful with screening and later has to apply to the LTB for judgment and eviction, the process can take several months. A professional tenant can easily get a few adjournments from the LTB and then, when the eviction order issues, can file an appeal to Divisional Court to automatically “stay” enforcement of the eviction order, all the while, not paying rent. Even where a “motion to quash” an appeal is filed, a properly drafted Notice of Appeal can result, at best, in an order requiring the tenant to pay the arrears into court pending an appeal hearing six months later.

Housing providers know the combination of lost rent and legal fees invariably runs from \$10

to \$15K, all because the housing provider took a chance on a marginal rental application. The housing provider is left with a large legal bill and a worthless judgment (and in some cases personal bankruptcy). So why take the risk?

Housing providers considering rental applications from recent immigrants or foreign students, or from other individuals with no reliable credit or tenancy history, will be more likely than not to reject such applications and choose instead an applicant with an established financial track record.

Where the housing provider explains the reason for declining to rent, then an offer of prepaid rent may be made by the applicant to give the housing provider comfort that there will be no payment issue. Prior to *Corvers*, housing providers would reject such offers because to accept would expose them to provincial offence charges under the RTA (where fines can range up to \$100K) and a tenant who pre-paid the rent could simply apply, after moving in, for a full reimbursement of the sum on the basis that the payment was an “illegal charge”. So why take the risk?

The *Corvers* decision, which is binding on LTB Members, removes the risk as long as the tenant offers to pay rent in advance and the housing provider then accepts it. The prepayment is not an illegal charge because it is not a “security deposit”.

Prepaid rent is payment of rent in advance of the date it is due, and it should make no difference if it is paid 12 days before it’s due or 12 months. So, as long as you don’t make prepayment of rent a pre-condition of acceptance of a rental application, then you should attract no legal liability if a tenant offers to pre-pay the rent and you decide to accept. ■

If you have questions regarding this or would like further information, you can contact Joe Hoffer (hoffer@cohenhighley.com) or by telephone at (519) 672-9330.



ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD (OEB) BRIEF

BY DWAYNE QUINN, D.R. QUINN & ASSOCIATES (DRQ)

FRPPO is pleased to provide a summary of the more significant energy policy issues and successes from our involvement at the Ontario Energy Board (OEB). On behalf of Ontario's rental housing industry, FRPO regularly intervenes and makes policy submissions to OEB hearings and consultations.

The Ontario Energy Board oversees regulated electricity rates, suite meter policies, gas price increases, and numerous other policies related to consumer protection, demand-side management and consumer protection. As a result of interventions by FRPO, medium to large apartment buildings in Ontario will save 7% to 9% on the delivery component of their bills, with total savings of \$28 million over 2014 to 2018.

Below is a summary of recent activity before the OEB:

DEMAND SIDE MANAGEMENT (DSM)

- Enbridge has partnered with United Way using Tower Renewal program for a limited 2013-15 rollout
- Union was convinced by FRPO and other intervenors to pilot a program similar to Enbridge and is currently working with stakeholders including FRPO.
- The Board's issued framework covers a six-year period with a mid-term review.
- Hearing completed in September with a decision pending – issue is how much, how quickly.
- FRPO is concerned with unchecked DSM growth and ensuring continued work on Low-income DSM for privately-owned multi-unit residential buildings in both Union and Enbridge territory.

UNION GAS 2016 RATES

- Rates established by formula negotiated with the utility in EB-2013-0202.
- Resulting annual delivery rate decrease of about 0.5% for average apartment building.

ENBRIDGE GAS DISTRIBUTION 2016 RATES

- Rates established by formula approved by the Board in contested hearing in EB-2012-0459.
- Enbridge proposed increase of close to 6% increase in the delivery rate for average apartment.
- Through subsequent negotiation, the rate increase was reduced to closer to 5%.
- This higher level increase was anticipated as a result of hundreds of millions of infrastructure expenditure predominantly in the GTA.

UNION GAS – DAWN PARKWAY 2017 PROJECT – EB-2015-0200

- Union has applied to increase Dawn Parkway capacity by 450,000 GJ/day to feed east of Parkway.
- FRPO was successful in incorporating requirements to mitigate future builds/rate impacts.

UNION GAS – DAWN REFERENCE PRICE – EB-2015-0181

- Union has applied to shift the reference price for commodity to Dawn from Empress (Alberta).
- This shift was advocated for by FRPO in the Natural Gas Market review Dec. 2014.

- FRPO has advocated for customer/market communication requirements for Jan. 2017 start.

UNION GAS – NEW COMMUNITY EXPANSION – EB-2015-0179

- Union has requested the OEB reduce Profitability Index criteria for New Community Expansions.
- While aligned with government policy, unless provincial contribution, existing customers subsidize.
- There may be a hybrid solution that could be created including customer contribution.
- Discovery process through December and January.

UNION GAS BURLINGTON-OAKVILLE PROJECT & NEXUS – UNION GAS/ENBRIDGE

- FRPO is concerned with Union's exposure of customers to rate increases driven by shareholder priorities.
- FRPO advanced a lower cost approach of using existing infrastructure instead of building new and letting the market determine the best projects.
- FRPO presented a high level overview of North American market changes to the OEB advocating for the Board to require utilities to demonstrate a more qualitative assessment of gas supply alternatives considered on behalf of customers. 🌱



[illegible]

EVICTION FOR ILLEGAL ACTS BY TENANTS

BY MIKE CHOPOWICK

Disclaimer: This article does not constitute "legal advice". Please retain the services of a licensed legal professional to obtain information specific to any potential case you may have.

One of the most common questions FRPO member housing providers ask is, "What defines an 'illegal act' that may justify terminating a tenancy?" Housing providers want to keep a safe and comfortable rental complex for all their residents, and occasionally the actions of one tenant threaten the security and safety of their neighbours. The proper course of action is for the housing provider to apply to the Landlord Tenant Board (LTB) to terminate the tenancy.

The problem is that the term "illegal" is not defined in the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA). Such illegal activities are usually considered to include a serious violation of a federal, provincial or municipal law. However, if the illegality is trivial or technical, the act or business or occupation might not be considered serious enough to warrant eviction.

Good examples include a tenant who runs a small food-catering business out of their residential unit (usually a violation of municipal by-laws), vs. a tenant who

commits drug dealing and trafficking offences in their unit. "Illegal acts" that are deemed to be non-threatening to other tenants or the housing provider may not be considered serious enough to warrant eviction. The LTB's own guideline also cites cases where a tenant or another occupant may have devised a fraud in the unit, written a bad cheque or failed to file a tax return, as examples that do not necessarily create a threat to the other tenants in the building or a problem for the housing provider.

SHORT TERM VACATION RENTALS

Many housing providers have raised recent concerns about tenants listing their units online as short-term AirBnB-type vacation rentals. In one case (*Sutton Place Grande Limited v. Hammer and Griffiths*), the Divisional Court held that where the tenant listed her rental unit with a real estate agent and repeatedly sublet the unit to short-term occupants for a rent that greatly exceeded the lawful rent and without the housing provider's consent,

this pattern of activity constituted the conduct of an illegal business. There have been other more recent successful applications by housing providers against tenants who turn their units into short-term vacation businesses.

Such conduct is contrary to section 134 of the RTA and is an offence under section 234(l) of the RTA, but those sections do not provide a remedy for the housing provider. Eviction for an illegal act does.

PERMITTING AN ILLEGAL ACT OR BUSINESS

A tenant may be evicted under section 61 if the tenant or other occupant "permits" a person to commit an illegal act in the rental unit or residential complex. It is not sufficient to prove that the tenant or other occupant allowed the person who committed the illegal act to be in the rental unit or residential complex.

A finding that the tenant or other occupant permitted an illegal act may be simply based on their knowledge of the illegal act. For instance, there may

“

Housing providers should carefully include details in their notices of how alleged illegal acts have the potential to affect the character of the premises, or to disturb the reasonable enjoyment and safety of the housing provider or other tenants.

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be sufficient evidence for the Board Member to conclude that the tenant or other occupant knew of the illegal act or was wilfully blind to the illegal act and therefore permitted it.

THE PROCESS

Housing providers should start by serving a correctly filled-out N6 form (available from <http://www.sjto.gov.on.ca/lrb/forms/>) to the tenant. A Certificate of Service should also be completed. In most cases, for an N6 eviction notice, an illegal act is defined as falling into two main categories, each with different notice periods for the termination date after the housing provider gives a tenant this notice.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

There is a 10-day terminate date period for the following illegal acts in the rental complex:

- the production of an illegal drug,
- trafficking of an illegal drug,
- possession of an illegal drug for the purposes of trafficking.

Housing providers should note that most of these eviction applications will only be considered if the above-noted illegal acts occur on the rental property – an eviction may be unlikely to be granted if the housing provider claimed that a tenant was trafficking illegal drugs in a park across the street, for example. Also, possession of illegal drugs on its own may not be considered as an “illegal act” for the purposes of terminating a tenancy. As noted above, the possession must be for the purposes of trafficking.

OTHER ILLEGAL ACTS OR BUSINESSES

There is a 20-day termination notice period where a tenant or another occupant commits another type of illegal act, or carries on an illegal trade, business or occupation in the rental unit or residential complex, or the tenant or another occupant permits someone else to commit an illegal act or carry on an illegal activity in the unit or the complex.

Your notice should contain sufficient detail in the “Reasons for the Notice” section. Precise dates, times, and descriptions of illegal activities should be meticulously noted.

BURDEN OF PROOF

Housing providers often remark how often police are reluctant to charge tenants with offences occurring in a rental complex. It should be noted that an eviction can be ordered even though the tenant or other occupant carrying on the illegal act, trade, business or occupation has not been charged with an offence relating to the illegal act. The Board may also evict a tenant for an illegal act whether or not the tenant or other person has been convicted of an offence relating to the illegal act. Therefore, there is no need for an adjournment from the Board proceeding until the matter has been heard by a court.

One of the most important factors in these cases is consideration of how serious the illegal act is. Housing providers should carefully include details in their notices of how alleged illegal acts have the potential to affect the character of the premises, or to disturb the reasonable enjoyment and safety of the housing provider or other tenants. Applications regarding illegal acts are often about dangerous or risky activities conducted by tenants. Housing providers should always seek professional legal consultation from a licensed lawyer or paralegal to address their specific situations. ■

Information Source: Ontario Landlord Tenant Board Interpretation Guideline 9 – Eviction for an Illegal act or Business



FRPO SYRIAN REFUGEE UPDATE

BY SCOTT ANDISON

The Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario (FRPO) represents more than 2,200 members who own or manage more than 350,000 households in every area of Ontario. We well understand the housing needs, costs and capacities in the communities that we build and manage.

Our members are a diverse group – from those with one small building or a single rental unit up to the largest property management firms and institutional owners. **Renting to refugees in Ontario** is not new to our members. Some 26,000 refugees from all over the world are admitted to Canada every year. A large percentage of these newcomers land in Ontario, and for a large number of them, the quality rental housing and communities

built and provided by our membership play a vital role in their accommodation and re-settlement. We are proud of that.

What is new, however, is the pace and quantity with which Syrian refugees are now coming to Canada. We foresaw this. Since mid-November, our organization has been seeking a process with appropriate provincial government representatives to assist in meeting the immediate needs of those in crisis. We have offered our expertise, information and resources.

Our members continue to be ready, willing and able to rent quality housing to refugee newcomers. Housing providers that have the opportunity to do more are doing so. For example, in Ottawa, Q Residential is reserving 150 apartments for refugee

families in two apartment towers. Boardwalk has a plan in place to accommodate up to 350 refugee families.

Our members also continue to be duty-bound by the laws of the Human Rights Code and the Residential Tenancies Act. As housing providers, we must ensure a tenant screening process that is fair, diligent and legal. We must strictly apply equally the application process for all new prospective renters, regardless of their residency status. This means:

- Housing providers cannot discriminate based on immigration or refugee status
- Housing providers cannot impose different criteria to assess newcomers; housing providers are required to request the same credit history, employment history and income information of refugees that is requested of all rental applicants.
- Housing providers' rental applications can consider credit references, rental history information and credit checks, alone or in any combination in order to assess the prospective tenant. A guarantor can also be required to

sign a lease. It is also important that potential guarantors realize they remain guarantors for the duration of the tenancy, and not just the original lease. This is set out in the Residential Tenancies Act, and not by the policy of any one housing provider.

- Housing providers cannot require pre-paid rent, or a signed termination notice for a fixed term as a condition of approving a rental application.

Our members understand the exceptional challenge and frustration this may present Syrian refugees and their guarantors. That is why we have been communicating with government officials to offer suggestions on what can be done to respond more appropriately to the influx of families requiring rental housing.

FRPO believes the rental housing application process for the Syrian refugees that are now coming to Ontario in an unprecedented number and at an unprecedented pace demands an exception to facilitate their speedy accommodation and community re-settlement.

In fact we have already provided our best advice to the provincial government on how they can use existing regulatory authority to expand the number of options housing providers would have to meet both the short term and longer term needs of Syrian refugee families. We continue to be hopeful that the provincial government will respond positively to our advice.

In the meantime, FRPO is providing our members with ongoing, and publicly available, information on their rights and responsibilities with respect to providing rental housing within the existing regulatory regime. We have begun to reach out to the community services and associations that are supporting the Syrian refugees to provide facts and information on how to find a quality housing provider in Ontario, and the rights and protections for tenants in the province.

Our members will do their best to support arriving refugee families as best as we are able within the prescribed regulatory environment. We encourage interested parties to contact FRPO for information on rental housing services. ■■



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ONTARIO RENTAL HOUSING VACANCY INCREASES TO 2.4%

Two-bedroom rents increase an average of +3.1% from last year

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) October 2015 rental survey indicates a slight increase in vacancy rates in Ontario, from 2.3% in 2014 to 2.4% in 2015.

Average two-bedroom rents in new and existing structures increased from \$1,086 to \$1,121.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CMHC:

- Factors exerting upward pressure on vacancy rates include: slowing youth employment; declining net migration and more rental completions.
- Vacancy rates moved higher for bachelor and two-bedroom units while remaining stable for all other units. Rental demand fell short of increases in supply resulting in slightly higher vacancy rates.
- The sharpest increase in vacancy rates occurred in Thunder Bay, Hamilton and Kingston. The lowest vacancy rate was registered in Guelph (1.2%), Barrie (1.3%), and Toronto (1.6%) while the highest vacancy rates were registered in Thunder Bay (4.6%), Windsor (3.9%) and Peterborough (3.7%).
- Year-to-date new purpose-built rental starts increased to 4,798 rental units (as of Sept 30, 2015), a rise of 60% from 2,994 new rental units starts in 2014.
- The cost gap between owning and renting a home in Ontario continued to increase resulting in fewer renters shifting to ownership housing in the fall of 2015. The rise in the cost gap was fuelled by mortgage carrying costs growing well in excess of increases in average apartment rents.
- Ontario's average rental availability rate, which includes vacant units plus units where an existing tenant has given notice to move, also increased to 4.1% in 2015 from 3.8% last year. 

