

EVALUATION OF THE BC RTA PROGRAM

IDENTIFYING THE BC RTA TRAINING IMPACT FOR HOUSING SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

The Rent Smart Education + Support Society's (RSESS) BC Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) training pilot in 2020-21 provided training to 92 non-profit housing provider and community support staff throughout BC to build the affordable housing sector's understanding of how to apply the RTA legislation in their roles. This training is a much-needed addition to the RSESS training tool kit. The following details the project and its findings.

REASONS FOR THE TRAINING + THE EVALUATION

What Evictions Cost

Evictions take a costly toll on tenants who often move into homelessness as a result and an emotional toll on front line staff supporting an individual or family facing an eviction. Evictions are very costly for the organization initiating them, which is challenging for the nonprofit housing sector.

In a recent eviction prevention report by the University of Winnipeg, the researchers estimated the following:

A 'positive move' typically cost an organization **\$1000 or less**.

A typical eviction can cost them anywhere from **\$3000-\$6000**.

More challenging evictions can lead to damages that occur due to landlord/tenant conflict can cost from **\$10,000-\$60,000**.

("2016 Eviction Prevention Toolkit" (p.14)

\$
**THE POTENTIAL
COST SAVINGS
FOR HOUSING PROVIDERS
\$9,000-\$59,000**

“ Homelessness prevention is complex and requires a big system response.

Along with high-level structural + systems changes that are necessary for prevention to work, communities + housing professionals also need to integrate upstream + preventative thinking locally into their current approach.

- Linda Amy, Executive Director of RSESS

Of the 92 workshop participants:

84% of participants said they had NOT had previous RTA training.

90% said that the people they support are at risk of homelessness + housing instability.

WHY

RTA training is a cost-effective way to build sector understanding of tenant + landlord rights and responsibilities to reduce evictions and future homelessness.

WHO

Participants were from housing providers, front-line staff, community service agencies, government + public sector staff, and many more service providers.

WHAT

Understanding tenant + landlord rights and responsibilities to reduce conflicts between tenants and organizations and costly legal processes.

HOW

Through 6 hours of interactive facilitated group online learning and 1.5 hours of self study with takeaway resources provided for future reference.

“ I feel like I am more capable of educating tenants about their rights and responsibilities & respond more effectively to issues that come up.
- Follow up Survey Respondent



The RTA training pivoted to and online virtual training from in person to comply with public health orders during the pandemic.

“ I feel more confident since taking RTA.
- RTA training participant

EVICION PREVENTION IS A TYPE OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Critical to eviction prevention is a foundation of working knowledge and familiarity with Residential Tenancy legislation and yet there is little training available in BC and so those able to assist in eviction prevention do so at a disadvantage. This gap in capacity is common to both (non-profit) housing providers and frontline organizations who support vulnerable tenants and those experiencing homelessness.

The BC RTA program primarily trains service providers who are helping to get people rehoused and preserve tenancies.

**INDEPENDENT 3RD PARTY
EVALUATION INDICATES A
PROMISING PRACTICE
BASED ON CAEH CRITERIA**

FINDINGS OF THE OUTCOME EVALUATION



I have a client who was having issues with repair work not being completed in her suite. Thanks to the RTA training, I was able to find a template and assist my client with writing a letter to her landlord.

- Follow up Survey Respondent



Increased sense of confidence in tenant management.

Before: "I don't know enough to be confident in my ability to mitigate risk for residents and/or my employer." - Pre-Survey Respondent

After: "I feel like I am more capable of educating tenants about their rights and responsibilities & respond more effectively to issues that come up." - Follow up Survey Respondent

85%

Was there an increased knowledge of the Residential Tenancy Act and how to apply it?

Yes, 85% of respondents that attributed the RTA training with increasing their knowledge - from a little bit to a lot.



Increased understanding of the Residential Tenancy Act supports a decline in tenant/staff/organization conflicts.



Participants learn to address tenant behaviors that have historically led to evictions with more a positive outcome.



I feel like I am more capable of educating tenants about their rights and responsibilities & respond more effectively to issues that come up.

- Follow up Survey Respondent



Almost every family I work with has had conflict with their tenancy rights.

-Survey Respondent

CONCLUSION

Based on evaluation findings, the BC RTA training program has been a success because it's:

- ✓ An emerging Best Practice
- ✓ Trauma informed
- ✓ Culturally safe
- ✓ An unaddressed market
- ✓ In demand from organizations
- ✓ Effective integration with other eviction prevention efforts in the sector



This is a valuable class which my organization recommends; all staff in my department are now required to take this class due to its relevance and effectiveness.

-Survey Respondent



KEY FINDINGS

Key informants said they would pay between \$150-200 for the training.

There is strong interest and demand for RTA training.

RTA training increased staff knowledge, capacity and confidence in applying RTA legislation.

There is potential for broader sector impact + increased eviction prevention.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Participant's suggestions were grouped into several themes including: A desire to spend more time on specific topics, discussion in sessions and additional follow up sessions, more discussion and exploration of gray areas within the RTA, the duration of the sessions should be longer, the duration of sessions should be shorter, presentation improvements, guest speaker requests, and technology improvements.



Participants wanted more info to address the challenges they were facing.



Due to these findings, RSESS is committed to continuing to run the BC Residential Tenancy Act program to provide this relevant education to increase positive impact in the community.

For more information about the BC RTA program or upcoming training dates for your organization, contact: info@rentsmarteducation.org