YOUR HOUSING

Good housing is more than just four walls and a roof. Good housing means having a home that is secure, safe, in good repair and free from infestation and mold. A home that doesn't meet these basic criteria has significant consequences for your health, and unfortunately this is a reality for many Torontonians.

1 in 5 Toronto residents live in housing that they can't afford, is too small for their needs, or is in serious need of repair.

WHAT IS GOOD HOUSING?

Housing is one of the most important social determinants of health, yet we still have a long way to go when it comes to ensuring healthy housing for all.

Good housing must be part of a healthy and inclusive neighbourhood where people feel a sense of safety and belonging in their community and physical environment.

Good housing must be affordable, too. Housing is unaffordable when it costs more than 30% of your income; over 3 million Canadians pay more than that. With so much being paid for basic housing, there is little money for food, transit, clothing, and other essentials.

DID YOU KNOW?

Canada is the only G8 country without a national housing plan. Federal housing and homelessness investments – adjusted for inflation and population growth – have been shrinking over the past two decades, and, while the federal government announces short-term initiatives from time to time, Canada still doesn't have a comprehensive, fully-funded and integrated national housing strategy.

HOW DOES BAD HOUSING MAKE US SICK?

Safe and affordable housing is essential to good health. Poor housing can lead to increased rates of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, infestations such as lice and bed bugs, and infections such as fungus related to damp conditions. Poor living conditions can lead to serious respiratory conditions associated with mold, lead, and poor heating, bugs and vermin, overcrowding and poor ventilation.

Those who are homeless experience a broader range of health issues than the rest of the population and are 8-10 times more likely to suffer an early death.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

What can we do?

Canada needs a national housing plan.

By 2016 the number of households assisted under federal housing programs will be cut by almost 100,000 to fall from 623,700 households in 2008 to 525,000 households.

The federal affordable housing initiative will be cut to zero and combined federal housing investments will have been cut to $1.8 billion – a cut of 52% in just six years. A bigger investment needs to be made.

Build more affordable housing in Toronto. A housing first strategy that ensures people have access to clean, safe, and healthy homes takes pressure off the city's overcrowded shelter system.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Municipal costs per capita per night (US Dollars)

Pathways to Housing First for people with psychiatric disabilities

$57 Pathways Housing First

$73 Shelter

$164 Jail

$519 Emergency Room

$1185 Psychiatric Hospital

A good and healthy home with proper supports is better and cheaper than a homeless shelter. In Toronto, the average monthly cost of a shelter bed is over $1,300 – TEN TIMES the average monthly cost of social housing, which is only $199/month.