

April 4, 2022

Key Information and Resources for Tenants during COVID-19



Updates

BC Allowable Rent increases: Maximum allowable rent increases for 2022 were capped by the Provincial Government at 1.5% (update: September 8, 2021). If landlords choose to increase rent, they must provide a full three months' notice to tenants using the correct notice of rent increase form.




Resources for Tenants

If you are a New Westminster tenant with immediate concerns and questions about your existing tenancy or building, the following resources may be able to offer further assistance:

- **BC Government - Residential Tenancy Branch** provides information on tenant and landlord rights under the Residential Tenancy Act. Phone: 604-660-1020 or 1-800-665-8779, email: HSRTO@gov.bc.ca,
- **Tenant Resource and Advisory Center (TRAC)** provides support and guidance on starting a tenancy, issues during a tenancy, ending a tenancy, pursuing tenant rights, and dispute resolution. Tenant Infoline: 604-255-3099,
- **Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS)** and **Access Pro Bono** offer free legal advice to tenants in British Columbia.
- BC Provincial Government – **Guides to Dispute Resolution**

Paying Rent during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Provincial legislation requires that tenants pay rent in full and on time during the pandemic, however, there are a number of support options available to tenants facing financial difficulties as a result of the COVID-19. A list of support resources is provided below:

Agency	Details and Web Resources
<p>The Purpose Society</p> 	<p>New Westminster Rent Bank (NWRB); the NWRB offers low-fee, no interest, short-term loans to low income individuals and families that live in the City of New Westminster and are at risk of eviction or essential utility disconnection due to a temporary and unexpected financial crisis. The NWRB also offers assistance with damage deposits, pet deposits and first month's rent for low income individuals and families who are moving into a new residence in New Westminster and are financially unable to meet these expenses.</p> <p>For more information on the New Westminster Rent Bank Program and to apply, please visit the Lower Mainland Purpose Society website or call 604-526-2522.</p>
<p>Seniors Services Society</p> 	<p>Seniors Services Society Seniors Loan Program can offer up to \$1,000 to seniors aged 60 and older who are at risk of eviction due to a temporary shortage of funds, or financial crisis. Funding may also be available for a utility payment or damage deposit, if the person is homeless or their current housing is unsafe or suitable. Funding is provided in the form of short-term interest free loans. For more eligibility and other information, please visit the Seniors Services Society website.</p>
<p>Government of British Columbia</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental Assistance Program (RAP) provides financial assistance to eligible low-income working families to help with their monthly rent payments. • Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER) is a rent subsidy program for eligible seniors renting in the private market. • British Columbia Housing Benefit. This program will help make rent more affordable for select households that do not qualify for other rental assistance programs. The benefit will be distributed to identified priority groups either by non-profit housing providers who will identify and select eligible applicants, or in some cases by BC Housing who will select eligible households from The Housing Registry database <p>Landlords are required to apply to the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) before they can terminate a tenancy agreement for the purpose of renovating. In addition, landlords are not able to end tenancies for renovations that are not substantial or do not require the rental unit to be vacant.</p>
<p>Government of Canada</p> 	<p>Federal government financial supports include benefits for individuals who are facing a loss of income due to the pandemic as well as other financial supports for low and modest income earners. Regular Employment Insurance benefits are available. More information is available on the Government of Canada website. Questions can be answered by calling 1-833-966-2099.</p>

While we strive to ensure the correctness of this information, should you find an inaccuracy or for more information on this document, please contact the Planning Division by phone at 604-527-4532 or by email at plnpost@newwestcity.ca.