



# 2025 CHRA Election Toolkit



CHRA ACHRU

This federal election is a crucial opportunity to ensure that community housing is a priority for all parties and candidates. CHRA is here to help you engage effectively and advocate for policies that support community housing across Canada and in your riding. This toolkit provides practical steps to get involved, key messages to communicate, and tools to maximize your impact.

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## What is Community Housing?

When engaging in advocacy we must ensure that people understand the basics of what we're trying to convey. See below for a simple explanation of community housing to begin your conversations:

- Community housing is rental housing that is offered at non-market rates so that it is more affordable for low- and middle-income earners.
- Community housing often goes beyond the bricks and mortar of housing to provide services, supports and engagement for tenants.
- Community housing rents are sometimes subsidized by public sources (be they federal, provincial/territorial, or municipal) so that rents can be maintained at a level that is affordable to tenants.

## Why Community Housing Matters in This Election

People across Canada have been feeling the pressure of consistently worsening housing and affordability crises. The pandemic exposed and deepened many of the cracks of our fragile housing system, and the economic shifts that followed put many people at risk. According to Statistics Canada, 22% of households in Canada were in core housing need in 2022. That same year, 245,900 households were on waitlists for subsidized housing options.

This situation is being made worse by the economic threat posed by a worsening relationship and potential trade war with the United States. To help people weather this storm we need to come together to not only provide people with the critical supports they need but also to start reforming our housing system.

Canadians are ready to start thinking about housing differently. In a recent poll by Abacus Data 73% of Canadians say that community housing can help solve the housing crisis, and 61% say that increasing availability of community housing should be a top priority for governments. That's why the moment is now for us to work together to turn public support into real commitments and action from our federal government to double the share community housing in Canada. Doing so would both protect and support those who need it most and would drive a stronger and more fair economy for all.

## Our Recommendations

Canada is not only in the middle of a housing crisis; we are now also facing an economic crisis brought on by the words and actions of the Trump Administration – this new crisis will drive party platforms during the election. It is THE election question in 2025, and our job is to show how community housing is part of the solution.

In the face of new economic and geopolitical threats, CHRA and a coalition of national housing organizations including the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), Habitat for Humanity Canada (HHC), and the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA), have come together to put forward a plan to ensure that every Canadian has a safe, decent, and affordable home in this time of economic need.

[\*Housing Canada: A Sovereign Plan to Protect Canadians and Build a Resilient Housing System\*](#) has ten parts which include:

- 1. Creating an immediate housing safety net to protect Canadians from the impacts of an economic shock.** This includes introducing housing-focused benefits, bolstering social assistance, putting up guardrails to protect mortgages, and preparing Canada for an increase in asylum seekers.
- 2. Protecting renters from falling into homelessness.** With the risk of increased predatory market practices commonly seen in times of economic vulnerability, Canada needs to introduce measures including a freeze on no-fault evictions, support for rent banks, and introducing funds to support the acquisition and preservation of lower rent housing, to ensure that people can keep their housing.
- 3. Doubling the share of community housing.** Through new policy tools such as a housing bond and an affordable housing tax credit, along with expanding and modifying existing CMHC programs, Canada can support the building, acquisition, and preservation of community and affordable housing.
- 4. Ensuring access to the land and infrastructure needed to build communities.** This includes expanding the Build Canada program, supporting the repurposing surplus and underutilized lands for housing, and identifying and incentivizing the use of municipal land to build community and affordable housing.
- 5. Creating resilient housing material supply chains that can withstand tariffs and trade barriers.** Canada needs more flexible and resilient supply-chains, which could include reducing interprovincial trade barriers and measures to facilitate better access to products from non-American importers.
- 6. Developing a housing skills agenda for Canada that equips our workforce.** This could include measures that support the re-skilling of displaced manufacturing workers into housing-related careers and efforts to recruit skilled trade workers wishing to leave the United States.
- 7. Reforming taxes to facilitate homebuilding.** We must ensure that governments have the revenue they need for infrastructure and support, while also ensuring that taxes,

charges, fees, and levies around homebuilding do not hinder development. This includes introducing incentives and supporting new models to build infrastructure instead of relying on development charges.

- 8. Streamlining permissions to facilitate homebuilding.** Communities can do this by ensuring that our homebuilding, through regulatory streamlining, are incenting development and leading to improved housing outcomes.
- 9. Accelerating innovation to build faster, less expensive, and better homes.** There is no sustainable solution to Canada’s housing crisis that does not involve increased innovation – through tax credits, investment funds, and improved procurement practices, Canada can incentivize low-carbon housing and accelerate the adoption of innovative and new homebuilding technologies and practices
- 10. Rapidly Expand Indigenous Urban, Rural and Northern (URN) Housing to meet the housing needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and communities.** Beyond the other mechanisms that exist to bolster affordable and community housing, targeted investments and distinct supports are needed to rapidly increase and meet the housing needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and communities, including taking a for-Indigenous, by-Indigenous approach and expanding federal investment in URN.

To learn more please visit: [sovereignhousingplan.ca](https://sovereignhousingplan.ca).

# Actions You Can Take

## 1. Engage your local candidates



Understanding who is running in the riding or ridings where you live and work and where they stand on housing is critical. Here's how you can find the information you need:

- **Find your candidates.** Visit the [Elections Canada website](#) to find out who is running in your riding.
- **Contact them.** Reach out to candidates via email, social media, or by phone to ask where they stand on community housing.
- **Find information about your riding.** Visit the [Canadian Rental Housing Index](#) to find housing stats specific to your riding.
- **Share information.** Provide candidates with resources on the benefits of community housing and ask for their commitment to supporting it.

## 2. Attend candidate events and debates



Candidate forums, debates, and town halls are excellent opportunities to raise housing issues publicly. Here's how to get involved:

- **Find events.** Check candidate websites, social media, and local community boards for upcoming debates and events.
- **Prepare your questions.** Frame your questions clearly and directly. For example: "What will your party do to expand community housing and protect affordable rentals?". Use local examples whenever you can.
- **Engage in discussions.** Speak up during Q&A sessions, share your perspective, and encourage others to ask about housing policies.
- **Mobilize your communities.** Encourage your tenants and volunteers to engage in the election and have them attend candidate events and ask questions themselves. Be non-partisan but encourage them to learn more and be active.
- **Follow up.** If a candidate gives a vague response, follow up via email or social media to request a clear policy position.

## 3. Take to social media



Keep it short and impactful. Many platforms have character limits, so get to the point quickly. This will also help keep your audience engaged. E.g.: "Community housing is key to solving Canada's housing crisis. We need action now! Use local examples whenever you can.

- **Use visuals to grab attention.** Share images, infographics, or short videos that highlight key statistics or personal stories about housing challenges and solutions.
- **Tag candidates and parties.** Directly mention political leaders and tag them in your posts and ask where they stand on community housing. This increases visibility and encourages engagement.
- **Visit [chra-achru.ca/federal-election-2025/](https://chra-achru.ca/federal-election-2025/).** Here you can find engaging graphics, and visuals that you can use to amplify your impact!



#### 4. Engage your local media



- **Write an op-ed or letter to the editor.** Keep it concise (150-200 words for a letter to the editor, 600-700 words for an op-ed) and tie it to current election issues. Make a clear call for action from political leaders.
- **Pitch local stories with a human angle.** Journalists want compelling narratives - highlight real people affected by the housing crisis and how community housing can help.
- **Build relationships with reporters.** Follow and engage with local journalists covering housing and politics. Reach out with insights or data they might find useful.
- **Use election debates and announcements as hooks.** React quickly to housing-related promises made by candidates and parties, offering expert commentary or a community perspective.

#### 6. Stay engaged with CHRA



- **Connect with CHRA staff:** If you plan to engage your local candidates, we would love to know about it. Contact our Director of Policy & Government Relations, Kenneth Milner at [kenneth@chra-achru.ca](mailto:kenneth@chra-achru.ca).
- **Tag CHRA on social media.** You can find us on LinkedIn, Facebook and X.
- **Visit [chra-achru.ca/federal-election-2025/](https://chra-achru.ca/federal-election-2025/).** Here you can find engaging graphics, and visuals that you can use to amplify your impact!

#### 5. Host a local event

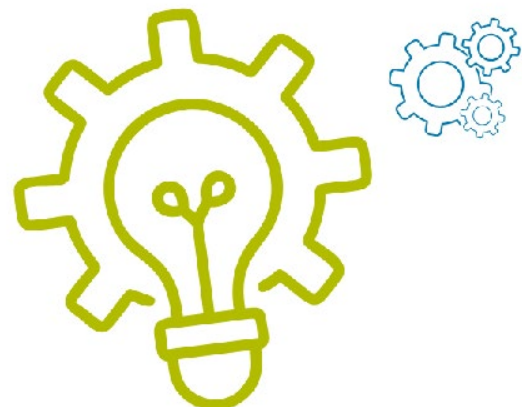


- **Arrange a site tour.** If possible, arrange a site tour of local community housing with candidates or their teams to discuss community housing in depth. Mornings will often work best for candidates.
- **Host a meet and greet.** Organize a meet and greet event between local candidates and your community members.
- **Organize a candidate town hall or debate.** Find other housing advocates in your community and organize a town hall or debate to which you can invite candidates. Learn more using our resources below.

#### 7. Engage others



- Talk to friends, family, and colleagues about the importance of community housing.
- Building support for community housing amongst the public, not just those who work in our sector, is one of the most impactful ways you can make sure that our elected officials see community housing as a core part of the solution to the housing crisis.



# Making the Case for Community Housing

Throughout the election we must be clear about the value community housing. Here are a couple key points to keep in mind when talking with candidates, policymakers, and the public.

## Talk about the need

- With rising inflation, job insecurity, and the increase in cost of living, many Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Community housing offers long-term, stable housing solutions that ensure affordability during economic downturns.
- According to research done by the [Housing Assessment Resource Tools \(HART\) project](#), over 1.5 million households in 2021 were living in inadequate or unaffordable housing.
- A [study by Scotiabank](#) called for doubling the share of community housing because of the drastic need for more affordable, non-market housing options.
- Less than 4% of Canada's current housing stock is community housing; less than half of the average of other OECD and G7 countries.
- The housing crisis also disproportionately impacts Indigenous people. Over 171, 000 people living in urban, rural, northern regions are in core housing need.

## Highlight community housing as a solution

- Community housing helps protect marginalised populations. Low-income families, seniors, people with disabilities, and Indigenous communities face the highest risk in the current housing crisis.
- Community housing is essential infrastructure, and just like roads and public transit, housing is critical infrastructure that supports economic growth, health, and social stability.
- A [study by Deloitte](#) (released by CHRA) shows if we were to double the share of community housing in Canada it would boost GDP between \$67 to \$136 billion annually, and improve economic productivity by a staggering 5.7% to 9.3%.
- The [Canadian Mental Health Association estimated](#) that every \$10 invested in supportive housing resulted in almost \$22 of avoided costs and social returns.
- [AHMA released a study](#) that shows that every dollar spent on Indigenous housing saves \$7.40 elsewhere in our economy.
- Economic instability, supply chain issues, and foreign investment trends can exacerbate housing challenges. Community housing provides a stable and locally controlled solution to mitigate these risks.

## What Canadians think

- 95% of [Canadians believe](#) that Canada is in the midst of a housing crisis.
- 73% [Canadians believe](#) community housing is a solution to the housing crisis.
- 60% Canadians think that there are not enough community housing options available in their communities.
- 61% of Canadians believe that expanding community housing options should be a high priority.

## Tips for talking to different political parties

Below are some suggested messages or themes that you can bring to your meetings with MPs or Senators from different political parties.

### Liberal

- The National Housing Strategy marked the federal government's return to housing. Now is not the time to back down: you must show Canadians that you believe in the growth and development of the community housing sector.
- Canadians want the government to do more, not less on housing and homelessness and we believe that the ideas we are proposing can help Canadians to see you are serious about tackling housing affordability.
- Investments in community housing are effective ways to systematically address the root causes of inequality while also lowering the burden on our overloaded and overwhelmed health and social services across the country.
- Mark Carney's leadership campaign committed to doubling the supply of community housing.

### Conservative

- Affordable housing is a necessity. The government needs to make targeted investments into housing that will address the real needs of people across Canada.
- Community housing serves people who the private market cannot. Stable housing helps people invest in themselves and their communities.
- Truly affordable community housing is one of the most common-sense investments that a government can make. It not only provides people with a decent place to live, but also lowers costs on healthcare, social services and law enforcement.

### NDP

- In a country like Canada, we should be able to realize our right to housing.
- We do not have enough community housing in Canada to provide a safe, affordable and decent place to live for everyone who needs it.
- The federal government must do more to help realize the right to housing and must make the investments needed to double the share of community housing in Canada.
- A government that has our backs is a government that builds community housing.

### Bloc Quebecois

- Quebec is leader in providing social housing, but we need the federal government to do more to double the share of community housing.
- Everyday Quebecers are relying on you to be their voice in Ottawa and to stand up for their right to housing – your support would be incredibly helpful.

### Green

- In a country like Canada, we should be able to realize our right to housing.
- We do not have enough community housing in Canada to provide a safe, affordable and decent place to live for everyone who needs it. Often this leaves the most marginalized without access.
- Truly affordable community housing is one of the best investments that a government can make. It not only provides people with a decent place to live, but also lowers costs on healthcare, social services and law enforcement.



# Tips for Engaging Candidates

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## **Keep your message clear and concise.**

Make sure you understand what you're trying to ask of your candidate.



## **Share personal experiences.**

Stories and local examples will make your advocacy more impactful and easier to remember.



## **Do your research.**

Research will help you tailor your message and connect with the candidate.

Research both the individual candidate and their political party to see if there is a way to connect them to the community housing sector and to the work your non-profit does.



## **Listen closely to what the candidate is saying.**

This will help you understand where they are coming from and how you might be able to direct the conversation.



## **Stick to your points.**

Candidates want you to believe that they will help you. Many will talk about their platforms without trying to address your comments directly. Make sure you stay engaged and make your point.



## **Educate your candidates.**

Like all people political candidates are not experts on all topics and many will not know much about community housing. Don't underestimate your own knowledge and use the resources provided here to help educate them.



## **Be kind and thank them for their time.**

It is important to be passionate advocates but it is also important to remember to lead with compassion. This will help the person you are talking to hear what you are saying and might help you build a relationship with them in the future.

# Phone Script for Contacting Local Candidates

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## Introduction

"Hello, my name is [Name], and I'm a resident of [your community or riding]. I'm reaching out because I'm deeply concerned about the housing crisis in Canada and want to know where [Candidate's Name] stands on expanding community housing options."

## Make the case

"As you know, the cost of living is rising, and many Canadians are struggling to find an affordable place to live. Research shows that over 1.5 million households in Canada are living in inadequate or unaffordable housing. Yet, community housing makes up less than 4% of our housing stock - far below other G7 countries."

## Emphasize solutions

"Community housing is a proven solution. It protects marginalized populations, supports economic growth, and ensures long-term affordability. Studies show that doubling the share of community housing in Canada could boost our GDP by up to \$136 billion annually."

## Ask for their position

"I'd like to know what [Candidate's Name]'s plan is to expand community housing in [your riding or community]. Will they commit to policies that prioritize making public land available for affordable housing and funding long-term solutions?"

## Closing

"I appreciate your time and look forward to hearing [Candidate's Name]'s stance on this important issue. Can I follow up with you or your team to discuss this further?"



# Email Sample for Contacting Local Candidates

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**Subject:** Where Do You Stand on Community Housing?

Dear [Candidate's Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a resident of [Your City or Riding]. As a voter in this upcoming election, I am deeply concerned about the growing housing crisis in Canada and the need for more community housing options.

Right now, over 1.5 million Canadian households are living in inadequate or unaffordable housing. Yet, community housing represents less than 4% of Canada's housing stock - less than half of what other G7 countries provide. Expanding community housing is a critical solution to ensure affordability, protect vulnerable populations, and support economic growth. Research from Deloitte suggests that doubling community housing's share in Canada could boost GDP by up to \$136 billion annually.

I'd like to know where you stand:

- Do you support making surplus public lands available for non-market community housing?
- Will you advocate for increased investments in community housing, including support for Indigenous-led housing solutions?
- How will you ensure long-term, sustainable funding for community housing development?

Community housing is a key solution to the affordability crisis, and voters like me want to see real commitments from candidates. I look forward to your response and hope to see your platform reflect strong support for community housing.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

