

# HOUSING SEARCH



FCJ Refugee Centre  
*Walking with Uprooted People*

## CONTENT

- Types of Housing
- Sharing a Budget
- Where and How to search
- Viewing the apartment
- Rental applications
- Signing the rental contract
- Moving supports
- Your rights and responsibilities
- Available support.

# HOUSING NEEDS FOR IMMIGRANTS

 The Law  
Foundation  
of Ontario



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE  
*Walking with uprooted people*





**FCJ** | **Refugee Centre**  
Walking with uprooted people

*FCJ Refugee Centre serves refugees and others at risk due to their immigration status, and welcomes anyone asking for advice, counsel and support.*



**Settlement Program**

**Immigration Help &  
Refugee Protection**

**Anti- Human Trafficking Program**

**Popular Education**

**Networking**

[www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org)

## WHO WE ARE...

**Non-profit organization which serves refugees and others at risk due to their immigration status...**





## WHO WE SERVE...

**We welcome anyone asking for advice, counsel and support regarding these issues**



**More than 5,000 people contact the Centre every year seeking assistance From around the world.**

*...Over the past years we have served people from more than 110 countries!*



# Housing Search

- Types of Housing
- Sharing a Budget
- Where and How to search
- Viewing the apartment
- Rental applications
- Signing the rental contract
- Moving supports
- Your rights and responsibilities
- Available support.



# When to start

- As refugee claimants in Toronto, the first two priorities for you and your family are immigration and finding permanent housing.
- Housing searches are challenging and can take time. So its important to start as soon as you are able to.
- When you are ready to start looking for an apartment, you should connect with housing worker for more information and support

# Types of Housing



- Rental rooms: single room or shared space(house or roaming building). This is a cheaper accommodation and as well the most affordable option for single adult on social assistance.
- Rental rooms, which are usually large homes divided into private room.
- Apartment: consists of bachelor unit/studio, 123 bedrooms
- Bachelor units made up of single room as a living area and bedroom.

# Housing Search



- Price: things affecting the price; size, location, distance to transit etc.
- It is important you set a budget before you start looking.
- Location: is important to think about cost and what you can afford. Some areas of Toronto are more expensive than others.
- School and services are available in different areas and can be transferred. It is important to be open to moving out of area you are living in now.
- Are you open to moving out of Toronto? Sometimes housing outside Toronto are more affordable.



# Setting a Budget

- How much money will you receive each month?
- How much do you need for:
  1. Food
  2. Transportation
  3. Phone
  4. Other expenses.
- How much you will have for rent?
- Always check the rent amount listen on advertisement as they often varied when you call the landlord.

# Setting a Budget



- Remember sometimes rent includes utilities and sometime things like water, electricity, internet, etc are extra costs you will need to cover. Always ask about this before applying for an apartment.



# Social Assistance allowance



## ➤ Shelter + Basic needs

- Single person: \$721/month
- Couple: \$1,118
- Single parent with 1 child: \$1,100/month
- Single parent with 2+ children: \$1270/month
- Couple with 1 child: \$1,286/month
- Couple with 2+ children: \$1,459/month



# Where and How to search?

- Ask your friends and relatives.
- Classified section of newspaper/online listings
- Go to areas you are interested in living and look for rental posted sign.

# Beware/Cautions in your search



- Be aware of false advertisements of apartment. Some listings online are not really available for rent.
- If someone is asking you for deposit money without offering you a lease of viewing, be cautious. This could be spam.
- Be cautious if you can only contact the person through email, you should be speaking on phone before going to see a place.
- Remember, most of apartment buildings in Toronto are managed by companies and therefore you should be able to contact them through supervisor.

# After search: what Next?



- When you have found a place that you are interested in, call the number listed and ask for an appointment to come and see the apartment.



## Viewing the Unit/apartment

- Be on time (look for directions ahead of time)
- Be polite and respectful- there are probably lot of people looking at the apartment. It helps to maintain good impression.
- Bring someone with you.
- Ask if you can take pictures.
- Ask to test doors, light switches, toilet flush, electrical outlet if they are working.
- Ask what is included in the rent and what are the extra cost if any.



# Applying for the unit

- If you find a place where you want to live you, you will need to fill out an application to show your interest.
- Every application is slightly different but they often are ask questions about:
  1. Your personal information (Name, family members
  2. Finances
  3. Work history in Canada.
  4. An it may require a deposit at the time of application.



# Required Documents

- Landlord may ask you to provide following documents:
  - ✓ ID (This might be a requirement but they are not allowed to ask about your immigration status)
  - ✓ Proof of income (OW statement or employment letter)
- You may be asked to provide a guarantor.
  - ✓ Someone who signs the lease with you to confirm rent payment will be made
- Landlords may ask you for other documents but you do not have to provide them. Such as your social insurance number (SIN), Bank Statements.



# Important

- Information a landlord CAN ask you:
  - Your income and if you are working
  - The number of people living in the unit and their names.
  - If you smoke or have animals.
  
- Information a landlord CANNOT ask you:
  - Your age
  - Your sexual orientation
  - Your immigration status
  - Your religion
  - Your health status (including pregnancy)



# Signing the Lease

- When landlord has approved your application you will need to sign a contract or lease.
  - Your agreement with the landlord that you will pay rent and utilities (if needed) on time and in a full amount.
- The lease should outline:
  - Monthly costs
  - Responsibilities of the tenant and landlord
  - Length of agreement
- Normally a lease runs for one year, but some contracts are month-to-month.
- If you are satisfied with the unit, you can stay past the one years and do not have to sign another lease.



# IMPORTANT

- Do not sign anything you do not understand
- Read the contract or have someone explain it to you so you understand
- Do not hesitate to ask questions
- Get a copy of the signed contract
- Always make sure to get rent receipts (proof that the landlord received your payment)



# After Lease signing

- Once you have signed a lease/contract/made an agreement to rent an apartment, you should inform your OW caseworker, request HSF, focus on moving arrangements, etc.
- A settlement organization may be able to schedule an appointment for you at the furniture bank, and give you an information on where to get affordable mattresses if you require furniture.



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# Housing Stabilization Fund (OW)

- Housing stabilization fund includes last month's rent, moving, rental arrears supports, etc
- The maximum annual HSF entitlement based on family size is:
  - Singles/Couples – \$1,600
  - Families with Dependent Adults – \$2,000
  - Families with Children – \$3,000
  - Temporary Care – \$560 per child (in temp care)



# Toronto Subsidized Housing

- You need to show your legal status in Canada for all household members. For the list of documents that you can provide are:
  - Permanent Resident Card;
  - Canadian Citizenship Certificate;
- Permanent Resident Document or documentation from Citizenship and Immigration Canada acknowledging application for permanent status in Canada i.e.: on-line application confirming application accepted and being processed;
- Landed Immigrant Status documents including date of landing;
- Immigration documents indicating Convention Refugee, Protected Person Status or Refugee Claimants such as acknowledgement of Convention Refugee Claim, Eligibility Certificate, Notice to Appear or Notice of



# How do I apply

If you are interested in applying for subsidized housing, where your rent will be based on 30% of your household income, you need to complete an application form.

A quick and easy way to apply is to complete an online application.

Or you can print the application form and submit it with the required documents to Housing Connections.

Or you can call or visit their office at 176 Elm St, Toronto



# Rights and Responsibilities

- As a tenant, you have both rights and responsibilities.
- You are responsible for:
  1. Paying your rent on time every month
  2. Keeping your unit clean and free of damage
  3. Keeping noise levels low to respect the other tenants in the building.
  4. Taking your garbage, compost, recycling outside or into a bin.



# Rights and Responsibilities

- Your landlord is responsible for:
  1. General repairs and maintenance of the building
  2. Repairing anything that came with the unit like appliances or plumbing (stove, fridge, toilet, sink...)
  3. Providing all utilities at all times including water, electricity and heat.
- Your landlord **CANNOT** enter your apartment without advance notice or without your permission.
- Your landlord **CAN** request deposits or fees for last month rent. Key replacement or cheques, that have not been approved by the bank.
- Tenant rights and landlord responsibilities may differ in certain circumstances such as when the landlord lives at the same address or you are sharing an apartment and only one person is named on the lease.



# Moving out

- You must give 60 days written notice if you are planning to move out.
- Your landlord must give you 60 days written notice if they are asking you to move out (there are some exceptions to this)



# Available Supports

- Sometimes tenants face challenges in applying for housing or as a tenant once they move in, if you are facing any issues; please ask for support...
- Who can help?
  - ✓ Settlement organizations
  - ✓ Centre for equality Rights in Accomodation
  - ✓ Landlord and Tenant Board
  - ✓ Community Legal Clinics/Housing help centres
  - ✓ Rent banks



# Some of the common websites for rentals

<http://www.viewit.ca/>

<https://www.padmapper.com/>

<https://www.torontorentals.com/>

**Bunz Home Zone**

<http://www.rentseeker.ca/>

<https://www.walkscore.com/>

<https://4rent.ca/>



# Housing and Housing related benefit

- Toronto Subsidized housing: application through housing connection
- Rent bank: application takes 5 business days to process. Eligibility criteria applies.
- Live in Toronto
- Pay market rent for a rental unit covered by the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA)
- Fall within the low-income household eligibility requirement
- Are not currently in receipt of social assistance such as Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)\*
- Can satisfy other Toronto Rent Bank Program requirements, as required.

