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# The Importance of Tenant Relations

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# What is a Tenant Relations Officer

A Tenant Relations Officer (TRO) is the first point of contact for your tenants and applicants for your First Nations Housing Department.

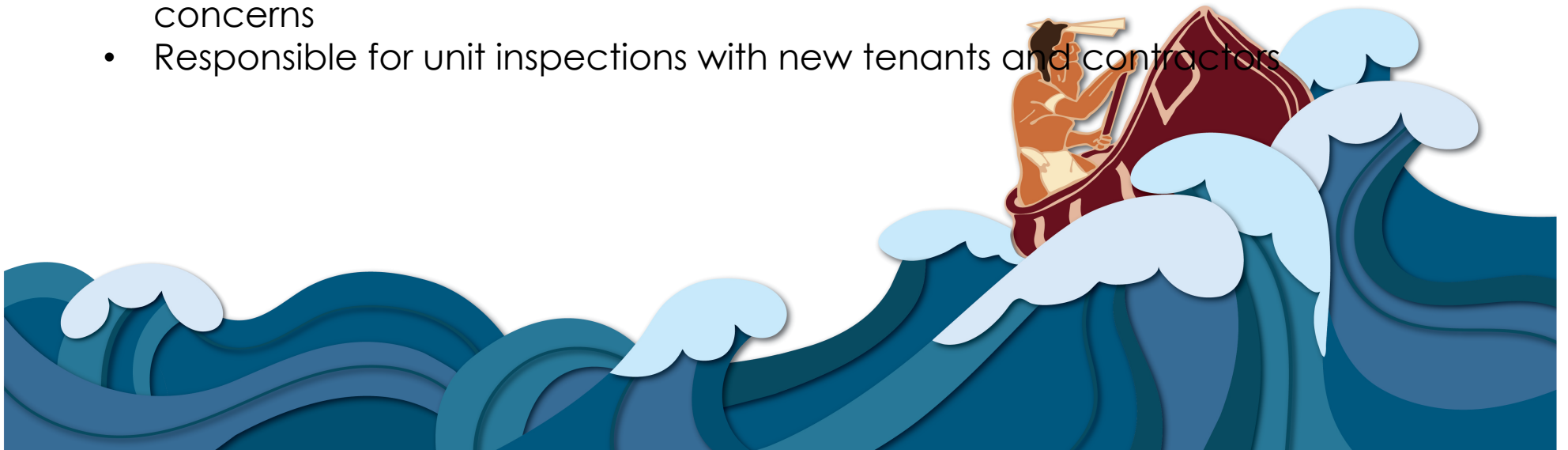
The Tenant Relations Officer, is responsible for daily phone calls, emails, home visits, office visits, to help assist and liaison between the tenant and housing department to ensure the tenants needs are met, as long as they fall within the guidelines of your Housing Policy and Procedure.

The Tenant Relations Officer will also promote a harmonious relationship between tenants and the Housing Department.



# Roles and Responsibilities of the TRO

- To provide and maintain effective lines of communication with Tenants
- Ensuring elders & families have direct line of communication and advocacy
- Maintaining a data base/filing system of all information regarding tenants and applicants
- Assisting applicants in the application process and determine eligibility through verification; verifying income, completion of reference checks and arrears verification
- Serving as a resource person for incoming applicants and tenants.
- Assess needs of tenants, coordinate with tenants through home visits, support or telephone calls through a prompt response to needs or concerns
- Responsible for unit inspections with new tenants and contractors



- Provide support to families-acting as a liaison person to tenants and elders in referrals to social service organizations
- Documenting calls and visits from tenants, applicants and community agencies and maintaining accurate comprehensive files and all activities and case management correspondence
- Promote information sharing through development of activities, newsletters and facilitate workshops
- Reviewing delinquent accounts with the Housing Director
- Intervening in tenant disputes, implementing appropriate solutions in solving problems or concerns of tenants as a single unit or group units
- Provide monthly reports to Chief and Council, Board of Directors and Management
- Enforce and uphold the Housing Policy and Procedures
- Develop a rapport and trust with tenants through effective communication strategies



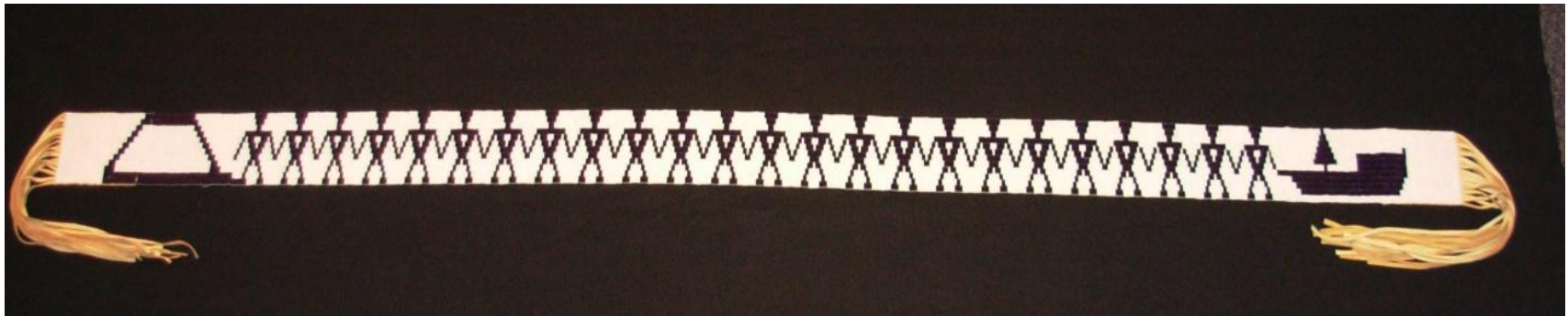
# SUCCESSFUL TENANT COUNSELLING

- Building a rapport with the tenants is the key to successful counselling
- Ensure tenants are comfortable and feel at ease
- Treat all tenants with respect and be empathetic
- Encourage the engagement and communication of the tenants
- Speak clearly and ensure the tenant understands before leaving the office
- Don't become too involved, or take things personally
- Keep open communication i.e. Return phone calls promptly, always try to find a solution, and state facts, and quote your policies and procedures
- Give the Tenant the option of picking the location of the meeting, some tenants are more likely to open up in the comfort of their own home

- **Always remember safety first**



# Problems that TRO's face



What are some of the challenges or issues you think a TRO encounters and deals with on any given day??



# TRO Resources



Band Administration

Health Department

Niigaaniin Program (Ontario Works)

Ontario Disability Support Program

Police Services

Child and Family Services

Community and Social Services  
Programs

Crisis Centre

# Case Study

A tenant calls the Housing Department on a Monday morning, and suggests some one had kicked in their door over the weekend while they were out. The house is ran sacked with holes, the front door is broken off and there is a window broken in the kitchen.

Tenant History: There was a unit inspection done in the spring (6 months ago) there was minor repairs done to holes in the drywall at this time, with a fresh coat of paint. The tenants have a noise complaint on file with the department for excessive noise and loud music. The police were not called. The first point of contact from the Tenant was to the Housing Department.

What do you think your next steps as a TRO would be???





# Successes

- Higher collection in monthly rent
- Recovery of historical arrears, and current arrears
- Lower maintenance cost-homeowner education
- Instill pride and ownership in tenants
- Advocacy for young adults and elders
- Rapport and trust with tenants
- Investment to Housing Portfolio

**This all leads to a more healthy and vibrant community**



# Job Description Sample

- Establish and maintain applicant based filing system on an ongoing basis
- Maintaining data base of all information regarding tenants and applicants
- Provide monthly reports outlining activities, concerns and recommendations
- Promote information sharing through development of activities, newsletters etc,
- Review delinquent accounts and establishing repayment agreements
- Documenting calls and visits from tenants, applicants and community agencies and maintaining accurate and comprehensive files and activities
- Assisting with office duties on daily basis: answering phones, following up on maintenance requests including work orders, rental inquiries, filing, updating , and implementing of new forms, responsible for correspondence to applications, tenants, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program Etc

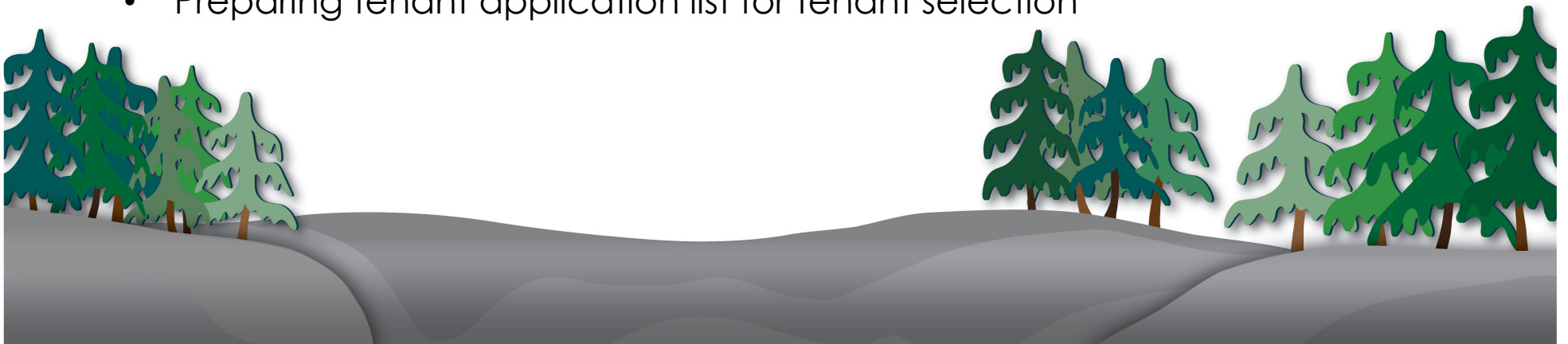


- Assist Housing Director in establishing Fire Plans for all units
- Responsible for all unit inspections with new tenants to view units
- Responsible for all unit inspections with Contractors to develop scope of work per unit
- Review contractor quotes
- Check units as work progresses
- Ordering of new appliances, coordinating delivery and meeting delivery persons at unit
- Meet with individual families to review lease agreements before signing
- Intervening in tenant disputes, implementing appropriate solutions in solving problems or concerns of tenants as a single unit or group units
- Delivery of notices to tenants regarding landlord and tenant Board issues/forms
- Responsible for after hour calls and tenant issues, maintenance issues and emergencies
- Provide support to families-acting as a liaison persons to tenants and elders in referring to social service organizations
- Providing support to tenants who may be leaving the program, information sharing of other non-profit housing
- Be available to work occasional after hours for emergency situations involving tenants
- Meeting with locksmith to gain possession on units
- Researching for funding by attending meetings, information workshops etc.



# Applicants and the Application Process:

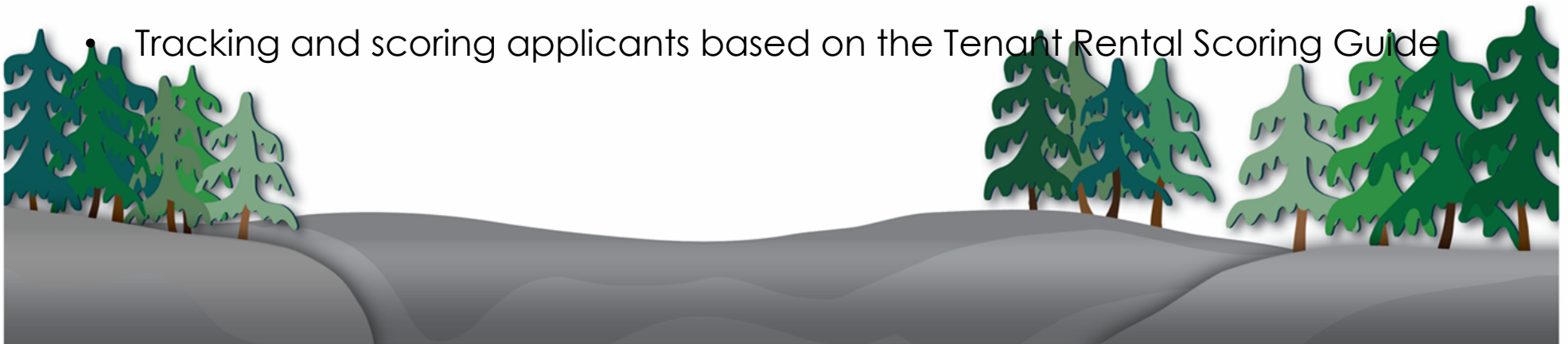
- Assist applicants in the application process by determining eligibility for on Reserve Housing Program and Social Housing
- Serving as a resource person for incoming applicants, explaining fundamental policies and procedures to individuals on waiting lists
- Ensuring all applicant files are complete and required information on file and verifying credit checks, home visit report and landlord reference
- Conducting applicant home visits as part of the application process
- Ensuring applicant database is compiled, updated and completed
- Preparing tenant application list for tenant selection



