


Update on 6 Calls to Action

Pan Canadian Voice on Women's Housing
Symposium 2022

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Housing and Women with Lived Expertise: The National Housing Strategy (NHS) should be developed in consultation with experts with lived experience of homelessness and housing need. The CMHC should link the NHS to the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Strategy to End Violence Against Women. The CMHC should be accountable for its progress to stakeholders in women's housing.

- Adoption of NHSA, National Housing Strategy Act, which means every household has the right to an affordable, accessible and suitably sized and located home
- The appointment of the Federal Housing Advocate to office this year
- Investments under the Gender-based Violence Strategy but those investments don't mention need for permanent, accessible and secure housing.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Housing:

The federal government should ensure that all Indigenous women's housing, in urban centres and off reserve as well as on reserve, is inclusive of healing and treatment centres and administered by First Nations, Métis and Inuit women. The government of Canada should take immediate steps to reverse the policy that excludes Inuit from accessing federal shelter funding.

- Last year's budget saw a very small investment of \$300 Million in the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Strategy. This amount is far from what is needed to address the needs of almost 120,000 Indigenous households in need, majority led by single mothers.
- As a result of action on MMIWG report, the federal government announced 724.1 Million to expand culturally relevant supports for Indigenous peoples facing gender-based violence.
- Reports from the National Housing Council on National Housing Strategy present that most housing created through the biggest programs under NHS is not reaching those in most need of affordable housing.

Infrastructure Funding for Housing: The CMHC should ensure that funding for women's housing is equal to 25% (later 33%) of total NHS funding envelope. It should reinstate the Shelter Enhancement Program immediately, allowing for shelter and other kinds of housing.

- The **Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCF)** is designed to produce housing that is affordable to middle-income families, a group that tends to have much higher incomes and lower rates of housing need than other household types. This definition has not been used by CMHC before and is inconsistent with how municipal housing providers assess affordability.
- About half (49%) of new units in **National Housing Co-investment** funded projects could lift the median household in their areas out of core housing need. The NHCF is better than the RCF at producing units that could lift low-income households out of need: about one third (35%) of new units in NHCF-funded developments are suitable for and affordable to low-income households.
- While the **Rapid Housing Initiative** is the smallest of the three programs studied, it shows promise as an avenue for addressing core housing need.
- Shelter Enhancement Program in 2021 invested \$31 million in funding for 12 additional shelters on First Nations was announced, with additional funding for emergency and transitional shelters for First Nations, Métis and Inuit committed (CMHC, 2021a).

A Voice for Women's Housing: The CMHC should provide ongoing funding to the Pan-Canadian Voice for Women's Housing.

- As of 2021, the Pan-Canadian Voice for Women's Housing has received enough long-term funding to support staff and research from Women and Gender Equality, formerly known as Status of Women Canada.

Operational Funding for Women's and Women-Serving Organizations: The CHMC should advocate for funding for women's and women-serving organizations to be comparable to the level of funding for services and programs provided directly by government and broader public sector agencies. Community-based front-line workers and organizational and program staff should be competitively compensated.

- The federal government can and should make cost-sharing agreements conditional upon recipient governments and organizations adopting a rights-based, GBA+ approach. This includes agreements that require operational funding for social and supportive housing, as has been the case for the Rapid Housing Initiative. It could prioritize new and renovated social housing for Canada Housing Benefits, in order to bring costs down to affordable levels. This is particularly important for larger households requiring 3+ bedroom homes.
- Funding under Social Housing Agreements (and federal-provincial operating agreements with Quebec and PEI) and NHS bilateral agreements with provinces and territories allows for affordability support and ongoing operations funding.

Women and a Guaranteed Annual Income: the CMHC should advocate for a Guaranteed Annual Income program that is reflective of regional realities. The program should be built using an intersectional gender lens with the participation of a diverse cross-section of women. It should be responsive to women's self-identified needs such as ensuring family preservation, sustainable, rent-geared-to-income housing, strong transitional supports, and be in addition to child benefits.

- Social Assistance rates are significantly below the poverty line and have not increased with cost of living
- New Census data representing a decrease in core housing need, even when rental supply has increasingly become unaffordable across Canada represents the effect of the temporary wage boost likely offset the negatives of minimal affordable rental supply (and few housing allowances), erosion of the existing affordable stock, and the substantial and compounding increases in rent levels since 2016.