

# **WEST-ISLAND TENANTS ACTION COMMITTEE**

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## **MEMBERSHIP BOOKLET**





# INTRODUCTION

The *Table du Quartier Sud de l'Ouest-de-l'Île* (TQSOI) is very proud to introduce the new organization : **West-Island Tenants Action Committee** (WITAC) or **Comité d'action des locataires de l'Ouest-de-l'Île** (CALODI). The constitution of an organization dedicated to protect tenants rights is an important, long-awaited step in the West-Island.

We are grateful to all those who participated in the establishment of the organization. We want to thank our colleagues at the TQSOI for their continued support. We want to extend our gratitude to our funders for the financial support : *Community Housing Transformation Centre* and *Centraide*. Thank you for making this project possible and a success. We also want to thank *Dynamo* and *Centre Saint-Pierre* for their guidance. Finally, a very special thanks to our *Founding Committee* of the WITAC, which was composed of the following members :

**Alena Ziuleva** (TQSOI)

**Philippe Forté** (TQNOIM)

**Mélanie Safi** (CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île)

**Sandra Watson** (CRC)

**Anne-Marie Angers-Trottier** (Pointe-Claire tenant)

**Ryan Simonyik** (TQSOI)

**Aida Louafi** (TQSOI)

**Alexander Lutchman** (former TQSOI employee)

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**Note** : this document is an excerpt from the upcoming handbook for CALODI-WITAC members. The final version will be sent to all the members by email.

## BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF THE WEST-ISLAND TENANTS ACTION COMMITTEE

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Housing insecurity and the lack of support for tenants have long been an issue in the West-Island. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Quebec, it became urgent to address the fragility of West-Island tenant households. During the summer of 2020, the Comité Logement Saint-Laurent offered temporary support to West-Island tenants in light of the ongoing pandemic.

However, a long-term solution had to be found. Following multiple meetings with West-Island organizations, the TQSOI decided to create a tenant advocacy and support organization for the West-Island. This organization would provide support to tenants facing challenges such as evictions and rent increases, while raising public awareness on housing issues.

In 2020, the TQSOI carried out a feasibility study to identify the possibility of tenants support organization establishment in the West Island.

In 2021, funding from the *Community Housing Transformation Centre* was secured by TQSOI for a 3-year project to create a West-Island resource for tenants.





# WITAC IN ACTION

Thanks to funding from the *Community Housing Transformation Centre*, the TQSOI has set in motion a project to establish West-Island tenants action committee. An action plan has been drawn up to guide the process. According to this plan, the creation of the organization will be completed by the summer of 2023.

To keep the project moving forward, a goal of the plan was to start providing support services to tenants in 2022. Thus, in August 2022, a telephone hotline began operating. In addition, individual meetings were held with tenants. In 2023, three workshops were organized in several municipalities (Dorval, Pierrefonds-Roxboro and Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue).

Tenant support services are now available Monday to Friday by telephone, e-mail and walk-in.

Number of WITAC flyers distributed door-to-door **1110+**

Interactions with West-Island tenants (calls, e-mails exchanged) **602**

Tenants assisted **187**

Information workshop participants **70**

*Tenant service figures from August 2022 to May 2023*



*Photos of the three information workshops held in early 2023  
From left to right: Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Pierrefonds-Roxboro and Dorval*

# WITAC IN ACTION



## INCREASE IN INTERVENTIONS

In addition to operating a hotline, three rent increase workshops were held in the West Island. Several door-to-door distribution campaigns were organized to invite tenants to the workshops. With the help of TQNOIM, we distributed over 1,000 flyers in Pierrefonds-Roxboro, Dollard-des-Ormeaux and Dorval.

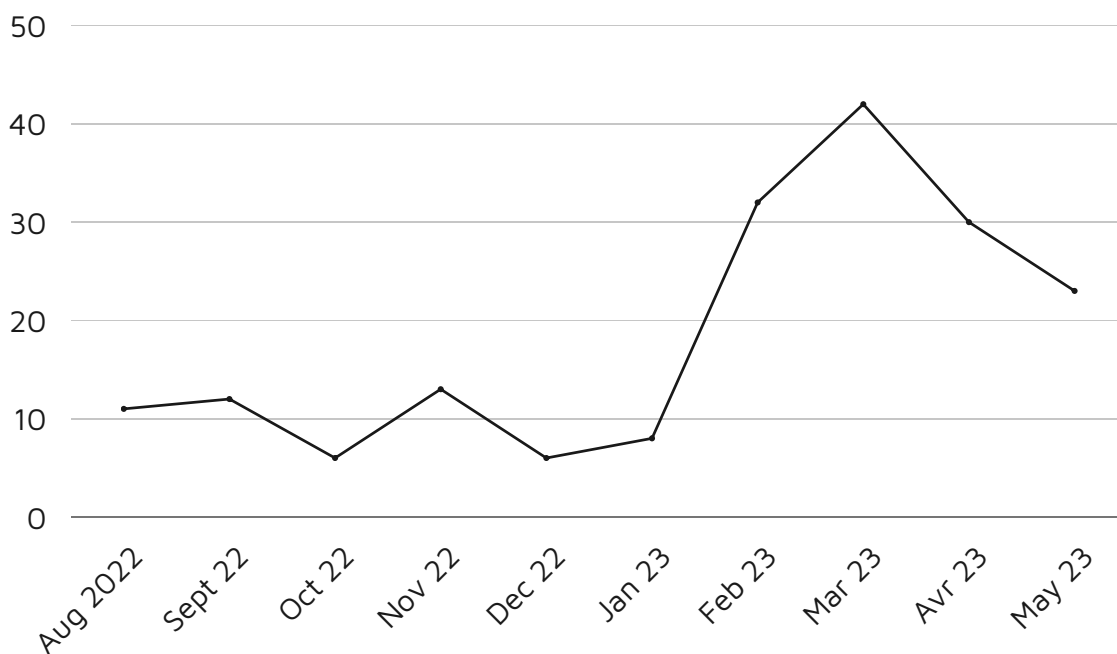
The campaign proved to be a success. Our first themed workshop in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue attracted 8 people.

