

TORONTO SENIORS HOUSING CORPORATION (TSHC)

Translation and Interpretation

Summary of Policy

This policy sets out Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (TSHC)'s commitments to communicate to tenants in multiple languages to enable tenant participation and promote tenant communication.

Introduction

TSHC recognizes that the City of Toronto is made up of many peoples and cultures. TSHC is committed to providing an inclusive housing environment in which all individuals are equally valued and fairly treated.

TSHC recognizes that many tenants communicate in a language other than English. In addition to English, there are at least 13 commonly used languages to communicate in our communities. The *Housing Services Act* requires TSHC to provide translation and interpretation services for the French language where requested. TSHC provides translation/interpretation at the building, community and cross organizational level for at least 12 languages in addition to English and French.

This policy has been adapted from TCHC Translation and Interpretation Policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable tenant participation; maximize tenant understanding of matters affecting tenancy and their daily lives as tenants; provide clear direction to Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation staff regarding translation and interpretation; provide direction to other tenant facing translation and interpretation needs.

The policy helps to meet the goal of providing an inclusive housing and working environment, which is a commitment made in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's policy on Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access.

This policy focuses on both translation of materials and interpretation services to tenants.

Application of Policy

This policy applies to:

- Rent Geared to Income and Market Rent Tenants;
- Direct and Contract Managed Communities;
- TSHC Contracts for service in which tenant engagement is required.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions have been taken from applicable legislation:

- Translation is changing one written language into another written language.
- Interpretation is changing the spoken word into another spoken language and is an interactive process.

Principles

Tenants require access to information that affects:

- the status of their tenancy in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation,
- their daily lives as tenants,
- their ability to participate in decision-making processes that ultimately can affect their tenancy.

Policy statement

TSHC will use translation and interpretation services to promote tenant understanding and engagement to enable full participation for tenants in TSHC issues and activities.

Language Preference

TSHC will develop a methodology to collect and analyze the language of preference for TSHC tenants; Translation will be provided based on the identified needs of the target audience of the communication, which may include:

- The top languages of a building;
- Identified languages of a specific group, e.g. tenant representatives;
- Regional Managers will review the language preferences in the communities on a regular basis, at a minimum during the annual business planning process and share information with Communications team;

- When TSHC receives written communication in a language other than English, TSHC will have this communication translated and reply in the language of the tenant's choice;
- TSHC will ensure that a translation and/or interpretation strategy is incorporated into each communication plan and community engagement activity undertaken;
- TSHC will provide advance notice of meetings to ensure tenants requiring or requesting translation and/or interpretation services are able to do so in advance;
- Regional Managers will ensure that strategies for translation and interpretation are developed to meet the identified language preferences of tenant representatives;
- TSHC will provide interpreters at tenant meetings and other events where tenants and/or staff have identified the need for interpreters;
- Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation recognizes its obligation to provide communications regarding housing services in the French language as requested.

Translation of written communication

TSHC will normally translate the following types of written communication:

- Invitations to participate in consultation sessions, tenant election activities, and building meetings;
- Newsletters, information notices and other communication where the primary audience is tenants;
- Tenant Policies and Procedures;
- Tenant handbooks or similar information materials;
- Building signage in each building's top languages (e.g., laundry room instructions, fire exit procedures).

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation will translate materials that affect tenants as described above. This includes, but is not limited to, materials such as:

- Contracts, Leases, Legal Notices, etc.
- Strategic plans

TSHC and Tenant Responsibilities

- Tenants will provide as much notice as possible, in advance of a meeting, to advise TSHC that they are requesting translation and/or interpretation services OR that they no longer require the requested translation and/or interpretation services.
- TSHC will make use of international symbols and drawings to improve the communication with all language groups.
- Documents on corporation-wide issues will be translated into the languages that are needed.
- Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation staff will provide interpreter services for meetings or telephone conversations with individual tenants where tenancy issues are being discussed. Staff will also arrange for interpreter services where tenants are using the corporation's complaints procedure.

Standards

- TSHC will develop and communicate to stakeholders a set of standards to be applied to translation and interpretation services;
- TSHC will develop a pool of approved translators and interpreters and make it available to all staff.

Policy Review

This policy, and the costs associated with its usage, will be reviewed as part of the annual planning process.

Applicable Legislation and Reference Documents

The following legislation and reference documents apply:

- *Tenant Protection Act, 1997;*
- *Housing Services Act, 2011;*
- TSHC Community Management Plan (CMP);
- TSHC Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy.

Approvals

Approved by the TSHC Board of Directors, May 18, 2022.

Policy Contact

Strategic Communications & Engagement