

Canadian Housing and Renewal Association

Strategic Plan • 2023-2027



Contents

Context	3
This Plan	4
Vision	7
Mission	8
Strategic Goals 1	9
Plan on a Page	15

WITH THANKS

This strategic plan is the product of a collaborative process facilitated by SHS Consulting, involving the CHRA Board of Directors, staff, and over 70 members from across Canada.

We are grateful for the significant contributions of all strategic planning participants.

Acknowledging the Land on which we Work

The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association acknowledges that our offices, located in Ottawa, are on the unceded, unsurrendered Territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, whose presence here reaches back to time immemorial. Further, CHRA respects and affirms the inherent and Treaty Rights of all Indigenous Peoples across this land.

Context

The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) was established in 1968 as a national non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and strengthening the community housing sector.

Our mission is to lead and provoke system-wide action toward the right to housing for all by serving as the national voice of the community housing sector and creating the conditions for community housing providers to achieve their goals.

Our strength comes from our members. As a national membership-based organization, we represent organizations and individuals from every Canadian province and territory. Our members include affordable and social housing providers, Indigenous housing providers, municipalities, provincial and territorial housing departments, housing associations and networks, non-profit organizations, business partners, and individuals.

Our Changing Environment

Adopting a future-oriented approach to strategic planning, the CHRA strategic planning team identified some of the most critical and uncertain signals and trends of change on our horizon that have great implications for the organization. These themes include:

- The **future of work**, including reliance on technology, artificial intelligence, and access to information
- The **divisive nature of technology** in society—its impact on social and economic division
- The rise in **cyber security challenges** and internet safety
- **Economic volatility** and the threat of recession amid an environment of high inflation and interest rates
- Persistent **inter-jurisdictional challenges and political polarization** on housing issues
- A lack of **long-term funding commitment** to housing
- The emergence of **construction innovation** to advance housing creation
- The pressing need to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** from infrastructure
- An increase in **extreme weather events** and other impacts of climate change threatening housing security
- **Workforce shortages** making it difficult to sustain capacity and operations
- The emergence of **human-rights-based approaches** to housing
- **Increased awareness** and public interest in housing issues

Our Superpowers

There are several challenges getting in the way of progress. While we cannot ignore these realities, we chose to begin our conversations from a place of examining “what we have” as an organization and a sector.

This plan leverages CHRA’s unique capabilities in the housing sector—our “superpowers” or what we do really well. Through our vision, mission, and strategic goals, we amplify our roles in advocacy, policy, convening collaborators and partners, and disseminating the vast knowledge and skills of our experienced membership.

This Plan

A Way Forward for CHRA

This strategic plan comes at a time of great urgency in the housing sector. As housing and homelessness challenges reach a critical state, the Board of Directors, staff, and members of CHRA rolled up their sleeves to develop this renewed strategic plan.

This plan situates the organization within the broader housing system in Canada to articulate our unique role and contributions to ensuring everyone in Canada can live somewhere in security, peace, and dignity.

Through our strategic planning process, we set out to make sense of an uncertain future—to contemplate changing circumstances in our environment. This strategic plan aims to produce preparedness and provide us with the tools to advance our mission as an organization.

Our Ambition

The CHRA Board of Directors, staff, and members set out to create a plan that:

- Leverages our unique capabilities in the housing sector
- Situates a role for CHRA in the broader housing system
- Is inspirational, impactful, and bold
- Reflects our beliefs and vision for a country where everyone can live in security, peace, and dignity

Reading this Plan

The CHRA strategic plan includes three key elements.



Our Beliefs

Our beliefs as an organization guide our strategy and everything we do. These beliefs shine through in our vision, mission, and strategic goals.

Everyone has the human right to safe, dignified, and affordable housing—a good home supports all people to achieve success and reach their full potential.

We know housing is a core component of reconciliation, and we prioritize action toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Governments have a duty to lead in providing access to safe, quality, and affordable housing and services beyond bricks and mortar to address diverse and unique needs.