\*Residents in receipt of social assistance should contact their [OW](#) or [ODSP](#) office as they may qualify for the Housing

Stabilization Fund



# Updates on Housing Law during Pandemic

- Rent freeze in 2021 by new provincial legislation
- The landlord and Tenant Board continue to hear eviction applications and issue orders, by the enforcement of eviction orders will be postponed for the duration of the emergency order, except in urgent situations such as illegal activity.
- The residential eviction is paused due to the provincial declaration of emergency. Enforcement of evictions has been paused for 28 days ending Feb 11 however, Eviction hearings will continue, and new eviction orders can still be issued.



- You are invited to participate in the IRB-RPD refugee hearing rooms in Toronto!
- This is a great opportunity to meet the RPD officers who will explain what is going to happen during your refugee hearing

### REGISTRATION CONTACT

Send your name, country of origin and refugee hearing date(if applicable) to Carolina Teves:

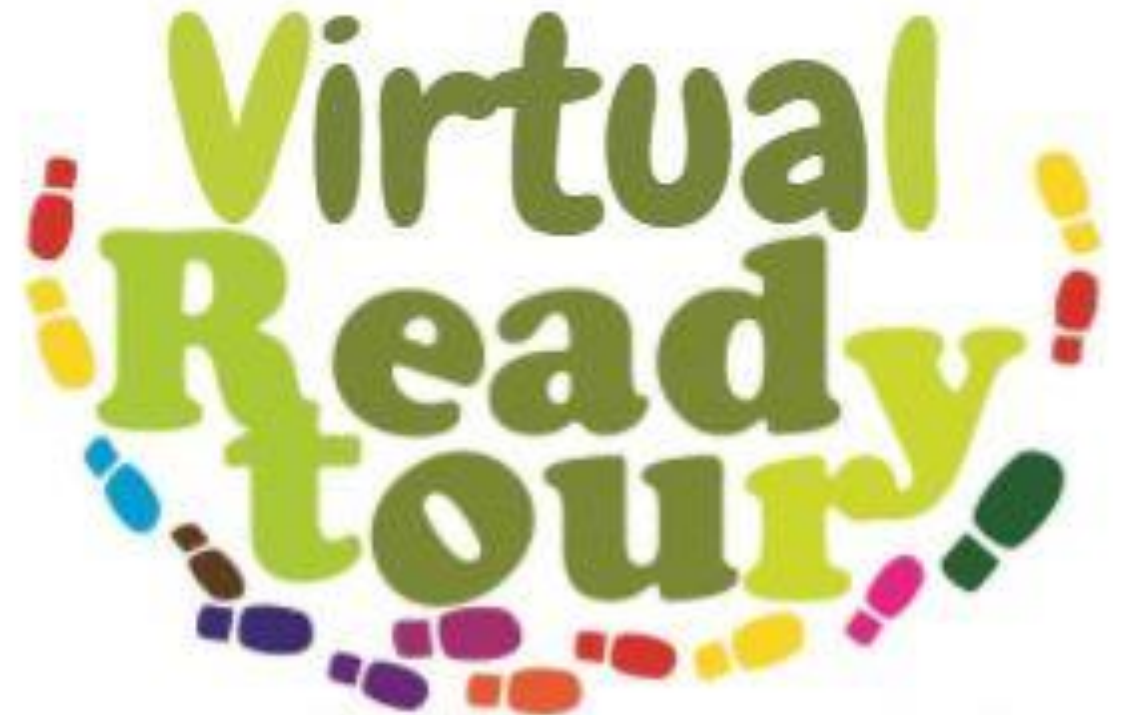
[cteves@fcjrefugeecentre.org](mailto:cteves@fcjrefugeecentre.org)

or visit our website :

<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/ready-tour-registration/>


[www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org)

## GETTING FAMILIAR WITH YOUR REFUGEE HEARING






## Connect with us

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 437-217 3786

 647-971 2153 Migrant Workers

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 [www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org)

 [fcjrefugeecentre](https://www.instagram.com/fcjrefugeecentre)

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 [@RefugeeCentre](https://twitter.com/RefugeeCentre)

# QUESTIONS



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