

National Housing Day 2012



3 IMPORTANT THINGS

ALL CANADIANS SHOULD KNOW!

1. CANADA HAS NO NATIONAL HOUSING PLAN, AND FEDERAL HOUSING INVESTMENTS CONTINUE TO ERODE.

- Canada is the only major country in the world without a national housing plan. Bill C-400, draft legislation to create a national housing plan, is in second reading in the Commons.
- Federal housing investments have been eroding for more than 20 years. Housing investments increased temporarily in 2006 and 2009, but in 2011, the federal government cut overall housing investments by 39% - from \$3.1 billion to \$1.9 billion in one year.
- The federal Affordable Housing Initiative is planned to be cut to zero by 2015, and the federal homelessness program is planned to be cut to zero by 2014.
- Current plans call for a sharp decrease in the number of federally-subsidized homes to 525,000 by 2016 – a cut of 101,300 over nine years.
- Every dollar invested in housing generates \$1.50 in economic activity and jobs, according to the federal government. Since the federal housing dollars are often matched by two or more dollars from provinces, territories, municipalities, community donations and private financing, the economic cost of federal housing cuts runs deep throughout Canada.
- Federal housing cuts are part of broader cuts to a range of social investments. Canada is 25th among 34 OECD countries on public social expenditures, and is 30th in public spending on family benefits.
- In 2009, as part of its Universal Periodic Review by the United Nation's Human Rights Council of Canada's international human rights obligations, the federal government promised to work harder to ensure adequate housing for all Canadians. Since then, the federal government has continued to make sharp cuts to housing investments.

2. PRECARIOUS HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS REMAINS DEEP AND PERSISTENT IN EVERY PART OF CANADA, AND HAS A BIG IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL AND POPULATION HEALTH

- Hundreds of thousands of Canadians experience homelessness. More than four million Canadians living in 'core housing need' are the hidden victims of the nation-wide housing crisis.
- In Toronto, there are a record 87,301 households (161,222 women, men and children) on the affordable housing wait list. The wait list has set a new record every month since the recession of 2008.
- There are many dimensions to housing insecurity. Statistics Canada has reported that a growing number of adult children are forced to live with their parents. The phenomenon of 'boomerang' kids is related to a severe lack of affordable housing.
- A growing body of research points to the strong links between poor housing and poor health, along with premature death. A good home is not only important for personal health, but also for the population health of the entire community and the economic health of regions. Research evidence is also demonstrating that good housing is good for the health of individuals and the population health of communities.
- Housing is one of the fundamental social determinants of health, along with other basics such as income, food and access to health-services. There are complex and dynamic links among the fundamental social determinants of health.

3. THERE ARE SMART AND SUCCESSFUL HOUSING SOLUTIONS IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS CANADA THAT CAN BE ADAPTED AND REPLICATED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

- The Wellesley Institute's housing and homelessness e-map includes more than 400 successful and effective local housing and homelessness solutions in every part of Canada.
- The Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home / Chez Soi mental health and homelessness pilot project is the latest demonstration that the 'housing-first' approach is successful in tackling chronic homelessness among people with serious mental health issues.
- The Calgary Homelessness Foundation's 10-year plan to end homelessness is not only demonstrating success in its home city, but – along with partners in other parts of Alberta – has engaged the Alberta government as a partner in housing and homelessness.

- Infrastructure Ontario's affordable housing loan fund is an innovative housing financing option. It is capitalized by provincial bonds. Other forms of social financing, including social impact bonds, have great promise, but not as a replacement for direct government housing and social investments.

FEDERAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVE 2010-2016

In millions of dollars, this program shows rapidly declining federal affordable housing investments in new affordable homes shrinking to zero by 2015



LINKS AND RESOURCES

The Wellesley Institute's Precarious Housing in Canada research and policy compendium: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/publication/new-report-precious-housing-in-canada-2010/>

The latest national housing numbers in the Wellesley Institute's submission to the 2013 UN Universal Periodic Review: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/news/canada-has-failed-to-meet-its-international-housing-commitments/>

Housing and health: Examining the links: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/publication/housing-and-health-examining-the-links/>

Canadian housing and homelessness e-map: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/our-work/housing/local-housing-initiatives-across-canada/>

Making the connections: Our city, our society, our health: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/our-work/housing/local-housing-initiatives-across-canada/>

Bill C-400 – draft legislation to create a national housing plan: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&billId=5353445>

Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home / Chez Soi pilot project:

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/homelessness.aspx>

Calgary Homeless Foundation: <http://calgaryhomeless.com/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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