



ALBERTA
SENIORS AND HOUSING

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-Beddington*

AR 52038

November 1, 2021

Dear Housing Operators,

Today, Alberta's government released *Stronger Foundations: Alberta's 10-year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing*.

Over the next 10 years, Alberta's government will take bold action to provide more affordable housing options that meet the needs of low-income Albertans. The strategy outlines how we will work with affordable housing stakeholders to support a target of 82,000 households at the end of 10 years. Achievement of this target would result in an increase of more than 40 per cent – and will be accomplished through five key action areas:

- 1) Support Albertans most in need,
- 2) Improve access,
- 3) Increase capacity, governance and planning, including flexibility to meet local needs;
- 4) Enhance sustainability and efficiency, and
- 5) Enable growth and investment.

A key focus of *Stronger Foundations* is to make sure you – Alberta's housing providers – are empowered to meet the needs of the communities you serve. To that end, we will simplify administration, help build your capacity, and give you more flexibility and autonomy.

Work is already underway on a framework to govern partnerships with the private and non-profit sectors, and a plan to manage government-owned affordable housing assets. Alberta's government will also continue to improve the Find Housing online tool and expand the Rent Supplement Program.

Also today, I introduced Bill 78, the Alberta Housing Amendment Act, to set the stage for key initiatives under *Stronger Foundations*. The proposed amendments will increase opportunities for partnerships, ensure appropriate oversight of new ventures, and improve governance and capacity across the housing sector.

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This strategy seeks to address the challenges with the current system. It is complex and hasn't changed structurally in more than 20 years. Waitlists continue to grow and government-owned affordable housing units are aging. Although Alberta's government has built more than 1,500 new units over the past two years, government investment alone cannot keep pace with the growing demand.

Stronger Foundations balances bold and careful changes. Along with our housing partners, we will proceed thoughtfully and carefully, and will continue to protect the most vulnerable to ensure they are not left behind.

This work is based on recommendations from the Affordable Housing Review Panel, which completed its work in 2020. The panel advised government to clearly define its role, tap into community expertise, expand partnerships, reward innovation and simplify the system.

I am grateful to the housing providers who served as members of the Affordable Housing Review Panel, my Minister's Advisory Committee on Housing and/or the Technical Housing Advisory Team. Their expertise was critical to ensuring we get this transformation work right.

I expect you will have questions about how this applies to your role and your work now, and in the future. Please join me and department officials for a telephone town hall at 3:30 p.m. today. You should have already received an invitation with details on how to join.

In the meantime, the strategy and a summary are attached for your information, along with the news release from today. Thank you so much for your support throughout this process. I look forward to continuing to work closely with you as we take our first steps to improve and expand affordable housing for Albertans in need.

Sincerely,



Josephine Poon
Minister of Seniors and Housing

Attachments