We believe our strength comes from the unified voice of our diverse members from across the country.

Collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders are central to our success and impact.

Infusing Reconciliation and Cultural Principles

Housing is a core component of Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. As the national association representing the community housing sector, focused on realizing the right to housing for all in Canada, **CHRA is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.**

CHRA wholeheartedly supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Principles of Reconciliation as well as the TRC Calls to Action.

As an organization committed to implementing the principles of Reconciliation, CHRA's culture must be influenced by Indigenous culture. CHRA staff and Board of Directors commit to the following cultural norms and encourage all its members to adopt the following norms.

Diversity and Inclusion

- Respect for diversity is not limited to race, disability, age, or gender but extends to diversity of thought, opinion, and perspective.
- Inclusion means ensuring full participation. To assist in this regard, CHRA staff undertakes cultural competency training on a regular basis with a particular focus on Indigenous cultures.
- CHRA Board meetings and other gatherings commence with Indigenous land acknowledgements.

Communication

- We listen with patience and understanding. Everyone has a story.
- We keep others informed by sharing information as requested.
- We seek first to understand others and then to be understood. We ensure everyone has a voice and that each voice is heard and understood.
- Tone and manner are important.
- We share knowledge in an effort to help each other and build understanding – no one person is considered “better” than the other.
- We communicate with the intent of being supportive and helpful.

Interpersonal

- We develop and maintain meaningful relationships.
- Trust is critical for our organization to operate and work toward the best possible outcome.
- We demonstrate empathy, sensitivity and understanding for the feelings of others, knowing that what we say, how we say it, and what we do has an impact.
- CHRA Board and staff strive for a relationship of mutual partnership, where both staff and Board are endeavouring to achieve common objectives and impact.

Collaboration

- We cultivate and maintain respectful relationships and strive to be on good terms with others.
- Actions are for the good of the group – they are not for personal gain or self-importance.
- We seek out others' ideas in an effort to achieve the best outcome.
- A community of sharing exists; everyone is expected to “roll up their sleeves and contribute.”
- Information is not considered a source of power—it is a shared service.
- We engage in collective decision-making and involve others in decisions that may impact them or their organization.

Representation and Governance

- Issues impacting Indigenous Peoples within CHRA must be discussed and led by Indigenous Peoples.
- The CHRA Indigenous Caucus will be the lead body providing input and direction on issues impacting Indigenous housing in a spirit of open collaboration.
- Where possible, Indigenous representatives will represent CHRA for external purposes on issues impacting Indigenous housing.

CHRA is grateful for Namerind Housing Corporation whose Statement on Culture inspired and served as a template for this statement.

Our Engagement Process

This page provides an overview of our engagement process to develop this Strategic Plan. The process included six (6) key opportunities involving CHRA members, staff, and the Board of Directors.

Key Stakeholders

- Board of Directors
- Staff
- Members

PHASE 1

Understanding the Current State

Dec 2022

We began the investigation into the **current-state environment, pressures, and trends** that may impact CHRA's new strategic plan.

Kickoff and Background Research

One-on-One Interviews

PHASE 2

Building our Desired Future

Jan 2023

We used the information gathered in Phase 1 as a jumping-off point to build the CHRA **desired future role, strategy, and impact** in the sector.

● ● ●
Survey

● ●
Strategic Planning Session #1

● ●
Strategic Planning Session #2

PHASE 3

Planning our way to the Future State

Mar

We focused on **how to realize** our validated mission and vision identified in Phase 2.

●
Strategic Planning Session #3

●
Strategic Plan Development and Congress Feedback Session

Apr

May

Vision

our shared aspiration for the future

our **national scope** goes beyond the community housing sector and reaches other organizations and people connected to housing outcomes

the **right to housing** recognizes that people in Canada have the right to live somewhere in security, peace, and dignity in housing that meets the following criteria:

- security of tenure
- availability of services, materials, facilities, and infrastructure
- affordability
- habitability
- accessibility
- location related to health, employment, education, and other social facilities
- cultural adequacy

A thriving housing system in Canada, where we realize the right to housing for all.

we want to see this vision realized for **all people in Canada**

Mission

why we exist

our efforts go beyond the community housing sector to **activate** organizations and people connected to housing outcomes

We lead and provoke system-wide action toward the right to housing for all by...