Source: CMHC 2015 Rental Market Survey. For more information, please visit the the Housing Market Information Portal: <http://www.cmhc.ca/housingmarketinformation/>

5-YEAR TREND

Average Vacancy Rates-Privately Initiated Apartment Structures (3 units and over)

Census Metropolitan Area	Oct 2011	Oct 2012	Oct 2013	Oct 2014	Oct 2015
Barrie	1.7%	2.0%	3.0%	1.6%	1.3%
Guelph	1.1%	1.4%	1.9%	1.2%	1.2%
Hamilton	3.4%	3.5%	3.4%	2.2%	3.4%
Kingston	1.1%	1.7%	2.3%	1.9%	2.8%
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo	1.7%	2.6%	2.3%	2.3%	2.4%
London	3.8%	3.9%	3.3%	2.9%	2.9%
Oshawa	1.8%	2.1%	2.1%	1.8%	1.7%
Ottawa	1.4%	2.5%	2.9%	2.6%	3.4%
St.Catharines/Niagara	3.2%	4.0%	4.1%	3.6%	2.8%
Sudbury	2.8%	2.7%	3.4%	4.2%	3.5%
Thunder Bay	1.7%	1.1%	2.6%	2.3%	4.6%
Toronto	1.4%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%
Windsor	8.1%	7.3%	5.9%	4.3%	2.9%
Ontario Average	2.2%	2.5%	2.6%	2.3%	2.4%

Source: CMHC Rental Market Reports, 2011 to 2015

Average Two-bedroom Rents (\$) 5-Year Trend (New & Existing Buildings)

Census Metropolitan Area	Oct 2011	Oct 2012	Oct 2013	Oct 2014	Oct 2015	Oct 2014-Oct 2015 % Change (Existing Buildings Only)
Barrie	\$1,001	\$1,037	\$1,048	\$1,118	\$1,167	+4.3%
Hamilton	\$884	\$886	\$932	\$959	\$1,034	+3.8%
Guelph	\$903	\$941	\$957	\$988	\$1,027	+3.4%
Kingston	\$965	\$1,005	\$1,054	\$1,070	\$1,096	+2.9%
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo	\$889	\$908	\$952	\$975	\$997	+2.7%
London	\$881	\$919	\$924	\$943	\$967	+2.3%
Oshawa	\$941	\$939	\$985	\$1,010	\$1,035	+1.9%
Ottawa	\$1,086	\$1,115	\$1,132	\$1,132	\$1,174	+3.1%
St.Catharines/Niagara	\$833	\$862	\$872	\$892	\$909	+3.2%
Sudbury	\$881	\$915	\$914	\$927	\$953	+2.5%
Thunder Bay	\$772	\$818	\$858	\$888	\$917	+2.3%
Toronto	\$1,149	\$1,183	\$1,213	\$1,251	\$1,288	+3.4%
Windsor	\$753	\$778	\$788	\$798	\$824	+2.6%
Ontario Average	\$1,002	\$1,033	\$1,059	\$1,086	\$1,121	+3.1%
Ontario Rent Guideline	+0.7%	+3.1%	+2.5%	+0.8%	1.6%	



FRPO'S 2015 MAC AWARDS

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FRPO 2015 MAC AWARDS PUMP UP THE VOLUME

On December 3, 2015, FRPO held its 15th annual awards gala in Toronto. FRPO's MAC (Marketing, Achievement and Construction) Awards recognize success and quality in Ontario's rental housing sector.

FRPO's awards gala continues to grow, with a record attendance of 1,000 guests, and 140 award submissions.

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AWARD PRESENTERS INCLUDED:

Paula Gasparro, CMHC
Greg Stokes, Rogers Communications
Don Neufeld, Coinamatic Canada Inc
Frank Evangelou, Ace Group of Companies
Scott Beneteau, Enercare
Peter Altobelli, Yardi Canada Ltd
Jackie Caille, Union Gas
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Recognizing Rental Housing Excellence

Lifetime Achievement Award

Roger & Alan Greenberg



Alan Greenberg and Roger Greenberg

Lifetime Achievement Award

ROGER AND ALAN GREENBERG (MINTO)

Roger and Alan Greenberg were recognized for their life-long efforts in building Minto into one of the most highly respected housing providers in Canada, with over 50,000 homes built, over 10,000 rental units owned and managed, plus 13,000 homes managed for third-parties. Founded in 1955, Minto is an award-winning integrated real estate developer, owner, asset and property manager of places to live, work and play. Both Roger and Alan have made significant contributions to advocacy efforts on behalf of the housing industry, enhancement of the overall standard for quality in multi-residential housing, as well as to philanthropy and community service to worthy causes in Ontario.



Katrina May and Mike Capone

Property Management Advertising Excellence - Single Campaign

HOLLYBURN PROPERTIES MY HOLLYBURN DREAM VACATION CAMPAIGN

This award recognizes a residential rental organization that has demonstrated clarity, innovation and excellence in marketing their advertising campaigns for rental housing. Entries were judged on overall concept, creativity, layout, copy or script, results and execution, as well as their promotion of the rental living lifestyle.

Finalists: Metcap Living Management Inc.
Ferguslea Properties Ltd.



Todd Nishimura, Sabrina Odamtten, Angela Thomaidis, and Michael Vezina

Best Property Management Website

VERTICA RESIDENT SERVICES – www.vertica.ca

Vertica's website best achieved a design that is both usable and tenant-friendly, positively conveying the company's brand and image, while being technically sound, easy to navigate and visually coherent.

Finalists: Greenwin Inc.
MetCap Living Management Inc.



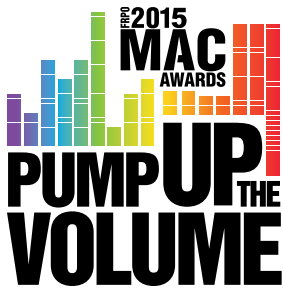
David Binder and Steve Carboni

Best Curb Appeal

GREENWIN INC./HANARD INVESTMENTS LIMITED 15 & 25 CANYON AVE, TORONTO

The Curb Appeal award recognizes exterior property improvements, gardens, landscaping, structural design, functionality and aesthetics of the entrance to the building. The winner must demonstrate evident success in enhancing the appearance and design of the building and grounds, while creating a strong favourable impression upon approach.

Finalists: Metcap Living Management Ltd.
Starlight Investments Ltd.



Recognizing Rental Housing Excellence



Georgeta Morar

Lobby Renovation of the Year

CAPREIT – 44 STUBBS DRIVE, TORONTO

CAPREIT was recognized for achieving excellence in renovating the interior of an existing lobby. The overall interior improvement, a modern and functional design, creative and efficient use of space and improved functionality of the floor plan made this a winning submission.

Finalists: Metcap Living Management Ltd.
Ferguslea Properties Ltd.



Paul Koutoulas, Nick Vito, Peter Ruff, Gloria Salomon, and Bryan Levy

Best Suite Renovation under \$10,000

PRESTON APARTMENTS – 90 EASTDALE AVENUE, TORONTO

Preston was recognized for excellence in renovating existing rental units at 90 Tyndall Ave. Improvements and upgrades to floors and appliances enhanced the overall interior appeal and attractiveness. Unique design, creative and efficient use of space improved functionality and appearance of the unit.

Finalists: Metcap Living Management Ltd.
Medallion



Betty Giaschi and Eric Khan

Best Suite Renovation over \$10,000

REALSTAR – 57 WIDDICOMBE HILL BLVD, TORONTO

Vertica was recognized for excellence in renovating existing rental units. Improvements and upgrades to floors and appliances enhanced the overall interior appeal and attractiveness. Unique design, creative and efficient use of space improved functionality and appearance of the unit.

