

Housing Supports Affordability

Key Messages - 2023



The Issues: A Brief Overview

Alberta offers the **Alberta Advantage for individuals, families, and businesses**. This includes high-paying jobs, low taxes, and our province’s natural beauty. Access to adequate and affordable housing supports the Alberta Advantage. Our efforts to increase migration **require preparation** for a growing population by creating **desirable, sustainable communities that provide people with a true sense of home**.

How Housing Supports Affordability

Beyond access to housing that supports your needs, housing providers continuously work to meet their communities' current and future needs. Inflation has reduced buying power, and housing providers are doing more with less.

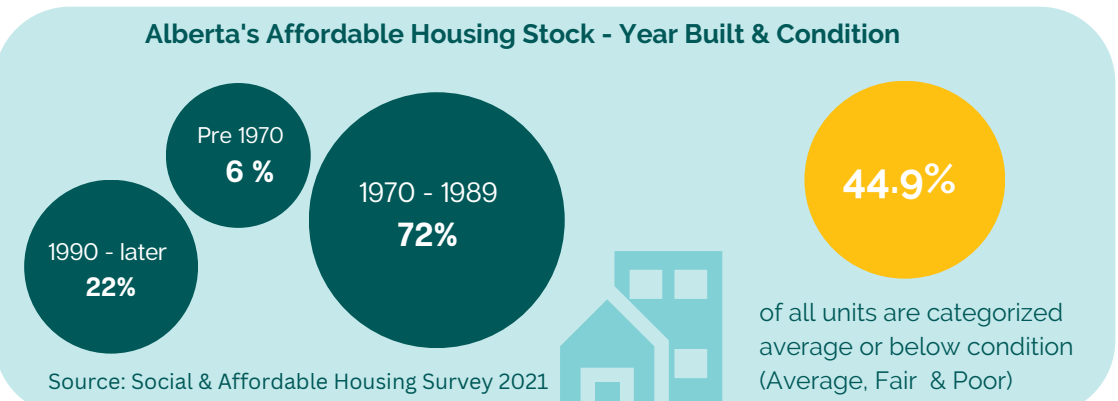
Scotiabank's Global Economics Insights highlights that shortages in one housing area means **price increases and a spillover effect on the housing continuum**. The Alberta Advantage is diminished when you cannot secure housing that meets your needs and budget.

We are mindful that there is **only one taxpayer in Alberta. Individuals, the government, and communities bear the cost** of providing appropriate housing for Albertans. Investing in prevention is less costly on multiple levels.

How Albertans Can Support Housing

Through all levels of government prioritizing **housing and support needs** and **addressing capacity challenges**.

Alberta's affordable housing stock is aging. This is a liability to everyone. We need to build more housing and, require adequate funding to address the upkeep of assets; otherwise, our affordable housing infrastructure deficit will continue to outpace efforts to build new units.



THE ISSUES



17.1%

of Albertans were in core housing need related to housing affordability which is one component of calculating core housing need. This means over 690,000 Albertans are spending more than 30% of their income on housing
Census 2021



Affordable Housing Waitlist

23,000

HOW HOUSING SUPPORTS AFFORDABILITY

For every \$10 invested in supportive housing, \$22 was saved in government spending
Canadian Mental Health Association

The Alberta Government projects that by 2046; our population will grow by **2 million**. **One in five of our population will be over the age of 65**. If Alberta does not have the housing that supports our growing population, we will become less desirable for individuals, families, and businesses. The only way to meet our province's growing housing and support needs is by prioritizing housing as central to Alberta's economic future.

ASCHA believes this can be accomplished through the following:

- An **empowered Cabinet Committee on Housing**.
- **Building capacity within the sector by addressing operational challenges** to meet Alberta's current and future housing and support needs.
- **Strengthening** community supports, including **homecare** and **tenant supports**, to reduce acute or crisis response and keep Albertans housed.
- **Improved funding models** are needed, moving to a community-based and preventative housing support system for Albertans.
- **Maintaining and redeveloping existing housing stock** to offer desirable places to call home, which support the broader communities.
- **Increase operational funding** to address the impacts of inflation and the real cost of delivering housing and support for Albertans needing wrap-around services.
- **Increase the Lodge Assistance Program (LAP) grant** for inflation to offset increasing requisitions to municipalities and ensure equitable resourcing regardless of individual municipality's ability to fund.
- **Extend utility subsidies** to all affordable housing and include all units.
- **Adjust the Temporary Rental Assistance Benefit (TRAB) and Rent Assistance Benefit (RAB)** to reflect the full reinstatement of rent supplement and allow housing management bodies greater flexibility in allocating and extending to all regions.
- **Extend Capital Maintenance Renewal (CMR) funding to all Seniors Lodges**.
- **Increase investment for 5-year maintenance and redevelopment** for our existing, aging housing stock as promised in Stronger Foundations.
- Work with municipal partners to **remove barriers to operations and development**, including property tax exemptions/grants-in-lieu of taxes for housing that targets lower-income Albertans or has government-regulated accommodation rates.
- **Invest in multi-billion capital grant funding** for new constructions to reach Stronger Foundations' target of 13,000 new spaces.
- Leverage federal funding and **offer a full financial backstop** for housing providers applying for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) funding.
- **Allow HMBs eligibility for long-term borrowing** for housing projects through *Local Authorities Capital Financing Act*.

These recommendations are a starting point from a perspective informed by front-line subject matter experts and constituencies across Alberta that believe that **every Albertan deserves to live well in their chosen community in safe, appropriate, and stable housing**.

Our full policy recommendations are in *Housing Supports Alberta, Albertans Support Housing*.

Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness (comprised of organizations leading the way to align resources and increase progress on homelessness) showed a significant impact on the use of emergency services & interactions with enforcement services, including:

46% decrease in EMS interactions

47% reduction in days hospitalized

39% decrease in Emergency & Urgent Care visits

(2008 - 2018)

OUR ASK

1. Prioritize housing as central to affordability & Alberta's economic future
2. Increase capacity in the housing sector
3. Strengthen the supports to keep Albertans appropriately housed



www.ascha.com

The Alberta Seniors & Community Housing Association (ASCHA) is the provincial association representing seniors and community housing in the Province. ASCHA currently represents over 100 public, non-profit, and private housing providers, employing over 22,000 workers and serving over 60,000 Albertans. We work closely with members, municipalities, and the Government of Alberta to ensure the growth and sustainability of our housing sector and to truly benefit the lives of the individuals our member organizations serve.