

The
CO-OPERATIVE
HOUSING
FEDERATION
of Canada



**Intolerance is Intolerable:
Human Rights and Housing Co-ops**

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COCHF Spring Education Conference Saturday, March 28, 2015

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Objectives
3. The right not to live in poverty
4. Housing is a human right - You hold the key
5. Human rights and rental housing
6. The evolution of human rights
7. Who is protected?
8. Wrap up and evaluation
9. Resources

Objectives

At the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of human rights
- Understand that co-operative enterprises such as housing co-ops are part of a global movement for social and economic justice
- Understand how human rights legislation affects our relationship with our members
- Understand why respect for human rights must remain central to our co-ops' mission and vision.

Seven Co-op Principles

- Originally developed by the Rochdale Pioneers
- First principle is voluntary and open membership
 - No one is forced to join a co-op
 - No one is prevented from joining a co-op because of race, religion, sex, age, marital status or any other grounds
- Co-ops respect the validity of human rights from first contact.

Seven Co-op Principles

- The seventh principle is concern for community
- Co-operatives are about communities and groups of people
- When the community rises, our individual members rise with it.
- Co-operative enterprises help people build better lives for themselves and their families.
- Co-ops are an important component of the movement for social and economic justice

The Right not to Live in Poverty

- Housing co-ops provide our members with some shelter from the storm
- During the time they occupy their co-op homes, our members enjoy home ownership without individual mortgages
- Rights and responsibilities, but no landlords
- Many get this for about 30% of their income

Housing is an international human right

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, **housing** and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- Adopted by the United Nations on December 10 1948.
- The first draft was written by a Canadian, John Peters Humphrey.

Housing is an international human right

Governments in Canada have recognized:

- Education is a basic human right, so they built schools
- Health care is a basic human right, so they built hospitals
- Voting is a basic human right, so they provide polling places
- Housing is a basic human right, but they do not build homes

You Hold the Key

- A national campaign to protect housing co-ops across the country
- 20,759 federally funded co-op households representing 51,898 low-income Canadians are at risk of being lost
- By 2020, most of the existing co-op homes will become unaffordable as federal operating agreements end.



Human Rights and Co-op Housing

- The Human Rights Code (HRC) is enforced by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC)
- “Co-ops are home to many of the individuals and families that are specifically protected by the Code, many of whom sit on the board of their co-op and are required to apply the co-op’s rules and make decisions that affect the co-op’s members. In effect, co-ops empower the very groups that the code and OHRC are protecting.”

CHFC 2007 submission
OHRC consultation on human rights and rental housing.

Evolution of human rights

- Magna Carta (1215)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Ontario Human Rights Code (1962)
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)
- Ontario Human Rights Commission policy on human rights and rental housing (2009)

Evolution of human rights

- Magna Carta (1215)
 - Birth certificate of democracy
 - Began the transfer of power from the aristocrats to the people
 - Opened the door to property ownership

Evolution of human rights

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
 - Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living *including housing*
- Ontario Human Rights Code (1962)
 - Takes precedence over other laws and regulations
 - Defines the prohibited grounds of discrimination
 - Constantly evolving as standards change and improve

Evolution of human rights

- UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
 - The right to organize self-help groups and co-ops to obtain equal access to economic opportunities
 - To have adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing

Who is protected?

- Almost everyone
- There are 14 prohibited grounds
- It is against the law to discriminate against people because of:
 - Race
 - Colour
 - Ancestry
 - Creed (religion)
 - Ethnic origin

Who is protected?

- Citizenship
- Sex (including pregnancy and gender identity)
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Marital status
- Family status
- Disability
- Receipt of public assistance

Who is protected?

- Persons with disabilities
- Most common ground for laying a complaint in Ontario
- Duty to accommodate
- Discussion: what measures are in place in your co-op to accommodate persons with disabilities?

Who is protected?

- Receipt of public assistance
 - Does not include poverty. OHRC is still looking at adding socio-economic status, but haven't done it yet
 - The Housing Services Act allows refusals if the housing provider has reasonable grounds to believe, based on the household's rental history, that the household may fail to fulfil its obligations to pay rent for the unit in the amount and at the times the rent is due
 - The HAS allows co-ops to refuse an applicant if there are reasonable grounds to believe the household will not accept or the responsibilities of membership in the co-op

CHF Canada Resource Centre

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying http://www.chfcanada.coop/eng/pages2007/searchresultsgse.asp?linkTarget=_self&sp. The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. Below the menu bar are icons for Suggested Sites, Facebook, Google, and Google Maps. The website header is blue and features the CHF Canada logo and the text "The CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING FEDERATION of Canada". A navigation bar below the header contains links for CO-OP HOUSING, CHF CANADA, ONTARIO REGION, IN YOUR REGION, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, and NEWS. The user "Alan Pickersgill" is logged in. The main content area shows search results for "Human Rights" with about 124 results. The search results are sorted by Relevance and are powered by Google Custom Search. The first result is "Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Human Rights and..." with a PDF format. The second result is "Human Rights By-law" with a PDF format. The third result is "CHF Canada : Having a problem with your housing co-operative?" with a text format.

CHF Canada Home > Back to previous page > Search results

CHF Canada website search results by Google

Human Rights

About 124 results (0.11 seconds) Sort by: Relevance

powered by Google™ Custom Search

[Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Human Rights and...](#)
www.chfcanada.coop/.../Human%20Rights%20and%20Rental%20Housing%20Summary.No...
File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat
CHF Canada- Ontario Region, November 2009. Page 1. Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Human Rights and Rental Housing. A Summary for Co- ...

[Human Rights By-law](#)
www.chfcanada.coop/eng/.../Human%20Rights%20bylaw_Final.pdf
File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat
Article 2.8 Relation to Human Rights Code. 5. 3 Dealing with Problems. 6. Article 3.1 Investigate complaints. 6. Article 3.2 Procedure. 6. Article 3.3 Complaints ...

[CHF Canada : Having a problem with your housing co-operative?](#)
www.chfcanada.coop/eng/pages2007/about_7.asp
what you agree to in exchange for the right to live in your unit; what the co-op ... It must follow other laws too, like the human rights code that applies to you, and ...

Resources

Resources available on-line via any search engine:

1. *OHRC Policy on Human Rights and Rental Housing* Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2009
2. *The Evolution of Human Rights in Canada*, by Dr. Dominique Clement, Will Silver & Dr. Daniel Trottier, Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2012
3. *From Capitalism to a Co-operative Commonwealth in 7 Steps*, by John Courtneidge, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2010
4. *Submission to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Consultation on Human Rights and Rental Housing*, CHF Canada, 2007
5. *Human Rights and Accessibility in Housing Co-ops*, Diane Miles and Jenifer Feren, CHF Canada

Wrap up

Questions / comments?





Your evaluations, please!