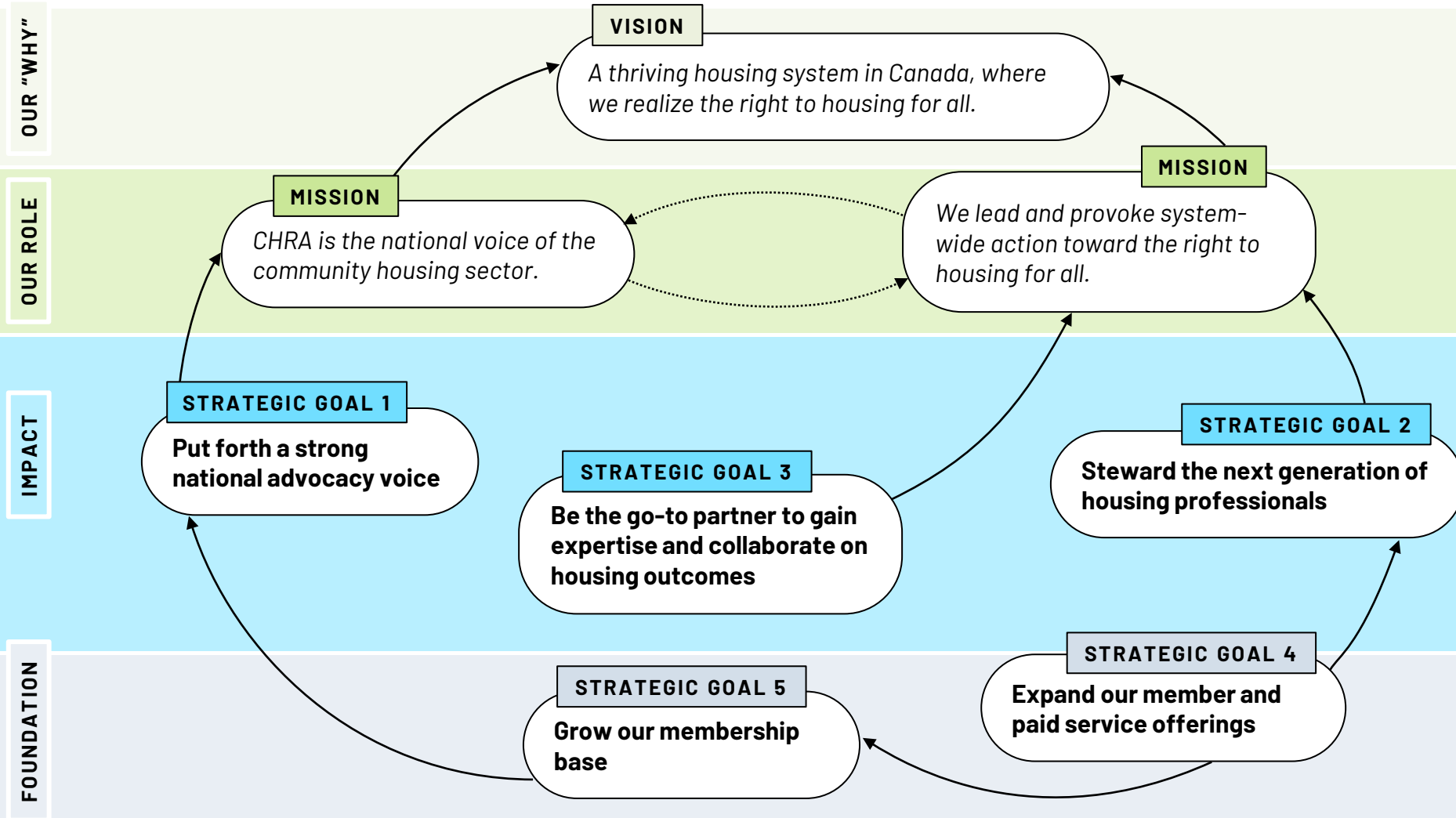
- Serving as the national voice of the **community housing sector**; and
- Creating the conditions for community housing providers to achieve their goals.

the **right to housing** language is a nod to our vision and our deeper purpose and reason for existing—ensuring people in Canada can live in security, peace, and dignity

the **community housing sector** includes all providers of non-market housing

Strategic Goals

how we will realize our vision and mission



WE WILL

Put forth a strong national advocacy voice

TO

ensure a holistic human rights framework and guide housing funding and investment in Canada.

This strategic goal is about (loudly) advocating for systems change and ongoing government support for Canada's thriving community housing sector.

CHRA will consider its role in advocacy as one of its highest-priority roles in the system. We will find new ways to support our members through awareness, education, and resources. Our advocacy approach will bring stories into public awareness and discourse, addressing difficult conversations and creating safe spaces to talk about human-rights-based approaches to housing.

Our advocacy efforts will focus on:

- Advocating for the Government of Canada to ensure a holistic human rights framework in housing;
- Bolstering the community housing sector—lifting the sector up so it can realize its potential;
- Telling stories about impacts to people and communities in Canada—bringing humans to the forefront of our storytelling;
- Continuing to demonstrate the value of the community housing sector;
- Influencing policy and procedural direction ; and
- Supporting system-wide action around addressing housing challenges as a collective across Canada.

Strategy in Action

The following types of activities can contribute to this strategic goal.

- Continue advocating for a fully funded for-Indigenous, by-Indigenous housing strategy.
- Ensuring NHS programs and objectives reflect the priorities of the community housing sector.
- Identify the more difficult or divided conversations in housing and homelessness—direct advocacy efforts to these topics by finding common ground in the community housing sector.
- Create a plan to address different audiences through our advocacy work beyond the Federal government (e.g., the general public).
- Collaborate with other advocacy organizations on national-level issues, especially the Co-Operative Housing Federation of Canada,, NICHI, Housing Partnership Canada (HPC), and CAEH.
- Continue to reaffirm the work of the Indigenous Caucus.
- Resource the community housing sector to have their voices front and centre in advocacy efforts—position our members as the “experts.”

WE WILL

Steward the next generation of housing professionals

TO

grow and sustain the housing sector and help community housing providers achieve their goals.

This strategic goal supports our belief in the role of the community housing sector as a key driver of change and progress toward the right to housing for all in Canada.

In an evolving labour market environment in Canada, it will continue to be important to steward the next generation of housing professionals by promoting accreditation, mentorship, and peer networks.

As a hub of knowledge exchange, CHRA has the opportunity to convene housing professionals to share lessons learned, make efficient use of sector resources, and find ways to grow together. CHRA also has a role in preserving the knowledge and intelligence we have in the sector, as the next generation of housing professionals carry the torch.

This strategic goal also focuses on raising the profile of opportunities available in the housing sector—among new graduates of post-secondary institutions and the broader public.

Strategy in Action

The following types of activities can contribute to this strategic goal.

- Create more strategic linkages between the work of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and our work in stewarding the next generation of housing professionals.
- Explore pathways for the next generation of housing professionals to join non-profit boards—support boards with filling seats and housing professionals finding boards.
- Increase awareness of the Housing Professionals Mentorship Program and build in connections to employment opportunities and post-secondary institutions.
- Launch an initiative to preserve the knowledge, wisdom, and information about the history of the housing sector—work with housing professionals at or near retirement to document our sector's intelligence.
- Find strategic alignment between the Housing Professionals Mentorship Program (HPMP) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), to amplify the impact of both programs.

WE WILL

Be the go-to partner to gain expertise and collaborate on housing outcomes

TO

foster connections and a community of practice toward housing solutions in Canada.

This strategic goal is to reinforce our role as a convener in Canada’s housing system—we bring people and organizations together to provoke system-wide action toward the right to housing for all.

