



Canadian
human rights
commission

Commission
canadienne des
droits de la personne

Housing

Aligning the National Housing Strategy with the right to adequate housing and a human rights-based framework

The Office of the Federal Housing Advocate

CAEH 2023

November 10, 2023



What does the Federal Housing Advocate do?

Marie-Josée Houle, Federal Housing Advocate

- Systemic Advocacy
- Participatory Approach
- Focus on Priority Groups

<https://www.housingchrc.ca/en>



Federal Housing Advocate Mandate

1. Monitoring the National Housing Strategy and the **progressive realization of the right to housing**
2. Engagement, research and studies
3. Receiving and analyzing submissions on systemic housing issues
4. Reviewing and taking action on systemic housing issues
5. Making recommendations to the Minister responsible for Housing



Obligations for governments

Under the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing

- Adopt immediate, concrete measures;
- Apply all appropriate means, including policies and legislation;
- Invest the maximum available resources;
- Prioritize the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups;
- Urgently address immediate threats to human dignity, such as homelessness and forced eviction;
- Ensure non-discrimination and avoid retrogression; and
- Progressively establish realization of the right in the shortest time possible.

Requirements for National Housing Strategy

Under the National Housing Strategy Act, the National Housing Strategy must:

- (a)** set out a long-term vision for housing in Canada that recognizes the importance of housing in achieving social, economic, health and environmental goals;
- (b)** establish national goals relating to housing and homelessness and identify related priorities, initiatives, timelines and desired outcomes;
- (c) focus on improving housing outcomes for persons in greatest need;**
- (d)** provide for participatory processes to ensure the ongoing inclusion and engagement of civil society, stakeholders, vulnerable groups and persons with lived experience of housing need, as well as those with lived experience of homelessness.

National Housing Strategy – Falling Short?

- National Housing Strategy - \$82B+ in federal & bilateral programs
- 2017 Targets:
 - Eliminate chronic homelessness
 - Take 530,000 households out of core housing need
 - Create 100,000 new homes and repair 300,000 homes
- 2022 Results:
 - Fails to address urban, rural and Northern Indigenous housing
 - Only 1 in 20 new units affordable to households in core housing need
 - No measurable impact on homelessness
 - Inconsistent definitions of “affordable” housing
 - Not updated to meet requirements of National Housing Strategy Act

National Right to Housing Day 2022 Calls to Action

1. Address Canada's legacy of colonialism and provide better housing for Indigenous people, no matter where they live.
2. Make programs purpose-built to address the needs of people experiencing inadequate housing and homelessness.
3. Prioritize the development and acquisition of housing supply that is permanently affordable and provides community value.
4. Demonstrate the leadership role of the federal government and a coordinated approach to involve all levels of government in solving the housing crisis.

National Right to Housing Day 2023

Revise the NHS to prioritize the development and acquisition of non-market housing supply that is permanently affordable and provides community value

- “Increase supply” presented as solution to housing crisis
- But – new supply funded by NHS is not affordable, accessible, or adequate for NHS priority groups
- **Non-market housing supply** is the best investment for realizing the right to adequate housing
- The \$82B+ NHS should be re-designed to allocate the maximum available resources to non-market housing.

Public funds = Public good

CMHC Housing Supply Report - 2022

Canada's Housing Supply Shortages: Estimating what is needed to solve Canada's housing affordability crisis by 2030

- Conclusion: Canada needs 5.8 million new homes by 2030 to reach 'affordability'
- Problems:
 - Focus on housing demand – not housing need
 - Focus on ownership housing – not rental
 - Definition of “affordable” not human rights based
 - Ignores other components of the right to adequate housing
 - Unclear relationship to *National Housing Strategy* 2018-28 targets
 - Does not reflect obligations under National Housing Strategy Act

