

VTAG Basis of Unity



Victoria Tenant Action Group is a membership-based organization committed to transforming the housing system and ensuring access to housing for all. Our members include tenants, co-op residents, and people experiencing housing instability and homelessness. We work in solidarity with all people who do not own their homes, and welcome the support of homeowners who share our vision for housing justice. All members are responsible to uphold the following principles, which form our Basis of Unity:

We understand housing as a basic necessity of life, not a commodity for sale. We reject the speculative housing market in all its forms, and strive for the realization of universal access to housing through decommodification of buildings and land, repurposing existing buildings, and construction of new homes that are truly affordable, dignified, inclusive, and stable.

We oppose displacement in the form of gentrification, evictions, and rent hikes. Because gentrification results in the unjust displacement of people, we support strong rent control and tenant protection measures. We oppose the criminalization of homelessness and survival through bylaws and discriminatory environmental design, tent city evictions, and police intimidation and violence.

We strive for decolonization of urban spaces. Our movement for housing justice takes place on the unceded territories of the Lekwungen- and SENĆOŦEN-speaking peoples of the Esquimalt, Songhees, and WSÁNEĆ nations. We recognize that colonization has resulted in the dispossession and ongoing displacement of Indigenous peoples of many nations from their homelands. We commit to decolonizing our relationships with the land and with each other as we mobilize for housing justice in the city.

We support the struggles for raising minimum wage, social assistance, disability assistance and pension rates to living levels. With the rapidly rising cost of living, we find common cause with people who are fighting for economic justice in the workplace and in the welfare system. The twin pressures of insufficient income and rent increases have pushed many in our society to the financial breaking point. We know that communities are built and sustained by labour (including unpaid and undervalued labour), not by capital.

We believe in direct, democratic participation in all decisions about our homes and lives. By organizing and mobilizing tenants, we strive to build the structure of a new, democratic housing system, and to erode the market-based and exploitative system most of us currently live in. We believe that all people should have the opportunity to exercise self-determination and autonomy in their homes and lives. We challenge social housing providers to move beyond the dominant models of medicalization and criminalization of poverty, mental health, and substance use which restrict meaningful participation in decision making.

We organize in solidarity with diverse movements for justice.

The fight to transform our housing system occurs in relationship with movements addressing decolonization, disability/madness, feminism, Queer, and racial justice. In recognition of this, we value diverse experiences and identities within our organization, and strive to uphold the voices of people facing systemic inequities and oppression. Additionally, we understand the importance of our work to environmental and climate justice, in that urban density, transportation systems, and carbon emissions are all affected by movements for housing justice.