



Affordable Housing & Homelessness Facts & Figures

1.5 million households in Canada cannot access a decent home that is affordable to them.

This is almost 13 per cent of all households.

Many of the same groups continue to be over-represented in these numbers:

- **26 % of lone-parent families**
- **18 % of immigrants**
- **20 % of Aboriginal households**

150,000 to 300,000 people are homeless in Canada.

It is estimated **65,000 young people** are homeless.

Why is housing so unaffordable?

1. There is not enough affordable housing to meet current demand and the expiration of federal agreements is threatening what we have.

In 2011, the federal government will support 9,900 fewer households in social housing than it did in 2010. This is due to the expiration of federal agreements which help to pay for social housing. If nothing is done to address this issue, valuable public assets will be lost, households will be at risk of losing housing that they can afford.

2. There are not enough rental units.

Renters are four times more likely than homeowners to have difficulty finding affordable housing. Despite our growing population, Canada has lost 18,000 rental units over the last decade. This has driven up prices as more households seek to occupy a smaller pool of units. There used to be incentives for developers to create rental housing, but they no longer exist.

3. Homeownership is a more costly burden than it once was.

Moderate-income families are increasingly priced out of the market. Prior to 2000, housing prices for 20 years stayed between 3 and 4 times provincial annual median income. Now, they are between 4.7 to 11.3 times the annual income of Canadians. Increasing energy costs also contribute to the expense of homeownership.

Federal investments have worked & are important.

Unfortunately, with 1.5 million households still in need of secure, adequate housing that they can afford, the current investment isn't enough.

How does housing help Canadians?

1. Investment in affordable housing will support sustained economic recovery.

Stimulus spending through Canada's Economic Action Plan (CEAP) has helped Canada to emerge relatively unscathed from the global recession. CEAP included a number of housing-related measures that have created jobs and helped to provide affordable housing to low-income families.

2. Investment in affordable housing creates quality jobs.

Housing construction is a particularly labour-intensive investment. New housing construction has a significant multiplier effect, with each new home creating four-to-six person years of direct and indirect employment.

3. Investment in energy retrofits has economic benefits.

Beyond the positive environmental outcomes, investing in energy retrofits creates jobs and makes housing more affordable by reducing energy costs.

4. Investing in housing reduces public cost

When housing is affordable and safe, health, employment and education outcomes improve, thus reducing public cost as households rely less heavily on public services. When spending requirements decrease, taxation rates can also be decreased.

So what has CHRA asked Parliament to do now to make housing more affordable?

[Over...]



What we are asking:

We know that a national housing strategy with long-term, predictable funding is required. With this as the overall goal, and building on existing federal investments that have made a difference, we ask that Parliament include these three pragmatic and cost-sensitive requests in budget 2012:

1. Enable social housing providers to undertake the repairs, renovations and retrofits necessary so that they can continue to offer affordable rents once the subsidies they receive from the federal government end.

- Social housing operating agreements are beginning to expire and many housing providers will not be able to keep their rents affordable for the more than 600,000 households they currently serve. Even if some rents can initially remain geared-to-income, without federal support, rental revenue (which is, by definition, low) will likely not be enough to pay for capital and maintenance requirements on an ongoing basis.
- Given this situation, **a time-limited fund for social housing renovation could be implemented.** This fund could be executed without any additional cost - due to the considerable reduction in federal expenditures on social housing that will take place as agreements expire. **This fund would create jobs, ensure affordable housing isn't lost and improve energy efficiency outcomes.**

2. Provide incentives for developers to build rental units, particularly those offered at or below average market rent in order to address the insufficient number of rental units across the country.

- CMHC could offer **low-interest loans for investors building purpose-built rental units.** Further incentives could be offered for rental properties that commit to moderately priced rents. With minimal administration costs, this could be undertaken at relatively little cost. **This fund would both create jobs and make housing more affordable.**

3. Existing housing and homelessness programs (Homelessness Partnering Strategy, Affordable Housing Initiative, CMHC renovation initiatives and ecoENERGY Retrofit-Homes program) have made a difference – but more needs to be done; these programs should be bolstered and extended.

- Annual **funding should be doubled and extended until 2017** so together they would be valued at \$787.9 million.

For further information, please contact:

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