



January 30, 2017

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

The renewed federal role in housing has been met with palpable enthusiasm across the country. The Government of Canada has recognized the urgent need for a national strategy, and the important role the federal government can play in housing policy.

The National Housing Strategy is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure every Canadian has a suitable, adequate and affordable place to call home. We applaud the federal government for having made housing a priority and we urge that Budget 2017 reflect the focus on this important policy area.

The National Housing Collaborative, an alliance of nonprofit and private housing associations and major foundations across the country, has proposed a four-pillar foundation to support the National Housing Strategy, and improve affordability for Canadians in housing need:

1. **Adopt a national goal to end homelessness within 10 years** - and launch a pan-Canadian initiative to make it happen.
2. **Develop a national housing benefit that provides direct financial assistance to renters**, moving households out of poverty and providing them with more choice and autonomy.
3. **Maintain and increase the supply of rental housing that is affordable across the country** through innovative financing and equity tools.
4. **Provide leadership and resources to strengthen and renew our existing social housing** to ensure it remains physically sound and financially viable.

These four pillars are complementary, and interconnected. Both supply and demand-side measures are needed to address Canada's critical housing challenges. New rental and social housing is required and is an important part of the picture. But new supply takes time to build. A housing benefit offers a broad-based, viable and immediate solution for those in core housing need.

A portable housing benefit of the kind recommended by the NHC would:

- Quickly help hundreds of thousands of low-income households
- Allow people to stay where they live, or to move, as they choose
- Promote employment and self-reliance



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- Address the large differences in rents across Canada, as most other government programs do not
- Be cost-effective

Properly designed, a housing benefit can work hand-in-hand with new housing supply, both market and non-market, to address Canada’s housing affordability crisis, without inflating rents.

Just as our recommendations will contribute to a stronger housing market, they will in turn be influenced by broader market conditions. The success of the four pillars will be affected by actions taken across all areas of the housing system, including addressing affordability of market-based homeownership. The National Housing Strategy presents a real opportunity to take tangible steps to achieve housing affordability for all Canadians. A systemic view of regulatory and finance policies could result in expanded choice of housing forms and tenure mixes.

Our four recommendations were developed by the Collaborative because their positive effects will reverberate throughout the housing system. We urge the government to follow the recommendations of the NHC, including funding social housing, ending homelessness, incenting new rental supply and a creating a nation-wide portable housing benefit program.

The National Housing Collaborative:



Cc: Hon. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Hon. Scott Brison, President of the Treasury Board, Hon. Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, Hon. Jane Philpott, Minister of Health, Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Hon. Kent Hehr, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Associate Minister of National Defence, Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Canada, Hon. Maryam Monsef, Minister of Status of Women, Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister



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of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Hon. Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science & Economic Development, Hon. Jim Carr, Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Bardish Chagger, Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Hon. Diane LeBouthiller, Minister of Revenue, Hon. Adam Vaughan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Evan Siddall, President & CEO Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation