



Housing backgrounder and resources June 11, 2010

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Housing and health: Making the links

There is a great deal of published research on the links between housing and health, including HIV / AIDS and housing.

Positive spaces healthy places: <http://pshp.aso411.ca/index.html>

Housing and population health: http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispPage.jsp?cw_page=AR_1129_E

Homelessness and health: <http://www.homelesshub.ca/Library/21-The-Relationship-between-Homelessness-and-Health-An-Overview-of-Research-in-Canada-45788.aspx>

On-line resources:

Wellesley Institute: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/>

Homeless Hub: <http://www.homelesshub.ca/>

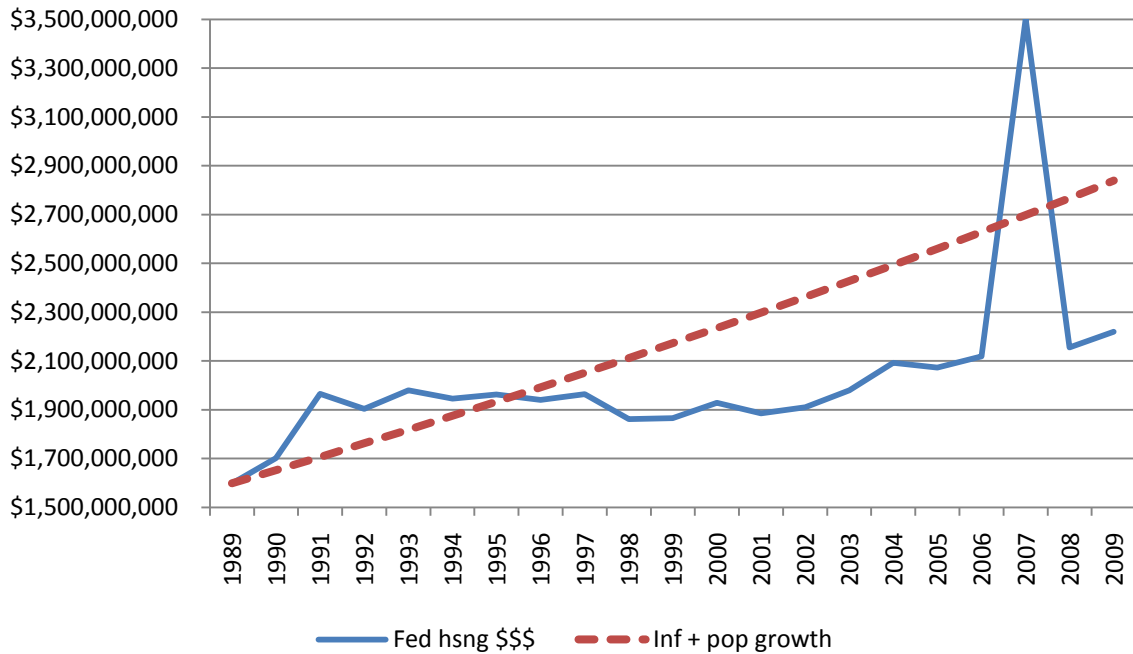
Cities Centre (CUCS – Urban Observatory): <http://www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/>

Canadian Institute for Health Information:
http://www.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispPage.jsp?cw_page=home_e

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (statistics): <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/index.cfm>

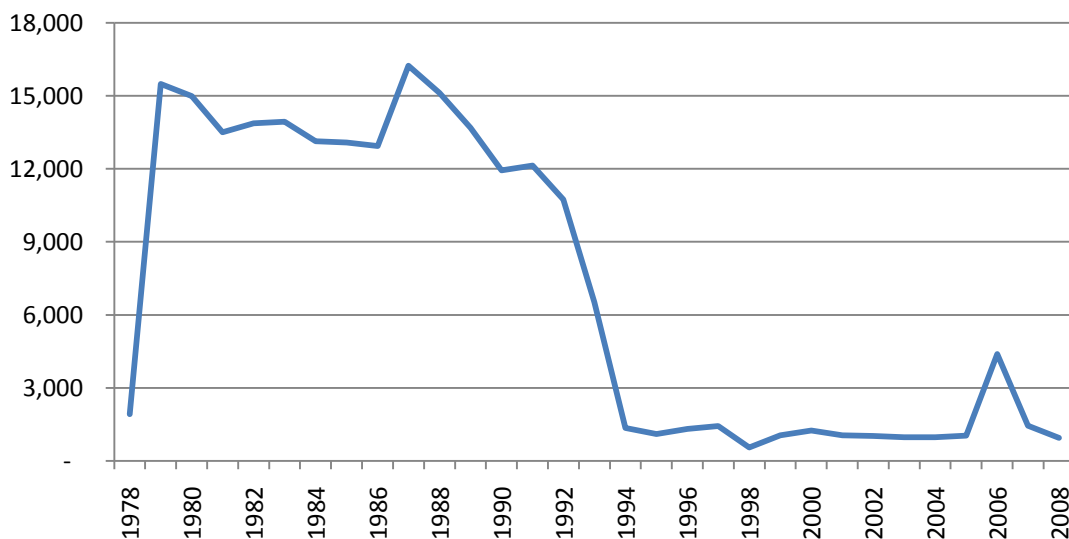
Tracking the dollars

Adjusted federal housing spending down by \$620 million over two decades



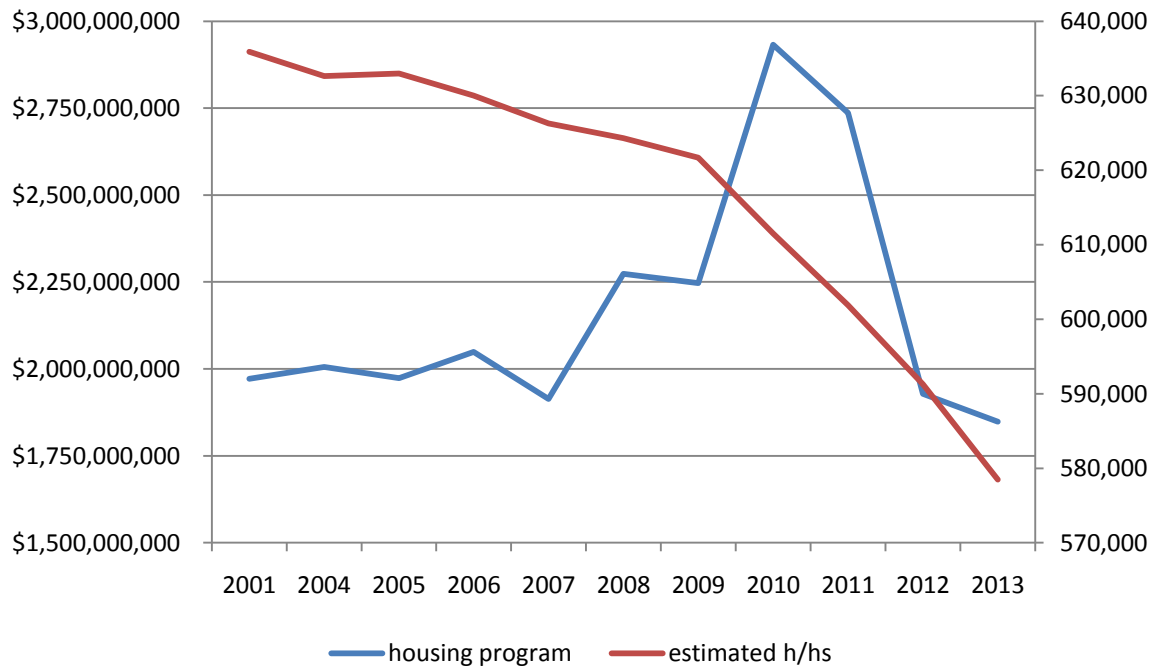
The federal government spent \$1.6 billion on affordable housing in 1989. Adjusting for inflation (53.75%) and population growth (24%) over the past two decades, it should have spent more than \$2.8 billion in fiscal 2008 just to be on par with the level of investment made in 1989. In fact, the federal government spent \$2.2 billion in 2008 – which effectively is a cut of \$620 million last year alone. (Sources: Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada)

New homes funded under s. 95 of the National Housing Act



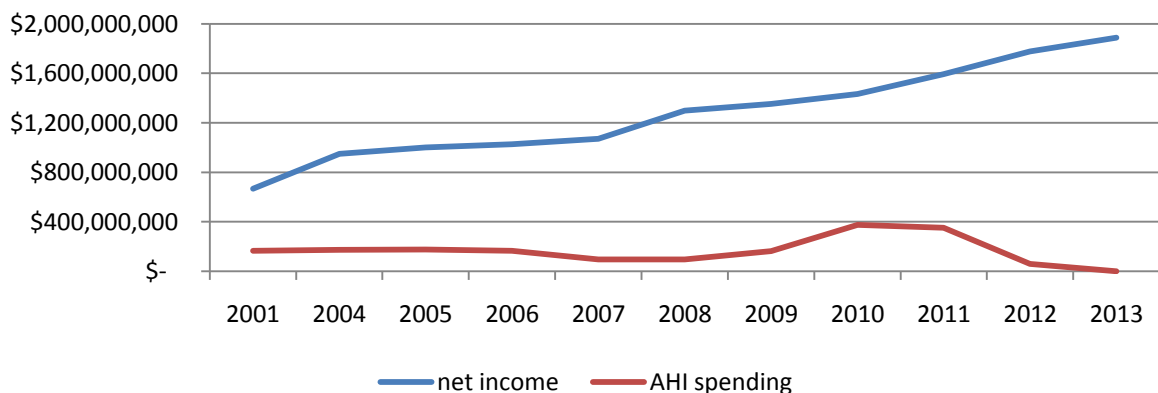
The number of new affordable homes funded by the federal government under s. 95 of the National Housing Act has slipped to fewer than 1,000 after a high of more than 16,000 in the mid-1980s. (Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)

Fewer households to be assisted by federal programs, and fewer dollars to be spent on housing by CMHC



Housing investments by CMHC will fall sharply by 2011 (blue line, left scale) once the spike from the 2005 and 2009 one-time investments drops; and housing investments are projected to continue to drop through the middle of the next decade. Meanwhile, the number of households assisted under federal programs (red line, right scale) will fall sharply and continue to drop over the next decade. (Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)

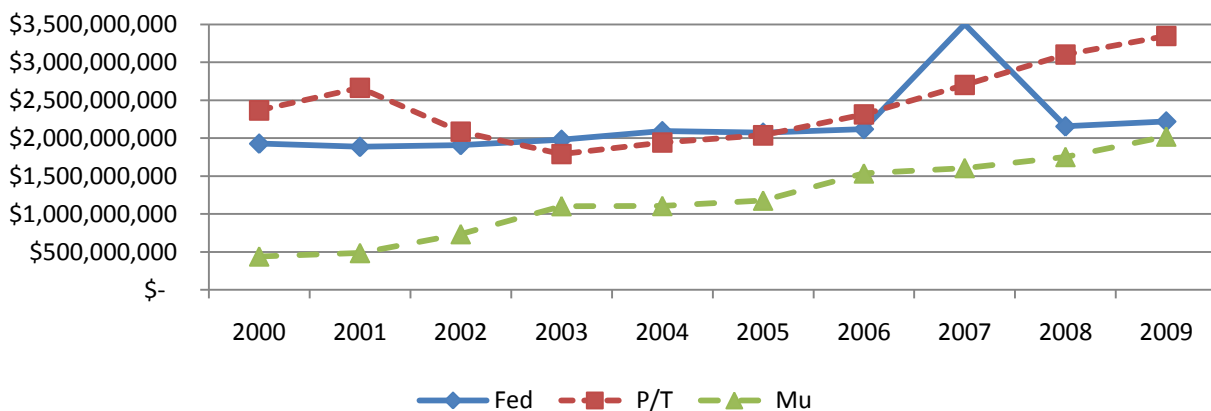
As CMHC's net income rises, affordable housing spending drops



Net income at CMHC will continue to rise sharply to an all-time record of \$1.88 billion in 2013, while investments in the Affordable Housing Initiative will shrink to \$1 million for the entire country. (Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)

Date	Federal housing investments (\$millions)	GDP (\$millions)	Housing as % GDP
1989	1,598	657,728	0.24
1990	1,702	679,921	0.25
1991	1,965	685,367	0.29
1992	1,904	700,480	0.27
1993	1,980	727,184	0.27
1994	1,945	770,873	0.25
1995	1,962	810,426	0.24
1996	1,940	836,864	0.23
1997	1,964	882,733	0.22
1998	1,862	914,973	0.20
1999	1,865	982,441	0.19
2000	1,928	1,076,577	0.18
2001	1,885	1,108,048	0.17
2002	1,910	1,152,905	0.17
2003	1,979	1,213,175	0.16
2004	2,092	1,290,906	0.16
2005	2,072	1,373,845	0.15
2006	2,119	1,449,215	0.15
2007	3,502	1,532,944	0.23
2008	2,155	1,600,081	0.13
2009	2,220	1,527,512	0.15
Change Over Time			
1989–2009	39%	232%	-38%
1989–1999	17%	149%	-21%
1999–2009	19%	155%	-21%

Municipal housing investments are set to overtake federal spending



Federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal investments in housing over the past decade (not adjusted for inflation or population growth) show that spending by local governments is set to overtake the federal investment. Looking ahead, municipal housing investments are projected to eclipse federal spending by fiscal 2011. The blue line is federal housing investments, the red line is provincial/territorial investments, and the green line is municipal investments. (Source: Statistics Canada)

Federal housing investments: Promises and allocations, 2008-2009

Investments	Promised allocation	Amount allocated (Sept. 2009)	Percentage of promised allocation
Repairs	\$251,290,000	\$7,300,000	3%
Affordable Housing Initiative	\$242,800,000	\$0	0%
Total, Sept. 2008	\$494,090,000	\$7,300,000	1%
PT renovation	\$850,000,000	\$46,060,000	5%
Federal renovation	\$150,000,000	\$0	0%
Housing for seniors	\$400,000,000	\$7,660,000	2%
Housing for persons with disabilities	\$75,000,000	\$100,000	0%
Total budget, 2009	\$1,475,000,000	\$53,820,000	4%
Total	\$1,969,090,000	\$61,120,000	3%

November 2009: Ontario auditor-general:

- No accounting for one-third of a billion in federal housing dollars transferred to province. “The province withheld \$330 million, of which it designated \$198 million—\$22 million a year for nine years—as what it called a “provincial constraint.” The Ministry was unable to provide support that this and the remaining \$132 million were spent on housing.
- Unaffordable federal-provincial affordable housing program. “We determined that more than half of the units in this Program would still be unaffordable for households on waiting lists, or eligible to be on the lists.”

Federal housing / homelessness funding – fiscal 2009 / 2010

Investments targeted to low-, moderate-, and middle-income households:

Housing program expenses	\$2,247,000,000
Affordable housing initiative	\$164,000,000
Homelessness Partnering Strategy	\$134,800,000
Renovation of social housing	\$500,000,000
Housing for low-income seniors	\$200,000,000
Housing for persons with disabilities	\$25,000,000
First Nations’ housing	\$200,000,000
Northern housing	\$100,000,000
Total	\$3,570,800,000

Investments not targeted:

Home Renovation Tax Credit	\$2,500,000,000
Various home buyers’ tax subsidies	\$190,000,000
Capital gains exemption for principal residence – full inclusion rate	\$6,230,000,000
Total	\$8,920,000,000

Other federal housing-related investments:

Insured Mortgage Purchase Program	\$66,000,000,000
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Federal housing / homelessness patchwork – 1999 to 2010

1999 March 1999: At the National Summit on Homelessness in Toronto, the federal government appoints cabinet minister to look into better co-ordination of existing federal spending on social programs that may help homeless people.

1999 December 1999: The federal government announces a new homeless program called the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative, plus enhancement to national housing repair program – Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). Federal homelessness funding initially restricted to nine major municipalities, then a tenth municipality added. Acquiescing to protests, federal government allocates 80% to the ten large cities, with 20% to 51 others. Rest of Canada not eligible for funding.

2001 November 2001: The federal government signs Affordable Housing Framework Agreement with the provinces and territories to flow \$680 million in new federal funding, to be matched by the provinces and territories. This is *not* a new national housing program – no development assistance, rent-gear-to-income subsidies, or support services, although CMHC does agree to waive mortgage insurance fees.

2003 The 2003 federal budget adds \$320 million for phase two of the Affordable Housing Framework Agreement of 2001. Additional changes are made, but the main features remain the same. The program is mainly provides capital subsidies. It is not a comprehensive national housing program, but a limited-time capital subsidy. The 2003 federal budget also renews the funding for the national homelessness strategy (for another three years) and the national housing repair program (RRAP).

2005 June 2005: Parliament authorizes Bill C44 – which allocates \$1.6 billion from federal budgetary surpluses to flow to new affordable homes, including off-reserve Aboriginal housing. However, the federal government is defeated in the winter of 2005/06 before the government flows the housing dollars.

2005 September 2005: Provincial and territorial housing ministers meet at White Point, Nova Scotia, to set out principles for a national housing plan. Federal housing minister welcomes the principles, but no comprehensive plan is adopted. No new meeting for federal housing ministers is scheduled.

2006 February 2006: Newly-elected federal government allocates \$1.4 billion of the \$1.6 billion from C44 to be administered by the provinces and territories, including Aboriginal housing. As with the 2001 agreement, there is a significant delay to negotiate individual deals. C44 funding is not a national housing program, but a limited-time capital subsidy. Federal government renews the funding for national homelessness program (changing name to Homelessness Partnering Strategy) and also national housing repair program. The level of funding remains the same as in 1999.

2008 February 2008: The federal government refuses to accept an invitation from provincial and territorial housing ministers to attend a national housing summit in Vancouver.

2008 Summer 2008: The federal government announces cuts to the national homelessness program, but after political protests, reverses the decision and maintains the funding at the same level as back to 1999.

2008 September 2008: The federal government announces it will extend funding for homelessness and housing repair programs for five years – first two years under the same provisions as in 2006 extension, with the remaining three years to be negotiated. Overall funding envelope remains frozen at 1999 level.

2009 January 2009: Federal ‘stimulus’ budget announces affordable housing funding of \$2 billion, including \$1 billion for social housing repairs, and \$1 billion for new housing for Aboriginal people, seniors and people with disabilities. The other housing needs of Canadians are not funded.

2009 June 2009: As part of its formal response to the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review of Canada's compliance with its international rights' obligations, federal government promises to work more closely with the provinces and territories on housing and homelessness strategies.

2009 August 2009: Federal government refuses to accept an invitation from provincial and territorial housing ministers to attend a national housing summit in Vancouver.

2009 Fall 2009: Bill C-304, a private member's bill to require the federal government to create a comprehensive national housing plan within 180, passes second reading with the support of a majority of Members of Parliament. The bill is amended in committee, and is moving towards third reading.

2009 December 2009: Federal housing minister accepts invitation to join with provincial and territorial colleagues for a national housing summit, but no progress towards a federal-provincial housing plan.

2010 March 2010: Federal budget commits no new funding for affordable housing.

Policy horizon

In the Commons: Bill C-304

< <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/blog/third-reading-debate-on-bill-c-304-national-housing-plan-slated-for-june/> >

The first round of third reading debate on [Bill C-304](#) - draft legislation to create a new national housing plan for Canada – has been postponed from its scheduled start yesterday. The bill has already passed first and second reading in the Commons, and has been amended at committee after hearings with expert witnesses, including the [Wellesley Institute](#). The start of third (and final) reading debate is now expected in June. Advocates pressing for the bill say that the delay in third reading debate gives an opportunity for supporters to contact their Members of Parliament and urge passage of the long-overdue and much-needed national housing strategy.

In the Senate: In From the Margins

< <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/blog/countdown-to-mid-september-senate-unanimously-adopts-call-for-national-housing-poverty-plans/> >

Canada's Senate has unanimously adopted a comprehensive, 283-page report that calls on the federal government to implement a national housing plan, poverty reduction strategy and other measures on income, health, education and training. Under the rules of Parliament, the federal government has until September 20 to formally respond. [In From the Margins](#) sets out [74 practical recommendations](#) from housing and homelessness to incomes and employment, plus health, education and training. "Senator **Art Eggleton** and his committee have prepared a vital blueprint for social and economic renewal, and it is gratifying to see that the full Senate has unanimously backed the strategy," says Michael Shapcott, Director of Affordable Housing and Social Innovation at the Wellesley Institute. "Now, the federal government is required to consider carefully and respond fully."

The Wellesley Institute hosted a [webinar with Senator Eggleton](#) on Jan 15 that drew more than 100 community leaders, government officials, housing advocates and experts and others. Our [presentation notes](#) provide highlights from the full report.

During the [final Senate debate](#) on the report, Senator Eggleton (Liberal) reported: “In our study of poverty, housing and homelessness, the committee held some 35 hearings, hosted 5 round tables and visited some 20 agencies in 9 cities across Canada. We had the opportunity to hear from close to 200 witnesses, some of whom were people who live in poverty or are homeless themselves. Other witnesses work for community agencies, are academics at universities or work in various volunteer organizations. What we heard, frankly, was appalling. We found that a staggering one in ten Canadians lives in poverty. The rate has been even higher at other times. That is 3.4 million people, the equivalent of every man, woman and child in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan combined. For these people, for our fellow citizens, every day is a battle with insufficient income, unaffordable housing, inadequate clothing and unsatisfactory nutrition. Every day brings wrenching decisions about whether they have enough money to buy groceries or whether they use the money to pay the rent; can they buy shoes for the kids or do they make a mortgage payment; and also whether they drop out of school and take a job to help the family struggling to get by. These families cannot even dream about getting ahead.”