Finalists: Starlight Investments Ltd.
Hollyburn Properties



Susan Morasse, Brian Athey, and
Alexandra Koumoudouros

Rental Development of the Year

MORGUARD CORPORATION 310 & 320 TWEEDSMUIR AVE, TORONTO

The Heathview is located at 310 & 320 Tweedsmuir Avenue in the mature Forest Hill Village neighbourhood near Spadina Rd. and St. Clair Ave. West. The twin tower development is the first new purpose-built high-rise rental building in this community in forty years. The Heathview's bold architecture and sensitive urban design blends seamlessly with the fabric and character of the community.

Finalists: KG Group
Concert Realty Services Ltd.

Recognizing Rental Housing Excellence



Bert Steenburgh and Andrew Lowe

Residential Amenities Award of Excellence

OXFORD PROPERTIES – 1101 BAY STREET, TORONTO

This new award recognizes a residential rental company that has demonstrated excellence in providing, creating or improving common area and amenities for their tenants. This can include improvements to existing common areas (excludes lobby) or creation of new amenities or common areas. Examples include (but not limited to) pool upgrades, laundry room renovations, addition of fitness facilities or media rooms, rental offices, rooftop patio, etc. Nominations were judged on sense of community, design and value provided to tenants.

Finalists: Metcap Living Management Ltd.
Starlight Investments Ltd.



Debra McGrath and Colin Mochrie



Back row (L-R): Andy Coutts, Maria Duckett, Matt Organ, Bethany Curtis, Danny Cobban
Front row (L-R): Andrea Rocheleau, Sarah Rodrigues, Roy Jason Ashdown, Susan Gallotti, BJ Santavy

Environmental Award of Excellence

SKYLINE GROUP OF COMPANIES

Skyline was recognized for demonstrating excellence in environmental practices. This includes energy conservation, water conservation, recycling and educating staff and residents about environmentally conscious practices. Starlight achieved a high quality level of environmental accomplishments when compared to an average rental housing provider in the province.

Finalists: Starlight Investments Ltd.
 Hollyburn Properties Ltd.



Magda Piwin and Bert Steenburg

Certified Rental Building Member of the Year (Under 15 buildings)

OXFORD RESIDENTIAL

This new award recognizes a residential rental company, property manager and/or owner who best demonstrates commitment to the Certified Rental Building ("CRB") program's values – "ongoing commitment to quality of apartment living"; "ongoing commitment to quality service"; and, "working with residents to create greener apartment communities." Entries are judged on a demonstrated commitment to achieving and/or exceeding the CRB Standards of Practice (SOP), engagement of staff, and creating CRB resident awareness.

Finalists: Melchoir Management
 Hollyburn Properties Ltd.



Back row (L-R): Andy Coutts, Maria Duckett, Roy Jason Ashdown, Matt Organ, Sarah Rodrigues, Danny Cobban
Front row (L-R): Bethany Curtis, Andrea Rocheleau, BJ Santavy, Susan Gallotti

Outstanding Community Service

SKYLINE GROUP OF COMPANIES

Skyline went above and beyond to give back to their local communities. This company has become involved in their community through volunteer activities, contributions to a charity or charities, and other service projects. Nominees were judged on their overall contribution (funds raised, people helped, volunteerism, etc.) to their community service project and/or initiative, and the positive impact (both short-term and long-term) that their efforts have made toward their community service project(s).

Finalists: Minto Properties Inc.
 Greenwin Inc.

Recognizing Rental Housing Excellence



Lillian Abulatifeh

Leasing Professional of the Year

LILLIAN ABULATIFEH (CAPREIT)

This award recognizes an individual employee nominated for an outstanding job in leasing and tenant screening. Lillian demonstrated strong performance with a high closing ratio, low tenant turnover and high occupancy rates. In less than a year, Jennifer took over a challenging portfolio with 40% vacancy to a now vibrant, fully-occupied community of satisfied tenants.

Finalists: Ginny Leddy (Park Property Management Inc.)
Susan Roy (Minto Properties Inc.)



Andrea Rocheleau

Property Manager of the Year

ANDREA ROCHELEAU (SKYLINE GROUP OF COMPANIES)

Andrea was awarded for excellence and professionalism in property management. She excelled at effectively managing her portfolio, staff and budgets while ensuring a high level of resident satisfaction. Andrea's ability to significantly increase revenue and deal with crisis situations make her a leader in the property management category.

Finalists: Josée Di Corpo (M&R Property Management)
Wendy Hope (Minto Properties Inc.)



Helen Howard

Resident Manager of the Year

HELEN HOWARD (SKYLINE GROUP OF COMPANIES)

Helen was recognized for her dedication to on-site building management. Consideration was given to challenges faced in the past year, work accomplishments for the year, and the standard of service provided. Extra weight was given for the effective management of on-site daily activities, building and maintaining positive professional relationships with tenants, and providing a clean and organized environment in which tenants can call home.

Finalists: Ponnampalam (Nathan) Ganeshanathan (CAPREIT)
Huong Tran (Greenwin Inc.)



Back row (L-R): Tim Stead, Paper Rockets; Cathie Wilson, M&R; Kerry Fordham, M&R; Rafael Tablada, M&R; Gerald O'Grady, M&R
Front row (L-R): Josée Di Corpo, M&R; Randy Daiter, M&R; Lynette Tavares, M&R

Customer Service Award of Excellence

M&R PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

This award recognizes high standards of resident care in rental housing. From high maintenance standards, to building a community atmosphere, to staff courtesy, M&R demonstrated leadership in providing quality services to tenants, starting right from the application process to throughout their tenure, resulting in exceptional levels of resident satisfaction and retention.

Finalists: Realstar
 Skyline Group of Companies



Scott Anderson, President & CEO



for
RENT

APARTMENT MARKETING AND LEASING: "10 REASONS IT'S BETTER TO BE A RENTER"

Trying to close that leasing decision with a prospective tenant who is still on the fence about renting? Providing them with this information may help seal the deal...

BY NICCOLE SCHRECK

For decades, it was drilled into the heads of many people that renting makes you a second-class citizen. You only rent temporarily until you can move up in the world and achieve the dream of homeownership — but those days may be behind us.

About three in five adults believe renters can be just as successful as homeowners, and more than half believe buying a home has become less appealing in recent years, according to a 2013 survey of more than 1,400 people by research firm Hart Research Associates.

While owning a home may be an aspiration for many North Americans, it's often just less expensive and more convenient to be a renter. Here are 10 examples:

1. You spend less on utilities. You still need to pay for utilities when you rent, but chances are, your utility bills would be higher if you owned a home. First, a larger space uses more energy, so you can expect your heating and cooling costs to increase. You may also have to pay for watering your yard, upkeep of a pool or utility bills that were previously included in your rent, such

as water, trash or association fees, if you live in a subdivision or condominium.

2. You're not responsible for maintenance or repairs. Homeowners are responsible for all repairs — maintenance and renovation — and depending on what needs to be fixed, these out-of-pocket costs can be astronomical. As a renter, you can leave the maintenance and repairs, as well as the associated financial responsibility, to your housing provider.

3. Property taxes are included in your rent. Homeowners are required to pay property taxes, which can be passed by cities and school districts, so exactly how much you would pay depends on where you live. Regardless of the amount, that's a direct expense renters avoid completely because it is almost always included in their rent.

4. You're likely to have less debt. Between student loans, credit cards and car loans, many North Americans are already in debt before introducing a mortgage to the mix. In fact, Debt.org reports that on average, each household carries more than \$15,000 in credit card debt. On top of that, NerdWallet

reports that the average household has more than \$154,000 in mortgage debt. Take a house out of the equation, and you don't have to worry about that mortgage debt.

5. Renters insurance is less expensive than homeowners insurance. According to the Insurance Information Institute, the average annual home insurance premium ranges from about \$600 to \$2,000. On the other hand, the institute says a renter's insurance policy averages only \$187 per year.

6. You have more freedom and mobility. Got a job offer in a new city? Just need a change of scenery? Renting gives you that flexibility. Americans tend to be mobile, and unless home prices are rising steeply, it usually doesn't make financial sense to sell a home a few years after buying it. As a renter, packing up and moving is a much easier process.

7. You can live in a better neighbourhood. Perhaps you can't afford to own a home in your dream neighbourhood — the one with



the best restaurants or the one with the best school district — but it may be attainable if you rent. If living in a certain neighbourhood suits your lifestyle, moving away just so you can afford to purchase a home may leave you feeling unsatisfied on a day-to-day basis. It could also increase your commuting costs.

8. You'll be more financially stable. While purchasing property can be an investment and home prices can appreciate, a mortgage can also dig you into a deep hole. The real estate market is unpredictable, and there are no guarantees. If you put all your savings into purchasing a home, you could be jeopardizing your long-term financial needs — especially if you're on a tight budget to pay your mortgage.

9. You can enjoy modern amenities and luxuries. When you purchase a home, you may not be able to afford a pool in the backyard or replace those old kitchen appliances. Depending on the apartment complex, renters can enjoy amenities that would be huge expenses to a homeowner — like a brand new carpet, a fitness centre or central air.

10. It's easier to redecorate. Renting your home means you can't make any major changes — like painting or knocking down walls — but it also means you can change your décor more often. With removable wallpaper and wall decals, you can easily update the look of your home as styles change. While owning a home means you can paint and remodel, you're in for a lot of time and redecorating effort if you outgrow that red accent wall. 🏠

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THE CUSTOMER SERVICE ASPECTS OF UTILITY METERING

BY PETER MILLS, WYSE METER SOLUTIONS INC.

An owner or manager choosing a utility metering provider is wise to remember this: your provider will be in direct contact with your residents through its monthly billing and customer service channels – for many years to come. Billing errors and frustrating phone calls can snowball into disgruntled residents and become a burden on your staff, and although unfair, it can ultimately reflect poorly on building management. Although utility metering services vary across the industry, there are client-focused providers who are suitably equipped to satisfy both your needs and the needs of your bill-paying residents.

SEVEN ASPECTS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE:

1. Transparent and Accurate Billing

The most effective strategy to generate resident satisfaction is simple: deliver accurate, on-time bills on a monthly basis.

Recommendation:

- Request service level commitments in your utility metering contracts.

2. Call Centre for Residents

Ontario is a multicultural, multilingual province. Residents need responsive customer service in languages they can understand, at convenient times.

Recommendations:

- Consider the languages offered and hours of operation of the call centre.
- Call wait times are another important benchmark. If a resident is left waiting in a prolonged queue, they may abandon the call and seek out your staff instead.

- Assess the quality of training given to call centre staff. Are they knowledgeable about Ontario's rate regulations? Are they integrated with the billing department and decision makers?

3. Resources for Residents

Residents should have access to self-monitoring tools and resources that are easy-to-use, to effectively manage their consumption.

Recommendations:

- A user-friendly web portal can allow residents to answer their own questions (i.e. see their consumption and billing history).
- Customer support and reference materials should be available for residents who want to reduce their consumption.
- Ask your provider about communications and assistance for residents regarding the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) and various other government programs.

4. Resources for Clients

Busy owners and managers need a provider who is invested in a long-term relationship and can deliver market knowledge and expertise.

Recommendations:

- Ensure you have access to your provider's executive team.
- Your account manager should be knowledgeable of the respective Local Distribution Company rate structures and consumption patterns for your type of properties.
- A robust web portal is a must, providing timely consumption data and reporting across your building portfolio.
- Evaluate the provider's options for bulk bill payment and reconciliation, a feature many building owners highly recommend.

5. Training for Client Front Line Staff

Your front line staff requires training on metering, billing and the web portal, so they can effectively interact with your residents.

Recommendations:

- Your provider should educate your staff to be knowledgeable about utility metering, to understand their role, and to properly guide residents through the enrolment process and the use of the web portal.
- Site staff should not play the role of intermediary for residents' billing issues or questions. These matters should be referred directly to the metering company for resolution. Every effort should be made to protect your staff's time.

6. Enrolment Process

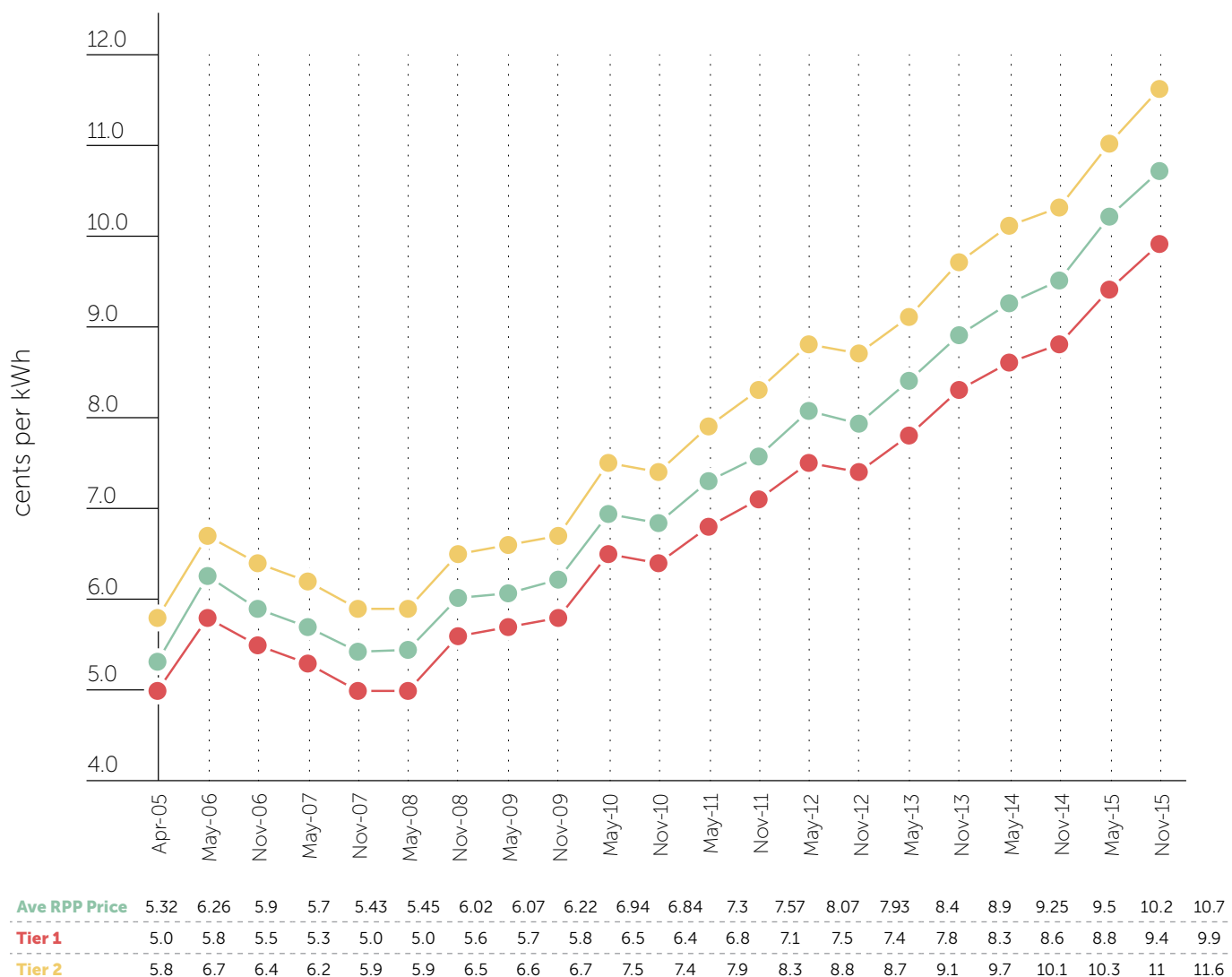
Proper enrolment is key to a successful metering program – process flaws can lead to an administrative nightmare of missed enrolments and lost revenue. It costs on average \$50 per month, per suite for a missed enrolment.

