

Housing Supports Alberta, Albertans Support Housing

Key Messages - 2023



The Issues; A Brief Overview

Housing costs are the biggest monthly expense for most Albertans and are related to overall concerns about affordability. Housing provides a sense of connectedness, community, and security.

Housing advocacy matters - Albertans need access to housing and the supports to keep them housed, and housing affordability more broadly to be the top priority in the upcoming provincial election.

How Housing Supports Albertans

Housing and housing providers play a **vital role** in communities, and like our unique communities, **there is no one-size-fits-all solution**. Living in housing that supports your needs positively impacts your health and well-being and, in turn, how you contribute to your community. Housing providers are continuously working to provide residents with a home that supports their needs and provide front-line experience in how our housing options can be more person-centred, adapting to the changing needs of Albertans.

How Albertans Can Support Housing

All levels of government need to **prioritize housing** as a **core need** and a **fundamental right**.

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.

Congregate seniors living is included in the housing continuum providing a **wellness model of living as we age, focused on person-directed choice**.

ASCHA strongly believes in prioritizing housing and has proposed solutions to meet Albertans' current and future housing and support needs including:

- Alberta needs an **empowered Cabinet Committee** on Housing.
- Address operational challenges by **increasing operational funding** to account for inflation as a cost-effective preventative measure to meet Albertan's current and future housing and support needs.
- Provide **24/7 homecare support** to Albertans living in congregate seniors settings to alleviate acute care pressures and crisis response.

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 ALBERTA

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

- Fund **tenant support workers** to provide residents with needed supports to remain housed.
- **Increase operational funding to meet the actual cost of delivering housing** and the **wrap-around services** Albertans are in need desperate of.
- **Increase the Lodge Assistance Program (LAP) grant** to manage inflation and offset increasing municipal requisitions.
- **Extend utility subsidies** to all affordable housing and include all units.
- Replace **inefficient legacy funding models** for designated supportive living (DSL).
- **Increase DSL accommodation fees** to reflect costs and index to inflation.
- Adjust the Temporary Rental Assistance Benefit (TRAB) and Rent Assistance Benefit (RAB) to **reflect the full reinstatement of the rent supplement**, with flexibility for Housing Management Bodies (HMBs) to allocate and **extend to all regions of the province**.
- **Extend Capital Maintenance Renewal (CMR) funding** to Seniors Lodges regardless of ownership.
- 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*.

ASCHA looks forward to working collaboratively on the proposed solutions and preventative measures, including all public, non-profit and private housing providers to support a stronger housing and support system for Albertans.

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 can be found 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 for Albertans
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.