

Organizing in the Somali Community: The Implementation of a Tenant's Rights Program for Minnesota's Somali Renters

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Minnesota is home to the one of largest refugee populations in the United States (Batalova 2006) and, according to Singer and Wilson (2007), Minnesota is home to the largest metropolitan area for Somali resettlement. Since civil war broke out in the late 1980s in Somalia, over one million Somalis have been displaced as refugees throughout the world, a majority coming to the U.S. (CIA 2010). As of 2005, up to 35,000 Minnesotans identified as being of Somali descent (Gillaspy 2004). However, key members of the Somali Community, as well as Donald Yamamoto, principal deputy for the State Department's Africa Bureau, dispute these figures and claim the national and local population figures are significantly higher and steadily increasing (Stratis Health 2012).

The majority of Somalis and many other immigrating East Africans are Sunni Muslims. Practicing Islam in a primarily western and Christian culture can prove challenging. Negotiating time to pray five times during the day (facing Mecca), requesting permission to wear the hijab, and confronting confusion from outsiders when they fast from dawn to dusk during Ramadan are just some of these challenges. Specific to this project, however, is the principal Islamic belief that the acceptance of specific interest or fees for loans or money is strictly forbidden (Hadjiyanni 2007). This belief prohibits the population from entering into the typical American housing market with traditional mortgages or bank loans, thus creating a higher demand for rental housing units. The U.S. Census Bureau (2000) reflects this sentiment as it indicates the rate of homeownership in Somali households as being only 5.9% compared to the national average of 66.2%. With the growing population of Somalis in Minnesota, the need for more adequate housing has increased.

With so many Somalis confined to the rental market, Chambon et al. (1997) suggest a greater challenge in finding adequate housing is due to the culture's emphasis on the importance of hospitality and the honor of hosting guests. This gives way to greater concerns among landlords who worry that Somali families will double up on a permanent basis, leading them to attempt to implement several "non-visiting" policies. According to HOME Line (2011), under Minnesota Law, tenants have the right to invite any guests over, unless the lease specifically states that the landlord has control over every guest who is on the property. Aside from hospitality, landlords are sometimes concerned that Somali families are considerably larger than most traditional American families; Somalis have approximately a 73% larger household size than the average Minnesotan household (Dischinger 2009). This percentage only indicates *family* size, and most likely underestimates the commonality of extended family members living in the same household. A more accurate representation would be much larger than this number.

According to research done by Shio (2006), several organizations and members of the Minneapolis Somali community have noted that there is a lack of shared knowledge regarding housing norms and tenant's rights. Some organizers and individuals have gone as far as to suggest an open forum to educate Somali immigrants on these issues (Shio 2006). For these reasons, the author has put together a program that partners two existing non-profits, one a locally-based tenant rights organization and the other a more nationally recognized teaching and

social services provider, to formally educate this rising rental population on how to intelligently traverse Minnesota's rental housing market.

The tenant rights organization (Organization A), is a locally-based nonprofit organization that aims to provide free legal, organizational, educational, and advocacy services to tenants around the state so that they can find the tools necessary to solve their own rental housing issues. Organization A also works to improve public and private policies through advocacy and community outreach involving affected tenants in the process.

From 1999 to 2011, Organization A has spread the scope of its services through a free tenant hotline to reach all of Minnesota with the exception of Minneapolis. As of 2012, Organization A has begun to take on Minneapolis clients due to the closure of a separate tenant hotline organization that was specific to the state's largest city. Due to a lack of staffing and funds, Organization A has had to charge Minneapolis tenants for services and thus has had troubles fully reaching out to the city, especially the rapidly growing pockets of Somali renters.

The second organization (Organization B) is a nationally recognized organization with branches running throughout the United States. The Minnesota chapter was first organized in the late 1800's with a mission of social reform for the American people. Organization B offers numerous services ranging from youth services and adult education to mental health, housing and legal services. The specific branch of Organization B contributing to this project is an education center, opened in 2000, operating as an alternative high school and providing evening adult education services. This education center has become one of the core resources for Somali and other East African immigrants to receive help through high school and adult education.

Organization B has the established groundwork and resources to reach out to the Somali Community that Organization A lacks. However, Organization B lacks the intense specificity and attention to detail when it comes to rental housing laws and behaviors that Organization A can provide. Through collaboration and gained partnerships in creating an interactive smart housing workshop, the two organizations have been able to combine their resources and tools to greatly benefit the local Somali community.