# Assisting in Selection Process:

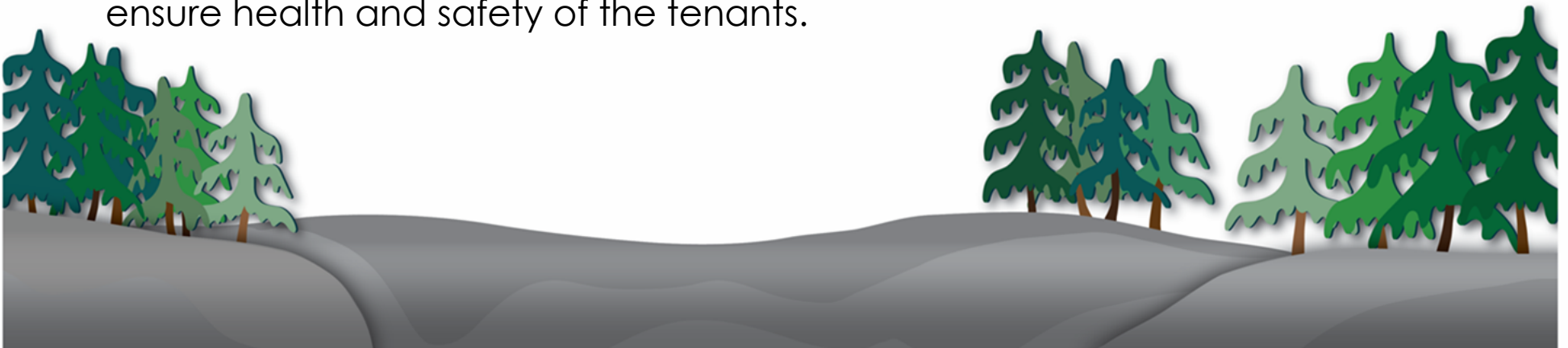
- Track all upcoming unit vacancies and transfers, ensuring that units are filled in expedient and a successful manner, and in accordance with the housing policy
- Preparing all relevant information and recommendations for the tenants selection process, participate and assist Tenant Selection Committee in establishing successful tenant selection
- Work as a team member with all staff and contractors to ensure smooth transition when tenants are moving in and out of units
- Produce monthly reports for the Housing Directors for presentation to the Board of Directors and or Chief and Council on activities performed during any given month

- Tracking and scoring applicants based on the Tenant Rental Scoring Guide



## Tenant:

- Maintain effective lines of communication with elders, tenants and families
- Encourage compliance of Corporations policies and procedures by providing orientations with new tenants, reviewing tenant information and tenant leases
- Assess needs of tenants, coordinate and facilitate interventions through networking/community resources
- Establish a trusting communication with tenants through home visits, support or telephone calls through a prompt response to needs or concerns
- Address transfer requests of tenant, keeping all communications and requests recorded for future reference
- Regular home visits to address and concerns of tenants, and follow up to ensure health and safety of the tenants.



# Question and Answer

