



# New mediation services for landlord tenant disputes

Monday, April 10, 2017

Resolving landlord and tenant conflicts in the GTA's York Region just got easier with the launch of the York Region Housing Mediation Services (YRHMS) program. Designed to help housing providers and occupants resolve conflicts without costly litigation, participants are assisted in reaching mutually acceptable immediate solutions while also learning better ways to approach the resolution of any future conflicts.

The mediation services are free, confidential, voluntary and open to all types of housing providers—from large-scale building managers to single-unit landlords.

“Our team of highly trained volunteer mediators will guide the participants through a conversation where communication between both parties will remain respectful, safe, inclusive and productive,” says Jennifer Lam, Program Manager. “Through our process, proposed solutions are more likely to be successful and permanent.”

## What is mediation?

YRHMS's mediation services use not one, but two independent third parties as mediators in each case. Through a facilitated conversation they help guide the parties to get at the underlying reasons for a conflict. Building on that understanding, the parties are then assisted in discussing how it can best be resolved and how to minimize the chances of it recurring.

Parties often finish the process with a better understanding of the role they played in the conflict as well as a more complete view of the other party's needs.

YRHMS is able to provide its mediation services for free to both sides and has been doing so since October 2016 thanks to funding from the United Way of Toronto and York Region (under the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy).

"For landlords participating in our process, they are able to save money and time," says Lam. "Going to the LTB costs \$170 just to file the application. If the landlord chooses to be legally represented, the costs will increase substantially. Additional costs such as vacancy during turnover, staging the unit, advertising, doing credit checks or employing the services of a real estate agent, can all be saved by using our services."

For tenants for whom the threat of eviction is imminent (whether they've received written notice or not) participating in this process will reduce their uncertainty and anxiety. Rather than taking chances in a tribunal hearing where the outcome may be uncertain, they will have an opportunity to sit down with their landlord to resolve the issues that contributed to the conflict. With help from YRHMS mediators, both the current conflict as well as future ones are much more likely to be resolved without the tenant having to move.

Find out more at: <https://yrhms.ca>