



# TENANTS UNION of Washington State

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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Founded in 1977, the TU carries on a proud legacy of work to create concrete improvements in tenants' living conditions and challenge and transform unjust housing policies and practices.

The TU is made up of low income tenant member leaders across the state of Washington working to build a movement for housing justice. Complex problems like gentrification and displacement, lack of affordable housing, and unsafe or unhealthy housing conditions need creative, multi-layered solutions that are grounded in the communities most impacted by them.

We bring low income renters to the forefront of these struggles by developing our leadership, celebrating the strength of our diversity, and amplifying our voices.

Over the last 45 years, the TU has provided empowerment-based tenant education to thousands of Washington renters, raised up hundreds of powerful tenant leaders and tenant councils, and increased tenant protections on the state, county, and city levels. Our staff and board represent the communities we serve and are part of our tenant leadership.







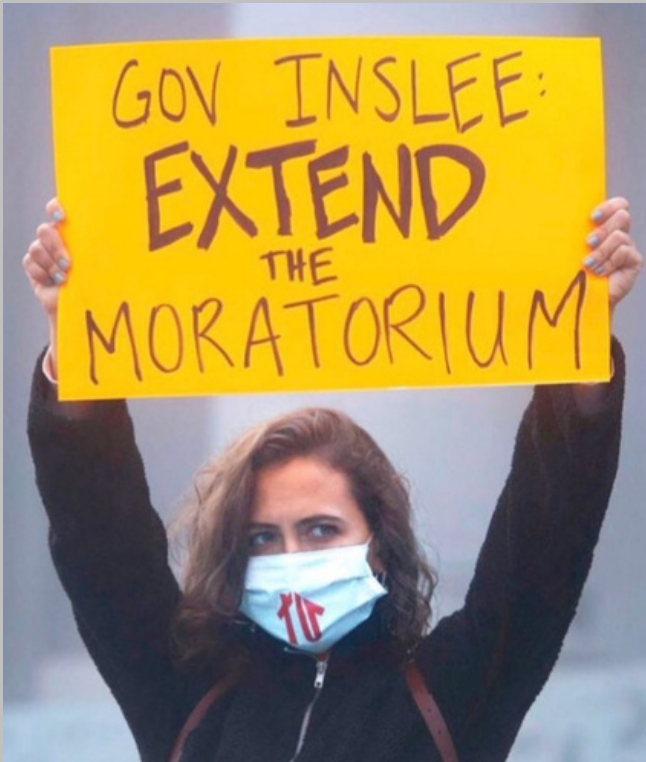
The mission of the  
Tenants Union (TU) is  
to create housing justice  
through empowerment-  
based education,  
outreach, leadership  
development, organizing,  
and advocacy.

# OUR MISSION & VALUES

Our mission is supported by the following values. We believe that:

1. All tenants have the right to affordable decent housing, free from excessive and frequent rent increases.
2. All homes should be safe and secure in order to ensure the privacy of tenants.
3. All people should have access to housing free from discrimination based on race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, political ideology, lifestyle, age, family status, marital status, amount or source of income, or disability.
4. All tenants have the right to organize and determine the rules and conditions of their tenancy through collective bargaining and other means.
5. All tenants have the right to live in the neighborhood of their choice, and we seek to increase the supply of rental housing, particularly for low and middle income tenants.
6. Housing exists to meet a basic human need, and that when conflict arises between tenants' needs and owners' profits, the basic need for affordable decent housing must take priority over the economic interests of the landowners.
7. We must end arbitrary evictions and all retaliatory actions against tenants.
8. We, the members, can achieve housing justice and commit ourselves to working together to accomplish the above stated goals.

# 2021 HOUSING VICTORIES



In 2021, The Tenants Union built on the leadership and wins of bilingual Latinx Burien tenants in 2019 to tirelessly organize tenants across Washington. We testified virtually for the first time and we won:

- A statewide Just Cause bill that ended 20 day no cause notices.
- Right to free counsel for income-eligible tenants. We are the first state in the nation to provide this.
- The creation of a statewide permanent fund for rental assistance.

Across Washington, the Tenants Union took action with tenants to extend the pandemic-related eviction moratorium through October 2021. To amplify our voices, we organized actions at the Governor's Mansion to demand housing justice.

Last year, Spokane experienced the fastest growing rent inflation in the nation. At the end of the statewide eviction moratorium, The Tenants Union partnered with other Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) led organizations to win the following victories:

- A new rental assistance fund from the City of Spokane
- A new law protecting tenants from evictions while they wait for rental assistance

The Tenants Union organized with the residents of over 500 affordable housing units in South Seattle's Rainier Court. Using community organizing, partnering with Be:Seattle, media, protest actions, and by getting the City Council involved, we won a roll back of rent increases and increased responsiveness to address deplorable conditions around safety, maintenance, and quality of life.





# 2021

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Tenants Union responded to devastating wildfires and pandemic needs in rural and tribal lands by collecting and distributing water and protective gear with the Spokane Tribe, Better Health Together and mutual aid networks. We held tenant rights workshops in collaboration with vaccine clinics to engage as many people as possible.

The Tenants Union wins victories, because of the collective power of community organizing. To develop tenant leadership, we provided multilingual Education Program services to over 1,400 Washington State renters last year and expanded tenant organizing in undocumented communities.

**"We can't be stopped  
because we are here for  
not just ourselves, but  
our community."  
~Tenant Leader**





# 2021 FINANCIALS

## Income:

51% Foundations  
34% Government Contracts  
10% Alliances  
5% Individual Giving

## Expenses:

81% Staff Wages & Benefits  
9% Office & Administration  
6% Professional Fees  
3% Program Supplies & Leadership  
Stipends  
1% Traveles.

The TU believes that tenants must be the leaders to transform housing conditions across the state.



# TENANTS UNION PARTNERSHIPS

350 Seattle  
Accelerator YMCA  
Africatown  
Afro Descendant and Indigenous Health Board  
American Indian Center  
APIC Spokane  
Artist Trust  
Asian Counseling & Referral Services  
Ballard Food Bank  
Be:Seattle  
Better Health Together  
Black Lens News  
Burien Community Center  
Carl Maxey Center  
Coalition Ending Gender Based Violence  
Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites Neighborhood Groups  
Coalition of Colors  
Eastside Legal Assistance Program  
El Centro de la Raza  
Entre Hermanos  
Ethiopian Community in Seattle  
Fair Work Center  
Fig Tree  
Friends of Youth  
Gonzaga Law  
Greater Spokane Progress  
Healthier Here  
High Point Community Center  
HopeLink  
Housing Development Consortium  
Housing Justice Project  
I Did The Time  
Ingersoll Gender Center  
Jewels Helping Hands  
Just Lead Washington  
Latinos en Spokane  
Legacy of Equality Leadership & Organizing  
Legal Council For Youth & Children  
LGBTQ Allyship  
Lifelong  
Live Stories  
Mt. Baker Village  
NAACP Spokane  
Native Project  
Neighborhood House  
New Holly Community Center  
North Helpline  
Northwest Fair Housing  
Northwest Housing Alliance  
Northwest Justice Project  
Pacific Islander Health Board of Washington  
Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane  
Powerful Voices  
Puget Sound Sage

Racial Equity Cohort  
Reentry Program  
Refugee Women's Alliance  
Reimagine Spokane  
Respuesta Comunitaria Latinx al Covid-19 en WA  
River Warrior Society  
Seattle Central College  
Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant  
Seattle DSA  
Seattle Housing Authority  
Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness  
SHAC Tenants Together, New Haven Tenant Association  
Smart Justice Spokane  
Solid Ground  
South Park Information and Resource Center  
South Seattle College  
South Seattle Community College  
SouthCORE  
Southwest Youth and Family Services  
Spokane Bar Association  
Spokane Coalition Against Racism  
Spokane DSA  
Spokane Faith Leaders  
Spokane Homeless Coalition  
Spokane Immigration  
Spokane Regional Health District  
Spokane Tribe  
The Way to Justice  
United Way of King County  
Univision  
UTOPIA  
Vera Project  
VT Radio Universal  
Washington Bus  
Washington Community Action Network  
Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network  
Washington Low Income Housing Alliance  
Washington Poison Control  
West Seattle Junction Association  
West Seattle Senior Center  
World Refugees  
World Relief  
YMCA  
YouthCare  
YWCA  
Zone

Thank you for fighting  
for housing justice.

# OUR LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Tenants Union acknowledges that we work and organize on occupied and stolen Native land. We honor the passing of Deb Abrahamson (Spokane, Coeur d' Alene and Dine), enrolled member of the Spokane Tribe. She was a fierce advocate for housing and environmental justice who taught us that the first eviction in the City of Spokane was Chief Spokane Garry whose land and home were destroyed and stolen by homesteaders.



## Honoring Our Tenant Leaders

In 2021, our Tenants Union family also lost Trisha York, a vivacious and dynamic disability and tenant activist who became one of our board members. Trisha gave decades of service to fight for housing justice. To remember her legacy, we created an annual award - the Trisha York Visionary Award.

**Housing is a human right.  
We are building power to win rent control  
for all tenants in Washington State.**

Tell us your story and add yourself to our action alerts and newsletters. If you're not already a member, join today and keep an eye out for our 45th Anniversary celebration this summer!

Website: [tenantsunion.org](https://tenantsunion.org)

Social Media:

[facebook.com/tenantsunion](https://facebook.com/tenantsunion)

[facebook.com/TUspokane](https://facebook.com/TUspokane)

[instagram.com/tenantsunionwa](https://instagram.com/tenantsunionwa)