The second one in Pierrefonds-Roxboro welcomed 22 tenants. The last one in Dorval attracted over 40 participants!

What's more, these campaigns enabled many tenants to find out about our service, and to contact us. Therefore, there has been a considerable increase in the number of contacts made. The graph below illustrates this change.



Posters created in fall 2022 and distributed to West-Island community organizations



Number of tenants who contacted us from August 2022 to May 2023

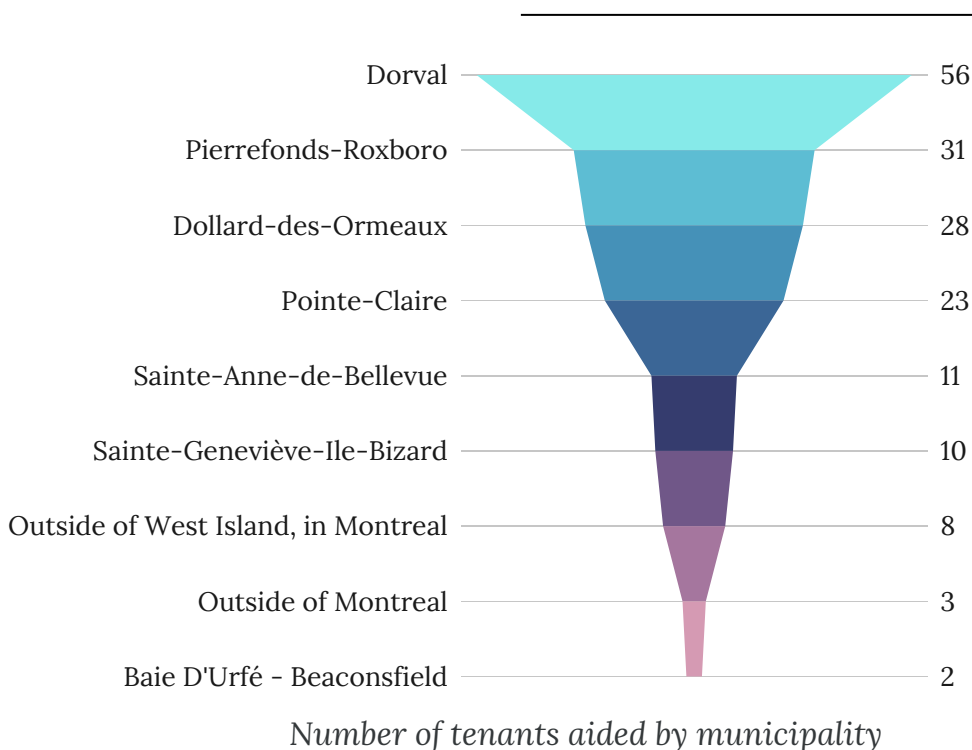


# WITAC IN ACTION

## ISSUES FACED BY TENANTS

West-Island tenants are calling about different issues, and our team is providing them with help. Here are some statistics from August 2022 to May 2023 explaining the issues tenants are facing :

28%	Rent increase
26%	Poor condition of dwelling, insalubrity, major works (disaster)
9%	Home repossession, eviction
7%	Questions about the lease
5%	Harassment
9%	Other (house hunting, pets, neighborhood, TAL procedures, etc.)



Nearly 80% of West Island tenant households live in Dorval, Pierrefonds-Roxboro, Dollard-des-Ormeaux and Pointe-Claire. This explains these figures.

Few tenants from outside the West-Island (Westmount, Saint-Lazare, etc.) contacted us because of a lack of resources in their area, or because their tenants' support organization were overwhelmed by calls.

# PORTRAIT OF THE WEST ISLAND



According to the *Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation* (CMHC), you should spend no more than 30% of your income on housing. This is called the **affordability threshold**. The table below shows that in most West-Island municipalities, more than a third of households have to spend more than the affordability threshold.

Municipality	Percentage of tenant households in the population	Percentage of tenant households spending 30% or more of its income on shelter costs
Pierrefonds-Roxboro	8,365 (32,07%)	28.28%
Dollard-des-Ormeaux	4,305 (24.8%)	33.4%
Pointe-Claire	4,095 (30.8%)	43.4%
Dorval	3,515 (40.3%)	29.0%
Île-Bizard-Sainte-Geneviève	1,790 (25.48%)	29.24%
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue	950 (45.1%)	34.6%
Beaconsfield	700 (10.4%)	31.7%
Kirkland	470 (7.1%)	36.6%
Baie D'Urfé	55 (4.2%)	0.0%
Senneville	40 (11.6%)	0.0%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021.



# MEMBERSHIP

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## WHY BECOME A MEMBER ?

WITAC relies on its members to fulfill the **mission** on which it was founded : *improve the quality of life for West-Island tenants and promote access to good quality housing*. Membership is a way to support the organization. It allows members to participate in the decision-making processes, and have a voice in the housing conversation in the West-Island.

By getting involved in the tenants' community, members have a platform to share their experience in a safe, supportive environment.

Members can help to promote and sustain our work by volunteering (door-to-door campaigns, sharing tenants' rights information with neighbors, etc).

## WITAC's STRATEGY

- Provide assistance to tenants, especially among highly vulnerable households (seniors, families, newcomers, individuals with disabilities, etc);
- Increase knowledge and raise public awareness of tenant issues;
- Support the development of social housing projects.



## WHO CAN BECOME A MEMBER?

- Any West-Island tenant
- West-Island non-profit organizations

It is also possible to become a **supporting member** if you aren't a West-Island tenant (a tenant living in Montreal, for example).

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

Please call 514-505-0840 ext. 12 or  
send a message to [locataires@tqsoi.org](mailto:locataires@tqsoi.org)

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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## RESPONSABILITIES

We encourage members to :

- Adhere to and promote WITAC's mission;
- Respect WITAC's by-laws;
- Pay membership fees as determined by resolution of the Board of Directors;
- Participate in activities;
- Inform WITAC of any changes that may affect their membership status.



## RIGHTS AS A MEMBER

All members have the **right to speak**.

Tenant and community organization representatives have the **right to vote** at meetings and can **join to the Board of Directors**.

## MEETINGS

Several types of meetings are organized through the year : annual meetings, regular meetings and special meetings. All members are invited to these events. A notice will be sent out for each meeting.

The **Annual General Meeting**, is held once a year. During the event, the Board of Directors presents its members with an activity report, the financial statements and any amendments to the by-laws. Board elections also take place at the Annual General Meeting.

**Regular meetings** are held several times a year. During these events, WITAC employees will present the ongoing projects to members, and discuss with them. These meetings are also an opportunity to organize future activities.

**Extraordinary meetings** are held only in exceptional circumstances. Under certain conditions, the Board of Directors and members can convene a meeting to discuss an issue.

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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## Who can make proposals or vote at meetings?

The identity of a tenants' support organization is linked to its community. West-Island tenants and community members are key players. Tenants are the first people affected by housing issues. Community organizations usually work through these issues. Therefore, **only tenant members and community organization representatives can make proposals or vote**. Community organizations must choose one representative.

Participation in meetings fosters an active, transparent and democratic community life.



If you have any questions about the voting process, please do not hesitate to get in touch with our team. We'll be happy to help!

## How can I make proposals?

Tenant and community organization representatives members can make proposals as long as they relate to the item on the agenda. To do so, members **must speak up, give their name and state their proposal** ("I move..."). **Each proposal must be seconded by another voting member** ("my name is (...) and I second the proposal"). If another member disagrees with the proposal, or thinks other members do too but don't dare speak up, **he or she can call for a vote**.

## How can I vote?

There are two ways to vote during a meeting: by show of hands or by ballot.

If there is a request for a vote on a resolution, they are generally taken by a **show of hands**, unless the meeting requests a **secret ballot**. In that case, ballots are distributed to voting members.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Five (5) tenant members**

**Four (4) community organization representatives**

In order to better represent the West-Island, we encourage Board members to present a diversified profile (place of residence, gender, age, etc.).

The term of office is **two years**. To ensure stability at Board level, terms will alternate.

The Board of Directors is the body responsible for administering the affairs of an organization. Its role is essential, since it must **manage, deliberate and consult** in order to act in the best interests of the organization and on its behalf.

The duties and powers of the Board are as follows:

- **Adhere to WITAC's mission.**
- **Manage the finances, assets and funds of the organization** collectively, jointly and in solidarity.
- Adopt all means it deems necessary to **achieve the goals pursued by the organization.**
- **Comply with these by-laws.**
- **Establish an internal structure** by appointing a president, a vice-president, a secretary and a treasurer.
- **Hire, evaluate the Executive Board.**
- **Approve new membership applications.**
- **Establish and support working committees** as required, and define their mandates.