A Human Rights-Based Calculation of Canada's Housing Supply Shortage

By Carolyn Whitzman, PhD, Housing and Social Policy Consultant

For the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate

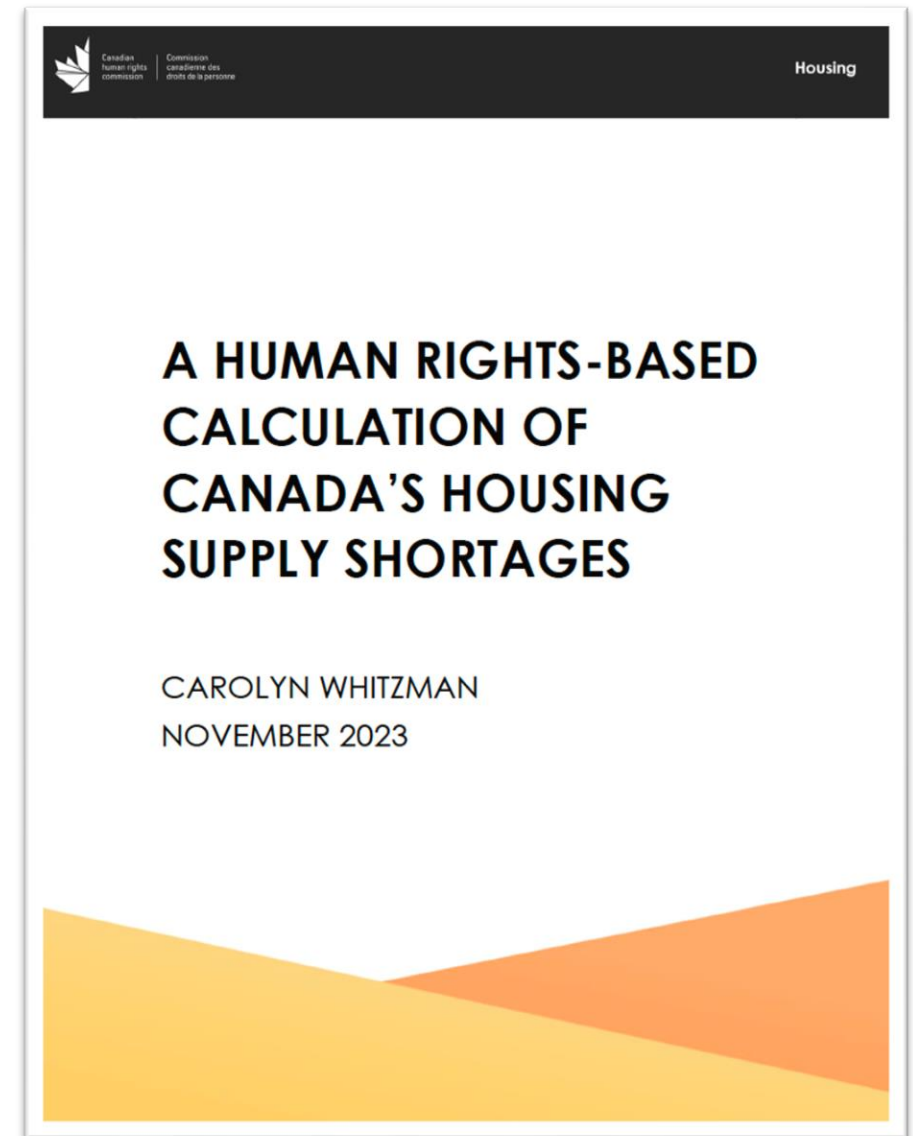
November 2023

English:

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/national-housing-strategy>

French:

<https://www.rondpointdelitinerance.ca/resource/strat%C3%A9gie-nationale-sur-le-logement>



Towards a rights-based calculation of housing supply needs

- Who Needs What Housing Where, at What Costs?
- Based on Core Housing Need + groups left out of core housing need + suppressed household & local demand
- Broken down by
 - Income category
 - Household size
 - Priority Population
- Including Projected Population Growth