

Throughout 2022, the Government of Manitoba held multi-sectoral consultations on its commitments to strategically reduce and end homelessness and advance a strategy for seniors to stay safe in their own homes and communities. The Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association (MNPHA) has been pleased to participate in these consultations, and heard from its members, stakeholders, and others involved in the throughout that safe, affordable, dignified housing with appropriate supports must play a central role in those strategies. The 2023 budget is an opportunity to resource the achievement of their objectives.

Community housing is the most cost-effective and sustainable investment in addressing housing needs for the lowest income Manitobans; research demonstrates that over time it remains more affordable than private-sector rental housing that receives initial government investments, and that it is more accessible for those often excluded from market-based housing, including those experiencing and at risk of homelessness. Across the province, there is a deficit of about 35,000 rental housing units. The majority of the need is for housing available at rents affordable to the low and very low income populations, with single person households in the greatest need overall. At the same time, the existing stock of community housing is at risk of being lost. The vast majority of these 33,000 homes were built between 1970-1989, and are in need of major capital repairs and modernization to be able to serve the next generation of Manitobans. The sale of Lion's Place Housing could be the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the loss of community housing without immediate action.

The 2023 budget can immediately invest in housing through the three following recommendations:

1. Create a Capital Funding Program for Existing Community Housing

Recommendations:

- Undertake an assessment of all non-profit housing to assess capital needs, and develop a capital program to bring existing buildings up to standard. Based on a condition review of a number of large non-profit housing suppliers, this program should be \$1B/5 years to meet the current needs, or \$200m in 2023-24.

For community housing with existing agreements, because of years of budget reductions and inability to build adequate reserve funds, a capital program to repair and modernize them is urgently needed. MNPHA's report on the expiry challenge found that 96% of the community housing with post-85 agreements are not viable without a renewed funding model, and 82% likely do not have sufficient capital reserves. Losing the existing assets and the good will of the volunteers and professionals in the sector would be a devastating loss, one that would cost much more to replace than to simply maintain.

2. Create New Supply of Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing

Recommendations:

- Develop a continuous Capacity Program/Fund that non-profit housing organizations can easily access to assist them to increase their capacity to develop new housing and increase their portfolios as the opportunities arise. This will lead to increase units and additional revenue that will ensure long term sustainability.
- Develop a new housing supply program that can leverage Federal investments. As a start, invest in 1,500 units of rent-geared-to-income housing to address the immediate housing need in Manitoba, with \$200m in new dollars.

Housing alone will not end homelessness, but homelessness cannot be ended without an adequate supply of deeply affordable housing. Funding new housing in a predictable and long-term manner, with an up-front investment is the best way to: leverage federal dollars, create the scale and momentum necessary in the community housing sector to build efficiently, and reduce the reliance on institutional and emergency-oriented responses such as emergency shelters, policing, long-term care beds, and emergency rooms.

3. Provide Consistent Resources for Tenant Support within Housing

Recommendations:

- Extend the Housing Supports Initiative to a long-term and predictable funding program.
- Target health and mental health funding to create supportive housing models for populations who need it, including seniors, people exiting homelessness, families affected by domestic violence, and individuals and families in transition.

Tenants often live in community housing due to complex poverty, which includes experiences with child welfare systems, health and mental health challenges, family violence, and migration to a new community. Some individuals and families require a connecting point to service continuums, in addition to an affordable housing unit. Several organizations currently receive funding to provide for tenant supports through Regional Health Authorities in the form of Tenant Resource Coordinators or Tenant Support Workers - these vital positions that support tenants with physical, social, or mental health needs have been maintained over time, but it has been years since this funding has been re-evaluated or made available to new organizations/organizations that have seen an increase of tenants with higher needs.

The Housing Supports Initiative is an excellent pilot project to demonstrate the impact of additional supports within housing or through partnerships; the program has assisted 542 families to transition into permanent housing and 207 households to avoid eviction. For every dollar invested, at least \$27 was returned in savings related to preventing eviction or homelessness.

Through the development and renewal of community housing, Manitoba has an opportunity to create local jobs, build its economy, and at the same time strengthen its social safety net for those most at risk to economic and health shocks. Making ends meet and improving affordability for the lowest income Manitobans starts with a home. MNPFA look forward to working with the Government of Manitoba to take advantage of this moment, for the long-term prosperity of all.

WE REPRESENT:



over **100** non-profit
housing providers



who collectively own and
manage more than **24,000**
affordable homes



across **25** communities
in Manitoba

The dedicated volunteers and employees of the non-profit housing sector strive to ensure non-profit housing in Manitoba is secure, sustainable, and affordable for all who need it.