

The role of landlords in shaping housing responses to climate change and health equity

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Housing is central to the climate crisis, shaping health, safety, and resilience as climate impacts intensify. **Despite this, climate adaptation policies largely prioritize property owners—particularly landlords and investors—while renters remain overlooked** and excluded from climate mitigation and planning.

The Problem

Climate policies primarily protect property owners through insurance, disaster relief, and incentives. Meanwhile, renters remain absent from policy discussions, despite being disproportionately at risk of displacement and health harms due to climate change. Overall, renters represent $\frac{1}{3}$ of Canadian households and are more likely to belong to equity-deserving groups.



Who are “landlords”?

The term includes corporate landlords, public landlords, and individual landlords.

- Corporate landlords often treat housing as an investment and avoid climate accountability.
- Individual landlords face high costs and barriers to adaptation.

Methods & Perspectives

Integration of Lived Experience

Community Advisory
Committee Consultation

Literature Review and Synthesis

Policy & Practice Recommendations

- Develop incentive programs to support affordable upgrades for landlords & safety nets for renters facing climate-related displacement
- Co-create policies with meaningful engagement from those most impacted, centring equity, health, & housing justice
- Recognize housing as a matter of human rights and the social determinants of health inclusive of climate resilience.

Conclusions

Without urgent action to include renters and support landlords equitably, climate change will deepen housing insecurity and become a looming public health crisis.

Landlords play a vital yet overlooked role in protecting the safety and well-being of millions of renters, as well as building community resilience.

Beyond housing, the landlord-tenant relationship reflects broader systemic issues rooted in the social determinants of health – all increasingly impacted by climate change.

For further action: <https://acorncanada.org/campaigns/housing-tenant-unions/>

We acknowledge that CAMH and the University of Toronto are located on the traditional lands of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit, who have cared for this land for thousands of years. We are thankful for the opportunity to learn, work, and gather on this land.

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