

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6



October 21, 2016

## **RE: Calgary Community Housing Affordability Collective Recommendations for the National Housing Strategy**

Dear Minister:

On behalf of Calgary's Community Housing Affordability Collective (CHAC), we are pleased to provide recommendations for the **National Housing Strategy**.

**CHAC is the collective engine for improving housing affordability in Calgary through cross-sector collaboration and community-based advocacy.** We are a network of individuals and organizations that recognize a need to improve housing affordability in Calgary through collaboration and advocacy. CHAC uses a collective impact model that coordinates efforts and builds a common agenda, to advance the affordable housing outcomes of plans across Calgary that cannot be accomplished individually.

Our vision is a future where Calgary has housing that:

- supports choice along the entire housing spectrum;
- is safe, appropriate and in suitable locations;
- allows Calgarians to meet their lifetime needs; and
- is affordable to all Calgarians across all income levels.

To achieve this vision, we are guided by a high-level action plan that has three key outcomes:

1. Integrated approach to housing.
2. Stable and diverse housing mix.
3. Predictable and stable funding.

CHAC welcomes the federal government's renewed commitment to delivering a healthy housing system in Calgary and across Canada. CHAC believes that in order to be effective, a **National Housing Strategy** must address the following:

### **1. Support choice along the entire housing spectrum.**

- A national strategy should address all elements of the housing spectrum, from shelters and supportive housing to affordable ownership and market housing. Our vision is that Canadians from all walks of life can access a diversity of housing options to meet their lifetime needs.
- Support an integrated system of housing programs and policies, where households are supported to transition through the housing spectrum as their needs evolve. For example, eliminate silos and ensure continuity between programs that address homelessness and social and affordable housing.

- Housing policies should avoid a one-size fits-all approach in favor of flexibility and autonomy, recognizing that there are different solutions and different regions have unique needs.

**2. Invest and offer incentives to increase the supply of non-market housing stock.**

- Substantial capital investment is required to meet the demand for non-market housing. Federal investment is needed both for new construction and preservation/renovation of existing affordable homes. Providing increased, predictable capital funding to provincial, municipal government and non-profits will allow non-market housing providers to plan ahead, budget more efficiently, and ultimately better serve Canadians.
- Commit to long-term operational funding for supportive housing programs serving vulnerable populations, such as through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.
- Make surplus federal lands available for new non-market housing development before offering them to the private market.
- Offer tax incentives to spur increased development of new purpose built rental housing stock and affordable home ownership units.

**3. Build capacity and improve sustainability within the non-market housing sector.**

- Manage the transition to the End of Operating Agreements (EOA) with support and resources for non-market housing providers to become financially and operationally sustainable.
- Support innovative and entrepreneurial operating models or agreements that grant housing providers flexibility to leverage, redevelop, or dispose of their assets, or to access alternative sources of capital, as necessary to ensure their future viability.

**4. Improve affordability of market housing.**

- In order to have Canadians transitioning out of affordable housing and moving along the housing spectrum, it is important to improve affordability of market housing. Addressing affordability is critical to relieve pressure on subsidized rentals.
- Carefully consider the market fundamentals of supply and demand, taxation of new homes, the cost of infrastructure and transit associated with new development, regulations and approval processes, interest rates and mortgage rules.
- Support market stability and sustainability through long-term measures (rather than quick fixes) that take into consideration local market data and mitigate unintended consequences to different regions.

**5. Clarify roles and ensure alignment across all levels of government.**

- Clarify the role of federal, provincial and local governments in delivering on the objectives of the national housing strategy. This should include an outline of governance and responsibilities for implementation across governmental agencies and departments.
- Local organizations are experts on the need, market conditions, and delivery in their respective communities, and must be enabled to participate in the development and implementation of housing policies and initiatives to meet local needs.
- Review and align with related policies impacting housing, including (but not limited to) the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy under development, as well as the many existing local housing and homelessness plans and strategies.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit our recommendations for the **National Housing Strategy**. We would be pleased to engage in further conversation in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

**Calgary's Community Housing Affordability Collective**

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cc: The Honourable Kent Hehr, P.C., M.P. for Calgary Centre  
The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, M.P., Chair of the Alberta Liberal Caucus

*CHAC website coming soon!*

This message is endorsed by the following Community Housing Affordability Collective members:

