



On November 22, 2016, the Federal Government released its report “What We Heard” that highlights the results of the numerous consultations that were conducted over the span of five-months with individual Canadians and experts in the housing field in order to develop their National Housing Strategy. The TAEH submitted [Renewed Hope: Recommendations for a successful National Housing Strategy in Canada](#), developed in consultation with our many members.

The TAEH is encouraged to read that what the government acknowledges they heard through the [#LetsTalkHousing](#) consultations reflects our own advice, as well as many of our partners across Canada. The real test, of course, is how they will act on what they heard. There is reason to be optimistic, but even more reason to take action – or to continue to do so – to make sure that the federal government and MPs have the support they need to deliver a National Housing Strategy that reflects what they heard. And to make sure that they continue to experience the urgency of acting soon and acting effectively!

You can read and download the [full document](#) on-line. It includes a good Executive Summary too. TAEH will continue to add resources to our website over the next weeks as well. The summary of what they heard Canadians demand of a National Housing Strategy is that it:

- 🏠 help those in greater need of affordable housing;
- 🏠 assist indigenous people to acquire better housing conditions for themselves
- 🏠 eliminate homelessness in Canada;
- 🏠 make housing more affordable housing;
- 🏠 adopt a housing systems perspective;
- 🏠 create housing policies and programs that centre on people and place;
- 🏠 set clear outcomes and targets;
- 🏠 deliver long-term and predictable funding;
- 🏠 realize the right to housing;
- 🏠 improve data collection, research and analysis; and
- 🏠 take a collaborative approach to housing.

It is significant that Canadians recognize the need to end homelessness as a key priority in creating a national housing strategy, and exactly the opportunity we need to make sure it finally happens. We encourage everyone to participate in the [on-line lobby kit](#) that allows you to easily write your MP. We are also organizing meetings to Toronto MPs over the next few months. Please email Kira directly at [heineck\\_k@cotainspires](mailto:heineck_k@cotainspires) if you are interested in joining one of these meetings.

Finally, take a look at the good discussion on [TVO's the Agenda](#) on Nov 23 on the strategy, housing in Canada and what is at stake. You can go to the Agenda's website too or watch for it to be available on the TAEH website soon too.

# The rise of homelessness in Canada

Homelessness on the scale we see it today has not always existed. The rise of modern mass homelessness in Canada began in the 1980's and is the direct result of federal withdrawal from affordable housing investment and cuts to social services.

In the last 20 years, as Canada's population grew over 30%, federal funding for affordable housing has dropped more than 46%. This has meant at least 100,000 units of affordable housing were not built. Today over 1.5 million Canadian households live in housing need, over 750,000 households live in extreme housing need (living in poverty and spending over 50% of their income on housing). And the crisis may get worse as federal operating agreements for older social housing expire and over 300,000 more households may lose their housing.

## A matter of life and death for too many

We believe all Canadians deserve safe, decent and affordable housing, but for some, the lack of housing is a matter of life and death. The longer people are homeless, the worse their health becomes. Not having a home can be lethal. Homelessness causes premature death, poor health and is a significant burden on our health-care system. **A recent report** from British Columbia suggests life expectancy for people experiencing homelessness in that province is half that of other British Columbians.

## Cheaper to fix than ignore

Fixing homelessness will be much cheaper than ignoring it. Homelessness costs Canadians over \$7 billion a year. According to the **State of Homelessness in Canada: 2016**, it would take an additional \$50 per Canadian per year – less than \$1 per Canadian per week – in new affordable housing investment to end homelessness.

## Homelessness is solvable

A number of Canadian cities including Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer and Medicine Hat are showing that with a focused effort homelessness can be reduced. Hamilton, Ontario – a part of our 20,000 Homes Campaign – has reduced chronic homelessness 35% in just one year. There's every reason to believe that success like this is achievable on a national scale.

What's needed is the Government of Canada to take urgent and immediate action on housing with a focused effort on ending homelessness.

## We need your help!

The government is currently finalizing its National Housing Strategy. Solving all of Canada's housing problems at once, from homelessness to the rising cost of home ownership, would be wonderful. It is absolutely the right objective, but the sheer scale of the challenge requires us to prioritize. It's important to tell your MP that you think ending homelessness should be a top priority in the new National Housing Strategy. Go to [caeh.ca](http://caeh.ca) to write your MP today!