“We need to do a better job on both housing and homelessness. It is time for the federal and provincial governments to come to grips with the issue and develop a national housing and homelessness strategy. Underlying our report is a simple common-sense premise: Social programs should lift people out of poverty, not keep them there. It is time to give people the tools they need to lift themselves into a better life. Poverty is not benign. It affects us all. It costs us all. We spend a lot of money and do not get the results we should get. We do not need to spend more money. I emphasize that. We do not need to spend more money, but we need to spend smarter, and more efficiently and effectively. In today’s global economy, with the looming demographic challenge of an aging population leading to a shrinking workforce, the importance of creating those opportunities of unleashing the creative contribution of those trapped in poverty is more important than ever. In a very real sense, honourable senators, the future level of our prosperity depends on addressing the current level of our poverty. Simply put, we cannot afford poverty anymore.”

Also in the Senate debate, Senator **Hugh Segal** (Progressive Conservative), deputy chair of the committee that produced the report, stated: “This report looks at federal and provincial issues as they relate to poverty income, security and homelessness, and not just from the perspective of the federal government. It is clear about not wanting to spend more taxpayers’ money and about spending the existing revenues of \$140 billion to \$150 billion per year by federal-provincial governments more efficiently and more effectively. It pays tribute to helpful programs, such as Minister Finley’s extension of EI benefits and Minister Flaherty’s Working Tax Benefit. These important initiatives have to be addressed over time but are steps in the right direction. The report also pays tribute to the reinvestment in social housing that the present government has put in place and which is so vital to the questions and challenges that we face. I will make one point about the notion of this report being a base for further work. The report takes the position that we have an income security hodgepodge of programs across Canada that clearly are not reducing the level of poverty while they cost a tremendous amount of money.”

“In every province of the country, except for Newfoundland and Labrador, recipients of welfare are earning, as a family of four, between \$11,000 to \$19,000 less than the low-income cut-off. Even if you take the market basket measure of our friends at the Fraser Institute, welfare still pays well below that level. What the report suggests is that this is a great opportunity for a green paper to look at income security across Canada, to look at best practices elsewhere, to look at how we can make it more effective and efficient and to do it in a way that involves the provinces, business, the private sector and the many NGOs that work so hard on this issue, church organizations and others in their own communities.”

Human rights actions: Global, national and provincial

In February of 2009, Canada's compliance with its international human rights obligations – including the right to housing – were subject to a Universal Period Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council. The UN HRC made a series of specific recommendations. The full text of the UN review is available at:

< http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/pdp-hrp/inter/wrk_grp-eng.pdf >

Canada's formal response, delivered in June of 2009, acknowledged that the federal government needed to take stronger action, in co-operation with the provinces and territories, on housing:

< <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/pdp-hrp/inter/101-eng.cfm> >

Specifically on housing, the federal government has committed to the United Nations:

“Canada accepts recommendation 49 and is undertaking measures to respond to the social and economic needs of Canadians. Canada acknowledges that there are challenges and the Government of Canada commits to continuing to explore ways to enhance efforts to address poverty and housing issues, in collaboration with provinces and territories.”

At the provincial level, the Ontario Human Rights Commission had been doing effective work over the past two years on filling out the right to adequate housing from a provincial perspective. Details on the housing components of the OHRC's work, including its legal policy on rental housing and human rights, is posted here:

< <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/housing> >

In the courts: Housing rights legal challenge

< <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/blog/right-to-housing-legal-challenge-launched-today/> >

Everyone in Canada has the right to a home – and the federal government has a responsibility to realize that right. That's the basis of a [legal challenge](#) launched today by a coalition of housing and legal advocates. The Wellesley Institute is providing policy support to the new coalition, including expert evidence on funding and legislative decisions by the federal government over the past two decades. The Globe and Mail featured the legal challenge in a [newspaper article](#). In February of last year, the United Nations' Human Rights Council conducted a [Universal Periodic Review](#) of the federal government's role in meeting its international housing rights obligations, and set out 68 specific recommendations. In [Canada's formal response to the UPR](#), the federal government acknowledged that it needs to do more on housing and homelessness policy.