The focus of this study will be on current housing research at a broader, more universal level, as well as specific to the Somali community, in order to understand the basic need for tenants' rights education targeting this population. The author has also incorporated an added element of community engagement to successfully reach out to the Somali community. This study will highlight other successful methods of community outreach, as well as combining them with the author's methods to examine the process of community organizing and successful project implementation.

Literature Review

Community Organizing and Outreach

Ferguson and Stoutland define community development as "building a capacity to improve the quality of life among residents of low – and moderate – income neighborhoods" (1999, 65). They assert that community development, as a whole, is loosely configured with no central blueprint or set of guidelines to lead one towards a definitive end goal. These authors describe certain elements that are generally found in community development settings, such as critical exchange partners, sources of funding, regulatory groups, professional or trade associations, non-local as well as local connections, and other sources of influences. Ferguson

and Stoutland emphasize the importance of many strong alliances in order to further community development.

Gittel and Videll (1998) emphasize social capital as an important factor in community development and community organizing by highlighting the success of the LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) Demonstration Program. Their work describes the importance of building stronger internal ties and capacity in low-income communities and building bridges among the community members within the greater metropolitan support area. Taking a more ‘boots on the ground’ approach, they lay out five key factors of program strategy and implementation: Communication, Consistency, Congruence, Counterbalancing, and Context. Stemming from these factors, Gittel and Videll (1998) infer that success in community organizing does not simply rely on a single activity or program element, but in the combination of all these factors.

On implementation of community action programs, Perry et al. (2000) describe the consistent success and community support of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program in elementary schools, despite criticism from the research community. The study focuses on the addition of the D.A.R.E. Plus program that attempted to extend drug education into middle school. This was then implemented in 24 random schools and communities in Minnesota. The D.A.R.E. Plus program was enacted to improve the overall success rate of the current D.A.R.E. program taking place in elementary schools. The conclusions of the study find that the factors contributing to greater success included the implementation of strategies similar to those pointed out in the previously cited community development studies. Specifically, the D.A.R.E. Plus program highlighted greater *communication* with parents and community members, as well as stronger *alliances* with the outside community and other organizations with similar interests by creating a “community-level goal and vision.”

Housing Norms, Deficits and Barriers

Ytrehus (2001) describes four approaches for looking at housing needs: spatial physical-normative tradition; cultural relativist approach; the market oriented position; and the universal standards tradition. The *spatial physical-normative tradition* takes on an objective and scientific lens and focuses on housing needs as defined by “physical and spatial terms.” The *cultural relativist approach* dismisses the objective lens and judges housing needs based on historical and cultural traditions and norms. The *market oriented position* takes a stance based on economic theory and defines housing needs through the preferences of actors, such as homeowners, in the market. This approach argues that the most rational way to approach housing needs is through the traditional rules of supply and demand. The *universal standards tradition* incorporates the three other approaches into a comprehensive definition reflecting overall societal goals and is thus considered to be the best approach. It states that “the basic needs of all humans must be satisfied in order to give equal opportunities.” Shio (2006) critiques these four approaches in his comprehensive study of Somali housing needs in the Twin Cities, dismissing them in favor of Morris and Winter’s (1978) theory of family housing adjustment.

Through the housing adjustment model, Morris and Winter (1978) developed a set of norms that measure standards for housing. These norms are not based on the minimal housing needs set up by the government, but reflect measurements through cultural and social aspects of housing in the United States. This led to six determined norm categories: housing space norms, tenure norms, structure type norms, quality norms, expenditure norms, and neighborhood norms.

While these norms reflect the housing needs and activities within America, they may not reflect the exact needs of the emerging Somali population (Shio 2006), but are able to provide a good starting point.

It is when the housing conditions of a household are lower than the standards and norms, or adversely, when there is an excess in a certain category that there is a housing deficit. Morris and Winter listed with three ways to reduce any perceived deficit: housing adjustment (moving someplace new or changing the current household unit), household adaptation (needs reduction, constraint reduction, or reallocation of current resources), and household regeneration (regenerating the households' decision making abilities and joining in on social action with others).

Robert Murdie (1999), a professor at York University in Toronto, has been a leader in research on immigrant and refugee housing demand, specifically in the Toronto area; however his findings can be universally applicable. In his research, he focuses on several barriers of the Polish and Somali community in Toronto, however for consistency purposes, this study will concentrate on his findings relating to the Somali community.