As the “home for the community housing sector,” CHRA will develop new and nurture existing partnerships and relationships within Canada and internationally to share lessons learned and solutions coming from our diverse membership. These efforts will support CHRA members’ desire to continue to grow and increase their impact.

CHRA members desire to make connections, network, and learn from each other. CHRA will initiate opportunities for members to engage in a community of practice toward housing solutions in Canada. These efforts will ensure the conversation continues beyond Congress, giving members more touchpoints to work together towards common goals.

We’ll know we are on the right track if we have politicians, policy-makers, and journalists coming to our members and us as the experts on emerging housing issues.

Strategy in Action

The following types of activities can contribute to this strategic goal.

- Offer more opportunities for CHRA members to engage in a non-political gathering space to share expertise and work on housing solutions together. Use these opportunities to build the CHRA advocacy stories.
- Host more communities of practice on different topics and programs.
- Undertake efforts to convene the key national housing and homelessness associations to align strategies for maximum impact (i.e., NICHI, CHF-Canada, HPC, and CAEH).
- Connect with regional voices across Canada to keep CHRA relevant beyond the annual Congress—continue the conversation.
- Identify “who is missing” from the housing conversation, including organizations and people supporting people with disabilities, and bring them into the dialogue for an “all of system” approach.

WE WILL

Expand our member and paid service offerings

TO

better serve our existing members, diversify our revenue sources to sustain CHRA, and grow our reach.

This strategic goal supports several efforts—first, it responds to CHRA’s need to increase our revenue sources. For instance, expanded services could include paid service offerings for non-CHRA members. Second, this goal directly supports our efforts to grow our membership base by enhancing the value of the CHRA membership fee.

CHRA will expand our member and paid services into offerings that reflect members’ emerging needs. For instance, we know there is a desire for CHRA to focus its policy, member services, and advocacy efforts on topics such as new affordable housing strategies and methods, strengthening partnerships for effective advocacy (including links with the homelessness space), training opportunities, and affordable housing operations and asset management.

Strategy in Action

The following types of activities can contribute to this strategic goal.

- Offer ongoing training opportunities for CHRA members and non-members (paid), for instance, introductions to housing policy, equity and human rights, history of housing, applying for funding streams, etc.
- Provide more forums to “think bolder and bigger” by bringing together more system-wide players outside of community housing (e.g., finance, development, etc.).
- Investigate opportunities to facilitate more peer-to-peer exchange spaces for our members to connect, share ideas, and learn from each other.

WE WILL

Grow our membership base

TO

strengthen our voice on national housing issues and sustain CHRA from a financial standpoint.

This strategic goal directs CHRA to expand its membership base, especially among community housing providers.

As we set out to sustain CHRA as the “home for the housing sector,” we believe reaching community housing providers of all sizes in all corners of Canada is crucial. An expanded membership base will help us strengthen our voice on the national stage and advocate in a way that represents a more diverse range of perspectives and voices across Canada. This expansion will also support CHRA’s efforts to remain financially viable.

To enhance our role as a convener of system-wide action, we will also seek to broaden our membership base across other community organizations and housing players who seek to play a part in realizing the right to housing in Canada.

Strategy in Action

The following types of activities can contribute to this strategic goal.

- Undertake broader outreach via in-person engagement and relationship-building to increase our membership base—emphasize interaction and connection as a key value of the CHRA membership.
- Focus member recruitment efforts in under-represented areas such as northern Canada, Quebec (recognizing their unique approach), and organizations involved in tenant rights.
- Connect with key national housing and homelessness associations, provincial associations and associations of municipalities to grow our reach together.
- Identify “who is missing” from the housing conversation, including organizations and people supporting people with disabilities, and bring them into the dialogue for an “all of system” approach.

Vision

our shared aspiration for the future

A thriving housing system in Canada, where we realize the right to housing for all.