Recommendations:

- Consider a forward-thinking provider that offers full integration between your property management software and their billing platform. By automating enrolment, you'll minimize the administrative errors and headaches associated with 'back billing.'
- If you opt for a manual enrolment process, confirm that the provider will audit monthly rent rolls. Establish a routine process that is straightforward and easy to accommodate new resident and move out information.

7. Sitting Tenant Conversion Program

It is essential to have a metering partner who can add value through new opportunities.



Graph: Historical Tiered RPP Prices in Ontario
Source: Ontario Energy Board "Historical Electricity Prices"

There is a strong economic case for owners to convert sitting tenants into utility bill-payers. Ontario electricity rates have doubled in the last 10 years and the 10% Ontario Clean Energy Benefit credit has expired. The introduction of the Ontario Electricity Support Program provides about 50% of tenants in Ontario with a substantial financial benefit to participate in a conversion program (i.e. only electricity bill-payers are OESP eligible).

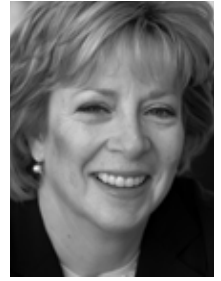
Implementing a conversion program requires a high level of customer service from a skilled provider. It will involve offering regulated rent reductions to tenants, so they immediately begin saving when they become bill-payers. You'll save significantly on electricity costs, even after accounting for the rent reductions.

Recommendations:

- As an owner, you'll need to partner with a metering company who can assist you with completing an accurate financial evaluation, as bulk bills lack sufficient data or consumption breakdown. A competent provider will be able to draw upon its internal library of utility consumption profiles and data for similar buildings, which are fundamental economic drivers to demonstrate the win-win conversion benefits for both owners and tenants.
- A full-scale, coordinated communications campaign is essential to achieving conversion program success. Ask your provider to incorporate the following key elements:

- Prepare convenient, basic communications packages for tenants.
- Host information seminars and door-to-door campaigns.
- Promote through onsite posters in common areas etc.
- Present the financial implications for tenants. For each suite, calculate the rent reduction (regulated formula), estimated electricity usage, estimated on-bill credits and financial savings.
- Detail the program support available (i.e. OESP) and next steps forward. 🏠

Further information is available directly from utility metering providers. Peter Mills, CEO of Wyse Meter Solutions Inc. prepared this article. Mr. Mills can be reached at 1.800.672.1134



WHY IT PAYS TO EMBRACE PETS IN RENTAL COMMUNITIES

BY SHERYL EREMBERG

For property management companies, it is no longer enough to just allow pets in their buildings. Offering amenities for pet owners is growing in popularity and importance, so much so that pet owners may even be asking rental agents questions about how pet-friendly their buildings actually are.

As tenant demographics continue to evolve, being pet-friendly will become even more important in meeting the needs of prospective tenants. Millennials (aged 18-34) now make up the vast majority of tenants in the urban core. In fact, they now own more pets than any other demographic group—even more than Boomers, the group you might think would own the most pets. Like all pet owners, Millennials also tend to view their pets as part of their family, and don't think twice about spending a lot on their pets.

There are potential cost benefits to keeping both owners and their pets happy. For one thing, research shows that tenants with pets tend to stay longer in their apartments. Tenants with pets tend to require less attention from building staff, and that can mean less staff turnover and the accompanying training and recruitment costs.

But most importantly, being pet-friendly means you will not be turning away pet owners who are looking for amenities for their pets. In other words, you will have a larger tenant pool to draw from. This is especially important as new rental developments and new condos, along with, of course current buildings, continue to offer more pet-friendly amenities.

SO WHAT CAN BE OFFERED TO ATTRACT MORE PET OWNERS?

One housing provider, Park Property Management, has included a dog wash station on the ground floor of its new purpose-built rental at 66 Isabella Street in Toronto. "We recognized that a vast majority of residents in the existing downtown portfolio had a dog," said Margaret Herd, Senior Vice-President Residential at Park Property Management, "and we knew we had to include it as an amenity in our new building."

At its mid-town location, 88 Erskine Avenue, Greenwin Inc. included a Pooch Party in its roster of resident events. Residents and their furry friends were invited to participate in races, an agility course and look-alike contests. Local pet stores and a dog walker sponsored the contests. "It was the second most popular event," reported Property Manager Helene Tissplat. "The Dog Days of Summer" has been an annual event at 59 Isabella Street in Toronto for tenants and



St. Laurent on the Parc hosts a "Pet of the Month" contest for tenants

their dogs. Senior Manager Lorelei Holden organized the first one in 2012 with a wading pool for the dogs and nibbles for the humans.

Shiplake Properties, also in mid-town Toronto, recently hired pet photographer John Lawson to take holiday portraits of residents' pets at 45 Dunfield Avenue. "All 30 sessions filled up within a few days," reported General Manager Jay Cohen. "Residents were thrilled with the concept. We got a lot of positive feedback."

Making pets feel welcome in rental communities can be as simple as having a jar of treats in the Management office or at the Concierge desk, or using an ice-melt product instead of rock salt on your pathways to reduce the harm to paws in winter. It will make your property stand out from the competition and widen your potential tenant base. ■

Sheryl Erenberg is president of Sheryl Erenberg and Associates. Her marketing consulting firm has advised hundreds of developers and housing providers over the past three decades. The company specializes in repositioning stigmatized properties and marketing under-performing communities. sherylerenberg.com



Greenwin's 88 Erskine Ave hosts regular "Pooch Parties"

CANADA'S ONLY RENTAL BUILDING QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM EXTENDS ITS REACH TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

FRPO's CRB program now available to B.C. rental-housing consumers through participating LandlordBC apartment owners and property managers



BY TED WHITEHEAD

On November 26, 2015 the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario (FRPO) marked another milestone with its Certified Rental Building program (CRBP) by officially launching it to B.C. rental-housing consumers through LandlordBC, the industry association representing rental housing owners and property managers in British Columbia.

"We are absolutely delighted to be extending the CRB quality-assurance program to B.C. rental-housing consumers through our long-standing relationship with LandlordBC, stated Scott Andison, FRPO's President & CEO. "We are very pleased to see that CRBP has been endorsed by B.C. provincial and municipal government stakeholders and, tenant advocates, who already see the inherent value it will provide to B.C. renters."

The program offers a quality-assurance approach to the B.C. rental marketplace, making it easier for tenants to recognize high quality buildings and owners and property managers. The certification program provides

owners and property managers with a consistent set of standards and best practices that represent good value and well-managed properties for BC consumers.

"We see the CRB program as a key deliverable in our goal to elevate rental-building standards to make rental housing better in the province of B.C. for everyone, as well as increase the professionalism within the rental industry. We are very proud to be only the second jurisdiction in North America to launch a program of this type, and thank our good friends at FRPO for their tremendous support and partnership," said David Hutniak, President & CEO of LandlordBC.