Through surveys of 30 Somali men and 30 Somali women, Murdie found that the most important factor for the majority (60%) of the respondents when searching for their first permanent residence was the proximity to social networks such as relatives and friends. This correlates with the fact that 80% of the Somali respondents reported family members and other friends as their primary source of housing information when initially searching. In subsequent housing searches, priorities shift as affordability becomes more and more important. This is most likely because many Somali refugees are only eligible for low skilled work positions, and even if they come with skills or a degree from overseas, they are not recognized in the United States or Canada (Hadjiyanni 2007).

The length of time it took for Somalis to find their residences may be an indicator of looking for the best quality, or more likely, the general difficulties experienced in the search (Murdie 1999). Over 50% of the Somali respondents to Murdie's research questions indicated that it took longer than a month to find their first rental residence.

Chambon et al. (1997) point to family size and increased hospitality as a major issue for Somalis when searching for housing. This sentiment is echoed by Shio (1996) as he points out that many leaders and organizations believe that there is no housing issue among Somalis due to low homelessness rates within the community. However, several Somali respondents featured in Shio's study note that there is no homelessness problem because of the way that Somalis help each other – many share dwellings with family and friends under crowded conditions to avoid forcing anyone to live on the street.

The research done by Murdie (1999) builds off of findings from Chambon et al. (1997) in which, through focus group sessions, several immigrant populations identified 11 key barriers to finding adequate housing, which may contribute to the difficulties in the search for housing that Murdie had identified. They are: level of income, color of skin, source of income, ethnicity/culture/religion, knowledge of housing system, gender, language/accent, household type and size, knowledge of institutions and culture, and overall experience with the dominant culture.

Putting all of this data together and looking at the Morris and Winter models of housing norms and deficits, most new Somali refugees should expect to regularly see deficits in housing tenure. This notion is solidified by Chambon et al. (1997) when describing the challenge to find stable housing through indirect discrimination and lack of stable incomes. The majority of

households also experience deficits in space and structure type norms as Murdie (1999) found in his research, specifically with affordability becoming more and more important when searching for housing; households must settle for smaller and smaller homes. Murdie's findings also indicate deficits in expenditure; if Somali households cannot generate enough income to pay for their current residence, they must continue to downsize and search for more affordable locations (1999). Together, all of these findings also indicate deficits in quality and neighborhood norms; with continuous downsizing and moving, Somalis are forced into homes of lesser quality and are forced to separate from the neighborhoods they wish to be a part of and the people to whom they want to be near.

As stated formerly, these findings can be seen elsewhere and are not exclusive to the specific case studies. Relating back to Minnesota specifically, HOME Line (2011) indicates some of the top reasons Minnesota renter's seek rental assistance: repairs, evictions, security deposits, landlord foreclosures, breaking a lease, notice to vacate, lease questions, infestation, privacy/intrusion, fees, and housing discrimination. This displays a lack of basic tenant's rights knowledge in Minnesota's general population. On top of that, due to a barrier created by a lack of proficiency in English, the ability of immigrants to understand the legal binds of rental contracts and the knowledge of housing resources is significantly limited (Shio 2006).

Research Agenda

This study first aims to frame the challenges in the Minnesota rental market, specifically relating Somali renters. As stated previously, and according to the models created by Morris and Winter and Ytrehus, the Somali population faces many housing deficits that stand in the way of them living in adequate housing conditions. With Chambon et al. (1997) and Murdie (1999) outlining many of the challenges Somali renters have faced in various housing markets outside of Minnesota, and HOME Line describing rental housing barriers locally in Minnesota, one can form an ample picture of the direct problems facing Minnesota's Somali Renters.

This study then will create an individualized community outreach plan, taking cues from various organizing resources in order to reach out to the community. Ultimately, the project will create a method for outreach that will bring members of the Somali community together for a workshop on rental housing laws and tenant's rights. The author along with three non-profit organizations will then host this workshop. Finally, the community outreach steps will be evaluated through the results and turnout of the workshop and compared to other examples of community organizing.

Methods

Through examining the findings of Ferguson and Stoutland (1999) as well as Perry et al. (2000), this study established a unique step-by-step outline for community organizing and outreach as it relates to this project. It goes as follows: preliminary research and establish a basis of need (through ethnography and interviewing); create critical exchange partnerships; seek funding; extend partnerships and internal ties; create ties within the community; and secure the end goals.

