

Canada's Housing Crisis and the Federal Election

2011 | Flip Sheet 

The Wellesley Institute's *Precarious Housing in Canada 2010* is a comprehensive overview of housing and homelessness issues and solutions. The report highlights the following four major observations.

Housing insecurity and homelessness remain deep and persistent throughout Canada.

- About 1.5 million of Canada's households are in "core housing need."
- More than 3.3 million households require repairs; and 1.3 million require major repairs.
- More than 3.1 million households are paying 30% or more of their income on shelter.

The nationwide affordable housing crisis is costly to individuals, communities, the economy, and the government.

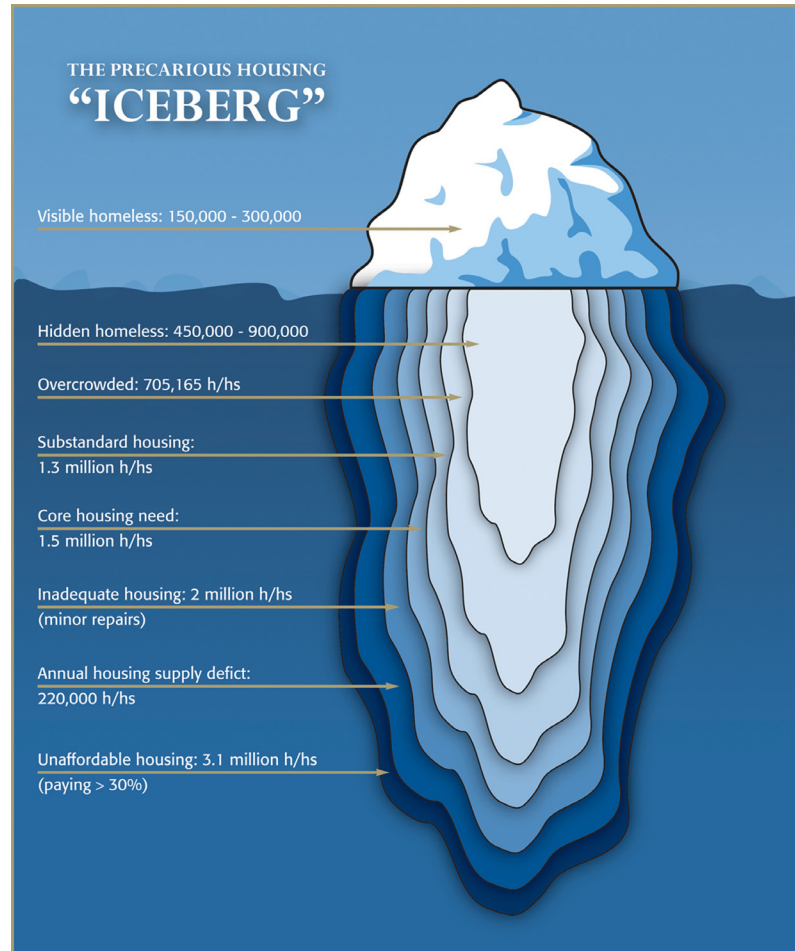
The costs can be measured in many ways:

- Poor housing is directly linked to poor health. Inadequate housing and homelessness leads to increased illness and premature death.
- The cost of "doing nothing" – as measured by increased health, justice, education, and social services costs – far outweighs the cost of solutions.

Federal housing and homelessness investments have been eroding since 1989.

By the year 2014:

- Federal housing program spending will be cut by 19% to \$1.7 billion.
- The number of households assisted by federal housing programs will be cut by 62,800.
- Housing spending by Canada's municipalities will be greater than federal investments.



Although the federal government has developed a collection of initiatives, Canada does not have a comprehensive national housing plan.

- Unlike Britain, US, Australia and every other major country in the world, Canada does not have a national housing plan.
- The United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing has said that Canada is failing to meet its international housing obligations and that housing rights are being eroded.

When federal election candidates ask for your vote, ask them the following questions about affordable housing:

WILL YOU SUPPORT BILL C-304 – NATIONAL HOUSING PLAN – WHEN IT IS RE-INTRODUCED IN THE COMMONS IN THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION?

Bill C-304 requires the federal government to create a comprehensive national housing plan that meets Canada's international housing rights obligations during an intensive six-month consultation with provinces, territories, municipalities, Aboriginal organizations, community groups and private sector interests. Bill C-304 had received support of a majority of MPs in the last Parliamentary session, was reviewed and amended at committee, and was ready for third and final reading before Parliament was dissolved for the election.

WHAT ARE YOUR SPECIFIC PLANS – TARGETS, TIMELINES, FUNDING – FOR A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL HOUSING PLAN FOR CANADA?

The Wellesley Institute's Precarious Housing in Canada 2010 includes a series of targets called Vision 2020 – a ten-year plan. We also propose new and innovative funding options to finance the housing plan. The Senate of Canada's *In from the Margins* report and the Common's HUMA committee's *Poverty Reduction Plan* both include detailed and useful recommendations. In 2010, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce called for a federal plan to end homelessness in ten years.

WILL YOU COMMIT TO END THE "STEP-OUT" OF FEDERAL HOUSING INVESTMENTS THAT LEADS TO A RAPIDLY-INCREASING ANNUAL CUT IN FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES?

Federal housing investments will be cut from \$2.2 billion in fiscal 2011 to \$1.7 billion in 2014 – and the annual cuts will grow more rapidly after that as the federal government "steps out" of its long-term support for affordable housing. At the same time as the growing annual cuts, the federal government's housing agency will see its net income grow by 11% from \$1.3 billion to \$1.5 billion. Simply maintaining federal housing investments at the same level as fiscal 2009 will provide much of the funding required for a comprehensive, 10-year housing plan for Canada.

The Wellesley Institute is a Toronto-based non-profit and non-partisan research and policy institute. Our focus is on developing research and community-based policy solutions to the problems of urban health and health disparities.

For more information:
Precarious Housing in Canada 2011

<http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/news/affordable-housing-news/new-report-precious-housing-in-canada-2010/>

Canada's housing and homelessness e-map
<http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/local-housing-initiatives-across-canada/>



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