



ONPHA
**News
for Tenants**

Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association | www.onpha.on.ca September 2006

MAKE YOUR MUNICIPAL VOTE HIT HOME

On November 13 vote!

There is great power in numbers – especially at election time.

More than 400,000 individuals live in housing provided by members of the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA). This means our tenants represent a potentially powerful force. But to exercise this power, you need to vote.

And before you even get to the polls, you need to know who to mark that ballot for. To determine who gets your vote, here are some questions to ask the candidates knocking at your door.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

1 *How will you protect the budget of this non-profit, so we can keep our homes in good shape now and 10 and 20 years from now?*

2 *What will you do to house the 122,000 households on Ontario's social housing waiting lists?*

3 *How will you stand up for supportive housing in the face of NIMBYs? ("That kind of housing is fine, just Not in My Backyard.")*

4 *How will you work for municipal policies that create new housing and revitalize communities? Can you give me an example of how you'll do this?*

5 *How will you bring together all levels of government to find long-lasting solutions to the housing crisis?*

HOW TO VOTE

Voting is simple. If you are a Canadian citizen, 18 years or older, you can vote.

Registered voters receive notification in the mail that they are on the Voters List, but you are entitled to vote even if you aren't on the list. You simply go to the poll with a piece of photo identification which confirms your name and address (e.g. driver's license, passport). Even if you are currently without an address or identification, you can vote by signing a declaration at the polls that you are who you say you are. Then vote!

If you do wish to check before election day to see if you are on the Voters' List, you can call the Clerk's office in your municipality. If you're not on the list, and want to avoid any delay when you get to the poll, it's simply a matter of filling out a form.

The Clerk's office can also confirm what polling station you vote at.

NEED A RIDE TO THE POLLS? Just ask one of the candidates. You are not obliged to vote for that candidate, or to say who you are voting for.

WANT TO GET MORE INVOLVED? Consider forming a tenants committee to help make other tenants aware of housing issues and ensure they are headed to the polls. You could go door to door handing out information (like this newsletter), or help arrange a candidates "meet and greet". Contact your non-profit housing provider if you are interested in volunteering.



THE W5s OF NON-PROFIT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

WHO lives in it? More than 400,000 Ontarians — families, seniors, singles, people with disabilities — in housing provided by 1500 non-profit housing groups.

WHAT is it? It is the main type of subsidized or social housing (co-op housing is the other form).

WHERE is it? In 220 cities, towns and rural areas across the province: houses, townhouses and apartment buildings ranging from 4 units to 58,000 units.

WHEN did governments get involved? **1946** Federal government's housing strategy created for WW II veterans and families. Run by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

1950s/60s CMHC's mandate broadens to low income families.

1970s Ontario government directly involved in building social housing.

1993 Federal government largely stops participating in constructing new social housing; the province follows suit by 1995.

2000 Social Housing Reform Act devolves administration of social housing to municipalities.



WHY do we need it? If housing costs consume more than 30% of household income, it is not affordable.

- ***One in 5 tenant households pays more than 50% of income on rent; 42% pay more than 30%.***
- More than 250,000 individuals are on Social Housing waiting lists.
- The wait is long: as much as 8 to 12 years long in some areas.

LONG STORY SHORT

We don't have enough non-profit housing to keep the families, children, seniors and most vulnerable members of our community safe and healthy. The housing that does exist needs funding to keep it habitable.

NON-PROFIT HOUSING

builds healthy communities