Beginning with the first step, this project had to first determine a basis of need through preliminary research involving demographic searches, ethnography, and interviews. It was already established through Hadjiyanni (2007) that the majority of Somali residents cannot pay interest, thus ruling out most traditional mortgages and loans that would involve owning a home,

confining the majority of Somalis to the rental market. With that in mind, ethnography research was done around rental properties within the Cedar-Riverside and East Phillips neighborhoods of Minneapolis. The Cedar-Riverside neighborhood has seen a sizeable wave of Somali immigrants to the area since 2000, and out of nearly 3,000 housing units in the area, over 2,500 are renter-occupied (Corn and Domansky 2009). The East Phillips neighborhood also has served host to a growing Somali population, as described by the East Phillips Improvement Coalition (2011), stating that the number of African Americans (a majority being Somali and Oromo) currently makes up 20.4% of the total population of the area. Within these targeted areas, interviews were then conducted, to which the results painted a similar picture of housing barriers as described by Murdie (1999), Chambon et al. (1997), and Morris and Winter (1978).

The next step was then to create critical exchange partnerships, as explained by Ferguson and Stoutland (1999), between Organization A and Organization B. This was done by capitalizing on prior connections the author had with both organizations, and by facilitating collaboration and communication between the established contacts. The partnership was then approached as a mutually beneficial project to both organizations; for Organization A, it would assist in expanding and networking into Minneapolis, and for Organization B, it would help in providing a service to an already targeted population that they had not been able to previously provide. Emphasizing Gittel and Vitel's key components to community organizing, modes of contact between the two organizations and regular communications on the various happenings and advancements of the project were established to keep both parties up-to-date (1998).

As the initial critical exchange partnerships were set in place, the next step was to find a source of funding for the project. Ideally, this would consist of various grants and donations, however due to limited resources, this was not the case. This project suffered from time constraints as well as an initial lack of knowledge concerning local grant options. Because of this, the project relied on spare funds from both organizations to assist in paying for various expenses such as flyers to distribute within the Somali community (see Figure 1).

After a basis of funding had been established, this project then set out to extend partnerships as well as strengthen internal ties. With this, the author worked closely with Organization A to secure an on-staff housing attorney to help facilitate the project, as well as to assist with putting together essential presentation materials and creating a curriculum. The author also worked closely with a Refugee Behavioral Health Group through Organization B to determine how best to structure the workshop while drawing off of the Morris and Winter models of reflecting and respecting cultural and social identity yet still remaining informative on legal grounds (1978).

Through discussions with the representatives from Organizations A and B, it was agreed upon to extend the partnership with a non-profit Somali Community Organization (Organization C), in order to expand the reach of this project and strengthen bonds within the community. Organization C is a low-staffed organization that plays host to various events (i.e. plays, speakers, and holiday celebrations) geared toward the Somali community – specifically the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood – as well as others interested in the community.

Creating the extended partnership between the first two organizations and Organization C helped provide a seamless transition into the next step of this community organizing process, which is creating ties within the community. In order to achieve this goal, this project had to be made aware to other organizers within the community, as well as various community leaders and businesses. The D.A.R.E. Plus Program (Perry et al. 2000) served as a precedent for this portion of the organizing process. Perry et. al. state that much of the success of their program hinged on

direct communication with the community as well as stronger alliances within the program. Given this observation, the details of the program were then communicated via flyer distribution amongst businesses and community groups, word of mouth discussions, and mass e-mail campaigns targeting Somali organizations statewide.

Finally, this project was able to enter into the last outlined step and ultimately following through to its end result. For this project, the ending goals were to educate and inform the Somali community, as a growing population, of their rights as tenants in Minnesota's rental market.

Project and Results

During initial interviews and observations amongst members of the Somali community, several individuals cited a lack of awareness regarding tenant's rights as a common problem. As stated by Abdirizak¹, a recent immigrant, "Immigrant families renting houses need to know that they have rights." This sentiment was echoed by Mohamed who furthered Abdirizak's point by arguing that Somali immigrants are aware of the expectations regarding their role in the rental process but not the role of the property owner: "Most immigrant renters are aware and careful of their responsibilities as to paying their rent on time and so on. However, they need to know that they, as renters, have the right to live in a clean and safe place."

Another issue cited by immigrants was the challenges of language and cultural differences. For example, Abdiasis, an immigrant who has been in Minnesota for the last ten years, suggests the following: "Barriers fall under such categories as language, different cultural expectations, different rules and laws about housing, different expectations of standards of upkeep, different concept of time, different family size and social norms, different concepts of privacy and authority." This, again, shows a need for increased cultural and social awareness on the part of property owners, as suggested by Morris and Winter (1978) when describing housing norms and outlining methods for reducing housing deficits. Finally, Michael, a career advocate and immigrant behavioral health specialist, pointed out that even renters who are aware of their rights are often not aware of how to demand improvement in their living conditions: "Most Somali renters may not know who to contact if they are having an issue."

With that, Charles, the attorney from Organization A, and the author worked together to create an outline of what should be addressed at the workshop. Taking cues from HOME Line, it was decided that the focus would be on several of the top problems that renters have faced in Minnesota, such as repairs, general lease information, evictions, and intrusion policies. To address some of the issues outlined by Chambon et al. (1997), Murdie (1999), and the various concerns brought up by the interviewees, the workshop also incorporated visiting policies, discrimination and retaliation, how to best communicate with landlords, and where to find tenant's rights information after the workshop (i.e. Minnesota State Legislature website, Legal Aid departments, non-profits, as well as Organization A itself).

Through various collaborative efforts between the three organizations, a site for the workshop was secured in a community center that Organization C operates out of, located in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. The group had established the mutually convenient date of Tuesday, April 24th, and settled on a time frame of 6:00pm – 8:00pm so as to accommodate individuals finishing school and work hours.

A translator was also secured to have on hand. Through discussions with the Behavioral Health Director at Organization B and representatives from Organization C, we determined that

¹ All names have been changed for confidentiality.

it would be beneficial to have a translator in case a language barrier existed between older members of the community or if there were any misunderstandings of the legal terminology.

On April 24th, the final product of this research project was concluded as the workshop began at 6:00pm. There were a total of nine people in attendance: the author, the attorney, two other organizers, two college-aged Somali renters, one college-aged Ethiopian renter, one twenty-nine year old Somali renter (who was also on hand to assist with translations if needed), and one elder in the Somali community. The workshop began as a presentation from the attorney, but as time went on the attendees spoke up and it transformed into more of a discussion than the author had initially imagined. While unexpected, adding a discussion component to the body of the workshop seemed to be more helpful in accomplishing the goals of this project than a straight presentation followed by a question and answer session. The translator had to speak up once in order to clarify certain terminology as it applied to units versus number of tenants, otherwise the language appeared to be clear to everyone throughout the workshop. In the end, the entire session did not last for the entire two hours that was planned for, but went on for about an hour and ten minutes.

Evaluation and Moving Forward

Initially after the end of the workshop, the author concluded that the endeavor was a failure due to the low number of attendees. However, after some discussion with the community partners and some careful examination, the author's position was reevaluated and it was determined that the effort was a success, though in a different way than what was initially planned for. While this project may not have reached the population it aimed to, word spread to several individuals in the non-profit and public sectors who possess better means to assist an idea such as this move forward in the future.

One of the most prominent setbacks in the process was a limited access to resources and funds. With a larger budget, the project could have attracted more attendees with the promise of food and/or created a more sophisticated presentation. Initially, the hope was to market this workshop to the entire East African Community in Minnesota, including, aside from the Somali community, members of the Oromo and Swahili communities as well. Unfortunately, the lack of funding resources created too many obstacles to achieve this goal.

Aside from funding, this project was weak in establishing ties within the Somali community. What was initially thought of as outreach (i.e. handing out flyers) did little to actually engage many community members. One workshop attendee, Nadifa, who described himself as an elder in the community, spoke up at the end of the workshop, proclaiming, "This was a very good presentation, very informative. . . . I believe it needs to reach more renters . . . many who needed to hear this were not here today." Nadifa, along with the other attendees provided valuable feedback at the end of the session on how to improve for future events. Abdi, the twenty-nine year old renter who also was on hand as the translator, offered this advice, "Many members of the Somali community are reached by word of mouth. Only after that will the flyers work as a reminder."

Yet as the flyers had failed to attract much of the Somali community, they had succeeded to reach others in a way that was not previously expected. In the week leading up to the workshop, as well as the weeks after, the author received multiple emails and calls from various organizers, city employees, as well as a city councilman who had all come across the flyer for this event and were interested in discussing the process and possibly assisting in similar events in the future. Nadifa, who had actually been to the workshop, had come on behalf of a charter

school he worked for. They had received the flyer via email. From the direct responses to the flyers, it appears that they had succeeded in reaching various organizers, organizations, and officials, however were unsuccessful in reaching the individual community members. This led to the discovery that the step in the organizing process regarding strengthening bonds within the community required an added sub step of first reaching out to community leaders, and working with them to ultimately reach individuals. This project succeeded in the former sub step, but failed to accommodate the latter.