The program's objectives are:

- To approve and classify multi-residential apartment buildings, across the British Columbia marketplace, that meet a defined set of industry quality assurance standards for rental housing consumers;
- To make it easy for tenants, and potential rental housing consumers, to recognize well-run, well-managed multi-residential apartment buildings; and

- To provide B.C. rental housing consumers with a quality assurance alternative when selecting their apartment home.

"This expansion of the CRBP to British Columbia speaks to the positive quality-assurance alternative that it offers to Canadian consumers in finding an apartment home", adds Ted Whitehead, FRPO's Director of Certification, "We fully expect that B.C. rental-housing consumers will embrace the newly-launched B.C. program in the same positive manner as Ontario renters have."

The CRBP residential rental housing initiative is the first quality-assurance program of its kind in North America, specifically designed for tenants (consumers). Since the program's inaugural launch June 2008, FRPO's members have enrolled in over 106,000 suites, in 1,480 buildings across Ontario. At the end of June, over 985 multi-residential apartment buildings have received official certification status across Ontario. ■■



THE NEW **LIBERAL** GOVERNMENT'S IMPACT ON HOUSING PROVIDERS

BY JOHN DICKIE, CFAA PRESIDENT

Under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the new Liberal Government has realigned various government functions, which has resulted in new names for several federal cabinet posts. This article addresses the policy areas that have an impact on housing providers. Within each area, the article addresses the main Liberal campaign promises, and the cabinet ministers who are charged with implementing those promises.

TAXATION

As promised during the election campaign, the Liberals moved quickly to introduce a reduction to the tax rate for the middle income bracket and an increase to the tax rate on annual incomes above \$200,000. Many housing providers have modest annual incomes and will benefit from those changes. However, housing providers may be hurt when they sell a property since the recaptured CCA and the taxable portion of the capital gain are generally brought into income in one year.

The Liberals also promised to remove the GST on new capital investments in rental

housing. Exactly what repair or renovation work will qualify are still open questions, to be addressed by Finance Minister Bill Morneau. He will also deal with the question of the qualifications for income to be considered active business income, when the Finance officials report on the results of their consultation, which was launched under the former government. Those tax questions are of great importance to housing providers, FRPO and CFAA.

HOUSING POLICY & SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME TENANTS

The Liberals promised a National Housing Strategy, with renewed federal involvement in housing programs. The Liberals will likely provide more money for social housing repairs and construction, as well as for homelessness measures.

Two ministers will play key roles in developing the new government's housing policies.

Jean-Yves Duclos, is the new Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. He is to design and implement the Canada Child Benefit, to improve incomes for low-income seniors and to lead the development



SAVE THE DATE

Save the date for CFAA Rental Housing Conference 2016 in Toronto from Tuesday, June 7, to Thursday, June 9. See www.cfaa-fcapi.org for more details.

of a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy. He is also to develop a strategy to re-establish the federal government's role in supporting affordable housing, as well as many other responsibilities.

Amarjeet Sohi is the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities. Minister Sohi's mandate includes developing a 10-year plan to deliver significant new infrastructure funding with a focus on investing in social infrastructure, including affordable housing; and working with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to create a housing strategy to re-establish the federal government's role in supporting affordable housing.

CFAA has already begun advocating for investments to include substantial funding for housing allowances, like the proposed Housing Benefit for Ontario advocated by FRPO and CFAA. How the government allocates money between supporting housing benefits and funding new social housing construction may have substantial impacts on the demand

for and supply of private rental housing, which can affect vacancies and rent levels significantly.

ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Several years ago, the officials in the Natural Resources Department brought forward a proposal for rules to require high-efficiency furnace and boiler replacements. The cost would have been prohibitive for many housing providers. After receiving CFAA's input, the Conservative government rejected those proposals.

The new Minister of Natural Resources is Jim Carr, the MP for Winnipeg South Centre. CFAA will be in contact with Minister Carr and his political staff to seek to ward off any similar regulations.

However, the Liberals advocate policies and regulations that aim to reduce pollution and greenhouse gases. The Liberals have promised to set national carbon emissions pricing, and work with the provinces to establish carbon

reduction goals. Those issues are largely in the hands of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, the MP for Ottawa-Centre.

CONCLUSION

CFAA works to influence politicians, political staff and officials, so that housing providers' interests are protected. That often means coordinating our advocacy with provincial and regional apartment associations, including FRPO. Both CFAA and FRPO often advocate for measures which help tenants as well as housing providers, since the interests of housing providers and tenants are often aligned. 🏠

FRPO is a member of the Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations, the sole national organization representing the interests of Canada's \$480 billion dollar private rental housing industry, which provides homes for more than eight million Canadians. For more information about CFAA, please visit www.cfaa-fcapi.org

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ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA) **THE INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATION (IASR)**

Moving forward towards accessibility compliance

BY DEBORAH COHEN, PSN SOLUTIONS NETWORK CORP.



ARE YOU A PROPERTY MANAGER WITH LESS THAN 50 EMPLOYEES?

If you are, did you know that January 1, 2016 marks the deadline for complying with the employee training requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and its Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)? If you are a property manager with 50 or more employees you were to have complied with these training requirements by January 1, 2015.

ARE YOU IN COMPLIANCE?

Back in 2011 and 2012, property managers and housing providers responded to the mandatory legislative requirements of the AODA and its Customer Service Standard by developing policies and providing training to property management staff, across Ontario, on how to effectively provide service to persons with disabilities. These training requirements applied to all employees, contractors and volunteers who interact and/or communicate with the public on the organization's behalf, as well as any individuals involved in developing organizational policies.

Several thousand staff from a host of property management companies across the Province took advantage of the FRPO/CRBP sponsored AODA - Customer Service Standard training, as an effective strategy to help meet their legal training requirements.

Subsequently, many property managers have incorporated mandatory Customer Service Standard training into their onboarding processes, thereby ensuring compliance with the on-going training requirements of the Customer Service Standard. This has been done either through e-learning formats such as, the online course offered through the

Certified Rental Building Program or by other housing provider and property management defined mechanisms.

But meeting the legislative requirements of the AODA does not stop with the Customer Service Standard.

In 2012, a new regulation under the AODA became law: the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

While the focus of the AODA Customer Service Standard was on how service is provided to persons with disabilities and identifying and removing barriers that prevent access to service, the IASR has a broader scope. The IASR addresses how to provide information and communicate with persons with disabilities, as well as how accessibility can be incorporated into employment practices, the design of public spaces and transportation services. The goal is to enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities, may it be tenants, prospective residents, staff or others.

Under the IASR, housing providers and property managers once again have a host of policy-related and training requirements with the requirements and timeframes for compliance varying depending upon the size of the organization.

Under the IASR, a large organization is defined as having 50 employees or more. A small organization has less than 50 employees. Large organizations have a wider range of requirements including the development of a statement of commitment, a range organizational and standard specific policies, and the development of a multi-year accessibility plan, all of which are to be documented and made available to staff and the public, in accessible formats upon request. Most of these requirements should already be in place or have compliance deadlines of January 1, 2016.

AODA ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS COMPLIANCE GUIDES

With the co-operation of FRPO, the Centre for Equality and Rights in Accommodation has produced a toolkit and guide for helping rental housing providers comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). These resources are available on FRPO's Website: <https://www.frpo.org/frpo-advocacy/advocacy-resources-and-tools> (www.frpo.org under the Advocacy & Resources Section)

The Toolkit is designed to assist housing providers in implementing the AODA and its accessibility standards. It should be read in conjunction with the AODA, its regulations and the accompanying resource guide. The Guide is designed to provide you with information about the law and provide you with practical solutions to the accessibility challenges housing providers face.

The Toolkit will provide templates for policies and plans. The Guide contains important information on compliance deadlines.


