



CHRA's Budget 2016 Highlights on Affordable Housing and Homelessness

CHRA was pleased to see that many new funding measures, in line with its pre-budget asks, were announced in the 2016 federal budget.

Below are the highlights, as stated in *Growing the Middle Class*:

Overarching messaging (p.97)

“All Canadians need and deserve housing that is safe, adequate and affordable. Without it, Canadians feel less secure and that makes it harder to accomplish every other goal—from raising healthy children to pursuing education, jobs and opportunity. When affordable housing is in short supply, Canada’s whole economy suffers.”

“Investing in affordable housing will provide targeted support to those who need it most and create good jobs that help grow Canada’s economy in a clean and sustainable way.”

Implementation phases (p.87)

- The Government’s plan will be implemented in two phases. In addition to funding flowing through the existing programs that support infrastructure, the Government will implement a short-term Phase 1 plan to immediately invest in the infrastructure Canadians need—to modernize and rehabilitate public transit, water and wastewater systems, provide affordable housing, and protect existing infrastructure from the effects of climate change.
- Phase 1 focuses primarily on infrastructure investments over the next two years.
- Phase 2 will deliver on the remaining eight years of the Government’s long-term infrastructure plan. In this phase, the goals will be broader and more ambitious: a more modern, cleaner economy; a more inclusive society; and an economy better positioned to capitalize on the potential of global trade.

Overall funding on social infrastructure (p.97)

- As part of the Government's Phase 1 commitments, Budget 2016 proposes initial social infrastructure investments totaling \$3.4 billion over five years. These investments will help expand affordable housing (including shelters for victims of violence), support early learning and child care, renew cultural and recreational infrastructure, and improve community health care facilities on reserve. As referenced in Chapter 3—A Better Future for Indigenous Peoples, of this new funding, \$1.2 billion will be invested in First Nations, Inuit and northern communities.
- Budget 2016 proposes to invest \$2.3 billion over two years, starting in 2016–17. Of this amount, \$2.2 billion reflects the Government's commitment to invest in social infrastructure, including \$739 million for First Nations, Inuit and northern housing.

National Housing Strategy (p.98)

- To ensure that these investments are most effective and to help the social housing sector achieve self-reliance, the Government will consult with provinces and territories, Indigenous and other communities, and key stakeholders in the coming year to develop a National Housing Strategy.

Investment in Affordable Housing Initiative (p.99)

- To support the construction of new affordable housing units, the renovation and repair of existing affordable housing, measures to support housing affordability such as rent supplements, and measures to foster safe, independent living, the Government will invest \$504.4 million over two years, starting in 2016–17. This increased support is expected to benefit more than 100,000 Canadian households.

Seniors (p.99)

- Budget 2016 proposes to provide \$200.7 million over two years, starting in 2016–17, to support the construction, repair and adaption of affordable housing for seniors. While funding will be provided under the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, provinces and territories will not be required to cost-match these investments. This investment is expected to help improve housing conditions for more than 5,000 low-income senior households (p. 99)

First Nations Communities (p.139)

- To address urgent housing needs on reserve, Budget 2016 proposes to provide \$554.3 million over two years beginning in 2016–17. Of this amount, \$416.6 million over two years would be provided to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to address immediate housing needs on reserve. An additional \$137.7 million over two years would be provided to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, most of which would support the renovation and retrofit of existing housing on reserve (p.139)

Renewal and repair (p. 100)

- To support these necessary retrofits and renovations, Budget 2016 proposes to provide \$573.9 million over two years, starting in 2016–17. This investment will help address the increasing demand for repairs as social housing units age, and will also improve efficiency and reduce energy use, lowering utility costs and making housing more affordable (p.99).

Rent subsidies (p.100)

- Budget 2016 proposes to reallocate \$30 million over two years, starting in 2016–17, to help these providers maintain rent-geared-to-income for households living in social housing. This additional support would be provided on a time limited basis until long-term approaches to help the social housing sector achieve self-reliance can be developed through consultations with provinces, territories and stakeholders.

Affordable Rental Housing (p.100)

- To encourage the construction of affordable rental housing, Budget 2016 proposes to invest \$208.3 million over five years, starting in 2016–17, in an Affordable Rental Housing Innovation Fund, to be administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation will also consult with stakeholders on the design of an Affordable Rental Housing Financing Initiative to provide low-cost loans to municipalities and housing developers for the construction of new affordable rental housing projects. Up to \$500 million in loans would be available

each year for five years. This initiative could support the construction of more than 10,000 new rental units over five years.

Homelessness (p.101)

- Budget 2016 proposes to invest an additional \$111.8 million over two years, starting in 2016–17, in the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

Shelters for victims of violence (p.101)

- Budget 2016 proposes to provide \$89.9 million over two years, beginning in 2016–17, for the construction and renovation of shelters and transition houses for victims of family violence. While funding will be provided under the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, provinces and territories will not be required to cost-match these investments. This unprecedented investment is expected to support the construction or renovation of over 3,000 shelters spaces over the next two years.

The CHRA's members and stakeholders include housing providers, municipalities, businesses, all 13 provincial and territorial housing departments, service and support agencies, individuals, students and other housing-related associations and networks.

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