The newly found connections to various organizers and officials that had occurred within the weeks prior to, and following the workshop led the author to also realize the necessary creation of an additional step at the end of the organizing process: facilitate sustainable relationships. For any future additions to this project, or any reevaluations, research into partnerships and continued collaboration between organizations as well as communities is necessary. It was quickly apparent after the workshop that, in order to truly secure the end goals, this could not simply be a one-time event. The partnerships created as well as the outreach already established must be sustained – and expanded on in the future – through continued communication, planning, and collaboration.

The steps outlined in this project are very specific to the conditions they were designed for. As Ferguson and Stoutland (1999) explained, there is no definitive way to define the outreach process; therefore these steps are best applied when working with the Somali population relating to rental housing issues. These steps have added to the current body of literature of community outreach by simply giving another suggestion on how to reach a select population. In order for these steps to apply to another project, they must be amended to suit the specific conditions of said project. However, this project invites replication; the suggested addendums as well as the initial step-by-step process laid out can be applied to further outreach with Minnesota's Somali population regarding tenant's rights education. Optimistically, further research and replication of this project would, in itself, strengthen the bonds created by the author's initial efforts and follow through with the final suggested step of sustaining lasting partnerships.

Conclusion

This study examined a process of community outreach while studying the current housing barriers facing Minnesota's growing Somali community and ultimately created a workshop similar to Shio's recommendation of putting together an open forum to educate Somalis on housing resources. The results of initial interviews and ethnographic research displayed housing disparities facing Somalis in the rental market. These challenges proved similar to the models laid out by Chambon et al. (1997) and Murdie (1999).

Building off the research of Ferguson and Stoutland (1999), Gittell and Videl (1998), and Perry et al. (2000), this study asserted six basic steps for community outreach to apply to this workshop: preliminary research and establishing a basis of need (through ethnography and interviewing); creating critical exchange partnerships; seeking funding; extending partnerships and internal ties; creating ties within the community; and securing the end goals. These steps proved to be inadequate, leading the author to insert additional steps in this process for future endeavors specific to this topic. Specifically, creating ties within the community needs to be broken up into two sub steps; first forging relationships with community leaders and then, with their help, reaching out to individuals within the community. Next, in order to fully sustain the overarching goals of the project, the established outreach connections and partnerships must

remain continual in order to further expand on the completed actions and research and ultimately move forward.

The findings show, in accordance with Ferguson and Stoutland (1999), that community outreach is not based on a defined step-by-step process. The steps created in this study were unique to this case, and, if used as a reference, must be amended to suit the specifics of the project. Nevertheless, this project welcomes, and hopes to inspire, replication and further research in order to test the initial laid out steps and addendums. By doing this, the bonds created through sustained community relationships will be strengthened and potentially solidified. Deep community connections and ties are a must in order to pave the way for lasting relationships and to find success in future outreach endeavors.

I would like to express my thanks to Kristen Haltinner and Katie Peacock of the University of Minnesota, as well as organization leaders Tracey Goodrich and David Schuchman for all the guidance, wisdom, and optimism.

Questions About Rental Housing?

Su'aalo ku saabsan kireysiga guryaha?

Do you know your rights as a tenant? Do you have concerns regarding:

- ... *disputes or communication with your landlord?*
- ... *finding and filling out form letters?*
- ... *your security deposit?*
- ... *being a good tenant?*
- ... *repairs and damages to your building/apartment?*

If you have these or any other concerns regarding your rental housing units, please come to our **Smart Housing Workshop** at 6:00 pm on **April 24th**, presented by a [REDACTED] Housing Attorney. We will cover all these topics, and more in a short presentation and then open discussion/Question & Answer session.

Somali Interpreters will be provided.

We can help you:

- ✓ **Become a smarter renter (Noqo kiro-bixiye feejigan)**
- ✓ **Learn your tenant's rights (Baro xuquuqda kiro-bixiyha)**
- ✓ **Know who to turn to when problems arise (Ogow cidda aad la xiriirayso markii ay dihibaato timaado)**

Tuesday, April 24th, 2012, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

[REDACTED] Community Center

[REDACTED]
Minneapolis, MN [REDACTED]

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