Small organizations, as defined by the IASR, have fewer organizational and standard specific policy requirements, and different compliance deadlines, some of which have already passed, others of which are fast approaching.

While the timeframe and some of the requirements for compliance are different between large and small organizations, a common element and requirement under the IASR is in fact the training requirement. Once again both large and small organizations are required to ensure training is received by all employees and volunteers (existing, and as new employees/volunteers join your organization), anyone who is involved in developing your organization's policies, as well as anyone who provides goods, services or facilities on your behalf. This would also include your contractors. Further, the content of the training is the same no matter if the organization is large or small.

The content of the training that needs to be provided is outlined in the regulation and

includes: information on the requirements of the IASR as it relates to the duties of the employee's job, as well as training on the Ontario Human Rights Code, as it relates to people with disabilities.

Do you want more information about your requirements under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act IASR and/or the Customer Service Standards? Looking for solutions to help meet your training requirements? If so, FRPO/CRBP can help.

FRPO/CRBP is examining offering a webinar in 2016 to help clarify property managers' responsibilities and requirements. Further, the Certified Rental Building Program will have an online course available to meet IASR staff training requirements. This is in addition to an online course that will help your new employees gain required training on both the Customer Service Standard and IASR. 

Deborah Cohen, and her company PSN Solutions Network Corp. is a valued partner of the FRPO's CRB program, and is considered an industry expert on Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and how it relates to Ontario's Multi-Residential Industry. If your organization requires information on the AODA act and understanding its requirements please contact her at dcohen@psncorp.com or 416-855-7500

MAKING THE MOVE

You have a legal requirement to meet your obligations under the AODA and to continue moving towards accessibility.

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BY JENN POIRIER; ASSOCIUM ADVANTAGE

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OLDER RENTER DEMOGRAPHIC IS CONTENT *NOT TO OWN*

A recent consumer survey of Canadian attitudes about mortgage debt offers insight on tenants' rationale for staying out of the home ownership market. While younger respondents most often cite financial reasons, an older renter demographic indicates it is more of a lifestyle choice.

The survey, conducted by Mortgage Professionals Canada as part of its annual report on the residential mortgage market, gave participants flexibility to check one or several items on a list of 10 reasons for not owning a home, along with an "other" option. Respondents aged 55 or older typically chose one or two of the declarations, heavily favouring: "Renting is a better option for me" (48%); "I am comfortable in my current situation" (34%); and "I am not interested in owning a home" (23%).

Not surprisingly, only 4% of renters aged 55+ report they need more time to save for a down payment, whereas that is the most common reason (46%) for aspiring homeowners aged 18 to 34. These Generation Y respondents are also more

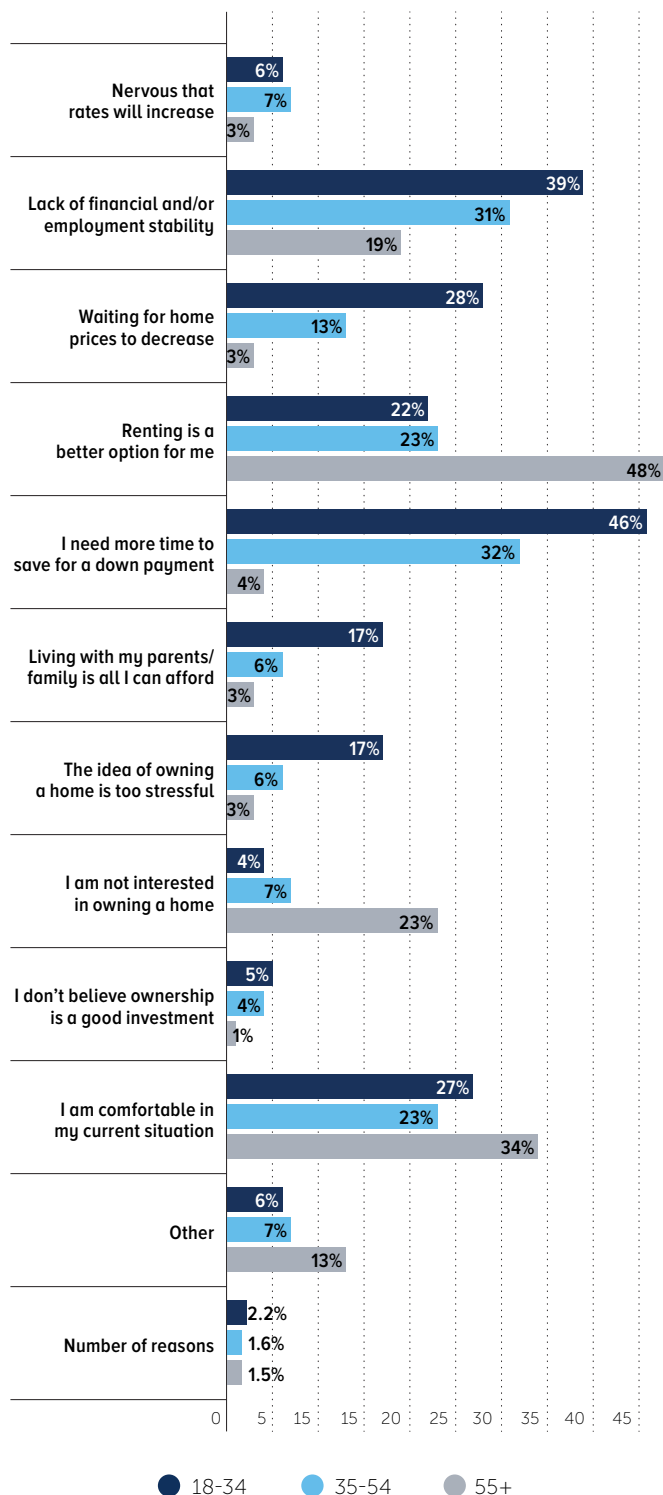
apt to consider the concept of homeownership "too stressful" (17%), and a large portion (28%) are waiting for house prices to decline — a likelihood that only 3% of respondents aged 55+ entertained.

Respondents aged 34 to 54 are the least likely to express contentment with their renter status (23%). Financial reasons are their most common impediment to ownership with 32% indicating they need more time to save for a down payment and 31% claiming lack of financial and/or employment stability.

The spectre of future increases in interest rates creates relatively little nervousness, with only 6% of all respondents calling it a reason for not owning. A large majority of respondents from all age groups also see housing as good place to put their money.

Indeed, although the older renter demographic was most likely to reject home ownership, only 1% of respondents in the 55+ cohort maintain it is not a good investment — perhaps suggesting that they have previously been homeowners. ■■

REASONS FOR NOT OWNING A HOME, BY AGE GROUP



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LANDLORD TENANT BOARD UPDATE

Updates to LTB Forms and e-File

FORMS


The LTB is releasing updated versions of forms, notices and the accompanying instructions. The majority of the updates are formatting changes to make the forms more accessible and readable, and to update the website address for the SJTO and LTB websites. A number of the changes were made as a result of suggestions by the general public and LTB Members and staff.

The updated forms were made available on the website on November 30, 2015. The Board encourages you to use the new forms immediately, for those using the older versions, as of May 1, 2016 only the new forms will be accepted.

E-FILE

Also effective November 30, the Board will be implementing a streamlined process for incomplete e-Filed applications.

e-File allows clients to file applications online and to submit any mandatory prescribed documents, such as notices of termination, or Certificates of Service, either online at the time of filing, or no later than five days after the filing date. If an applicant does not submit the prescribed documents by the deadline, the application is considered incomplete and the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) will dispose of it without holding a hearing.

e-File already includes multiple notices advising users of the deadline and that the application will not be considered complete and accepted for hearing unless this is done. 



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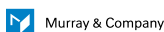
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