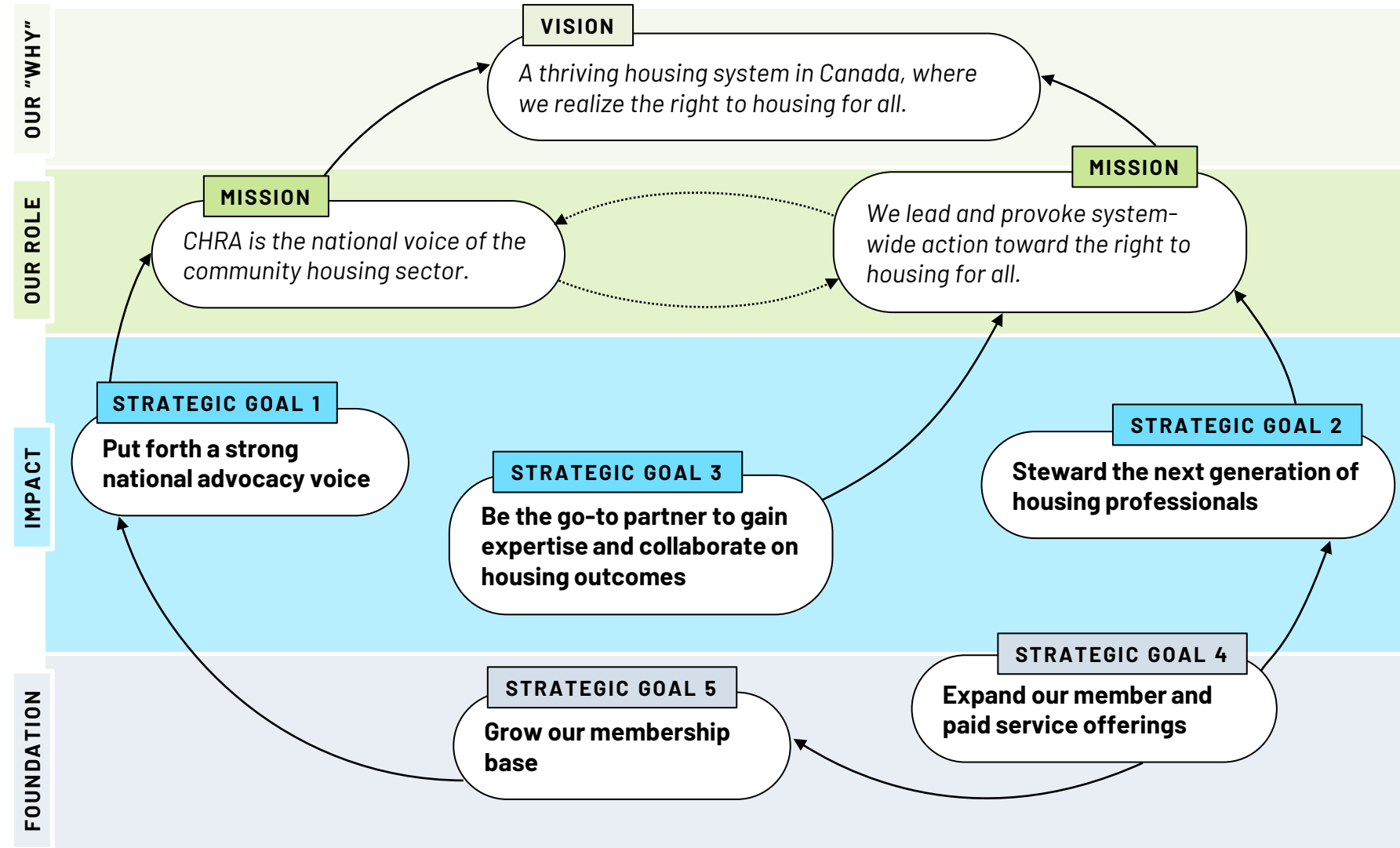
Mission

why we exist

We lead and provoke system-wide action toward the right to housing for all by...

- Serving as the national voice of the **community housing sector**; and
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Strategic Goals





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Strategic Goals

