

Stronger Foundations: Alberta's 10-year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing

Summary

Over the next 10 years, Alberta's government will take bold action to provide more affordable housing options that meet the needs of Albertans with low income. This summary provides key details from the strategy.

Vision for affordable housing

- Albertans have access to safe, affordable housing that meets their needs and promotes quality of life.
- The housing system delivers innovative and sustainable affordable housing options to Albertans in need through partnerships with other orders of government, non-profit and private housing providers, and communities.
- The housing system will serve Albertans now and into the future.

What we'll do



Support Albertans most in need

Continue to protect the most vulnerable and ensure housing eligibility is fair, clear and equitable.



Improve access

Make it simpler for Albertans to access affordable housing supports, and easier for housing providers to deliver those supports.



Increase capacity, planning and governance

Enable more collaboration and local decision-making and provide more flexibility and capacity to meet local needs.



Enhance sustainability and efficiency

Make the affordable housing system more sustainable by enabling innovative operating models.



Enable growth and investment

Use innovative approaches for partnerships with the non-profit and private sectors to grow the supply of affordable housing.

What we aim to achieve

Serve more Albertans

- Support up to 82,000 households – an increase of more than 40 per cent, or up to 25,000 more households

Increase housing supply

- Add 13,000 affordable housing units
- Available units address a range of needs – from vulnerable households to ones with more moderate need

Improve choice and options

- Provide rent assistance to 12,000 more households
- Increase housing developments with mixed-income options



1. Support Albertans most in need

Objectives

- Continue to protect the most vulnerable
- Ensure eligibility is fair, clear and equitable
- Reduce red tape and increase flexibility for housing providers

Actions

- 1.1: Continue to maintain income thresholds for eligibility, as informed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Housing Income Limits.
- 1.2: Clarify and standardize the income verification process so eligibility, priority and rent setting are more equitable and simplified.
- 1.3: Enable housing providers to prioritize target populations into affordable housing based on the local need.
- 1.4: Ensure a required number of target income groups (very low, low, and moderate) and target populations based on community need are prioritized.
- 1.5: Expand access for Indigenous communities through the GOA's Indigenous Housing Capital Program.
- 1.6: In collaboration with partner ministries across government, expand supportive housing for populations transitioning out of homelessness and requiring mental health and addiction support.
- 1.7: Increase seniors housing in line with population growth.



2. Improve access

Objectives

- Make it easier for people who need affordable housing to access and navigate the affordable housing system
- Provide access to a continuum of supports, and a range of programs that meet individuals' different needs
- Provide housing that serves as a pathway to connect Albertans with health and social supports
- Reduce red tape for Albertans in affordable housing, or who are trying to access housing supports

Actions

- 2.1: Invest in a public online system, the Find Housing online tool, to enable Albertans to access a range of affordable housing options.
- 2.2: Establish regional housing system navigator roles in collaboration with partner ministries and community partners.
- 2.3: Work with partners to support housing literacy programs and access to housing information.
- 2.4: Collaborate with partner ministries to co-ordinate supports and transitions for Albertans as they move through the housing continuum. This includes people receiving income support, youth exiting government care, women and children fleeing violence and seniors moving to higher levels of care.
- 2.5: Work with housing operators to enhance support services or co-located services onsite, such as tenant support workers and services informed by awareness and sensitivity of Indigenous and other cultures.



3. Increase capacity, planning and governance

Objectives

- Enable more operational decision-making at the local level
- Increase operator flexibility by focusing on outcomes
- Increase sector capacity to deliver programs and meet outcomes
- Shift the GOA's role away from prescriptive regulatory structures to providing oversight and funding
- Reduce red tape for housing providers

Actions

- 3.1: Co-ordinate planning with municipalities, regions, First Nation governments, Métis organizations and local housing providers.
- 3.2: Encourage regional/municipal needs assessments to inform GOA and community planning.
- 3.3: Establish three-year targets for programs and new housing developments based on current and projected community need.
- 3.4: Continue to work with housing management bodies and operators to improve efficiency, increase capacity, and expand local decision-making.
- 3.5: Develop an operator performance-assessment framework and support capacity building.
- 3.6: Ensure all operators follow best practices and housing management body board appointments are competency based.
- 3.7: Increase the number of operating agreements with HMBs, non-profit and private sector housing providers.



4. Enhance sustainability and efficiency

Objectives

- Achieve greater sustainability in the affordable housing sector
- Enable multiple development and operating models that can be tailored to local need
- Target the deepest subsidies to those most in need
- Reduce the GOA's role in property ownership
- Maximize federal funding
- Enable operating revenues and asset monetization so operators can fund more capital costs

Actions

- 4.1: Allow new and innovative operating and funding models.
- 4.2: Gradually transition existing units to new operating models, while being sure to minimize disruption to tenants and prevent loss of deep subsidy units, and ensure those most in need have access to appropriate housing.
- 4.3: Use real estate asset transfer and redevelopment opportunities to move from the prescriptive regulatory format to focus on outcomes and move to operating agreements that allow for innovative housing models such as mixed-income developments.
- 4.4: For regulated, mixed-income developments that provide community housing, set rents based on operating costs and below-market target ranges.



5. Enable growth and investment

Objectives

- Leverage existing housing supply to meet growing demand for affordable housing
- Increase capital investment by partners and the GOA

Actions

- 5.1: Create a partnership framework and program tailored to affordable housing.
- 5.2: Develop and implement an affordable housing asset management framework, which will optimize the Alberta Social Housing Corporation (ASHC) real estate asset portfolio by identifying properties for sale, transfer, retention or redevelopment.
- 5.3: Develop a five-year maintenance and redevelopment plan for all government-owned assets and improve capital maintenance and renewal processes.
- 5.4: Introduce new programs and incentives to grow the supply of affordable housing.
- 5.5: Provide redevelopment grants to revitalize, densify, or repurpose existing housing with below market rents.
- 5.6: Work with partners to enable seniors' lodges to serve as community hubs in rural areas, and expand the Lodge Partnership Program to increase designated supportive living spaces in seniors' lodges where stand-alone continuing care facilities are not feasible.
- 5.7: Reinvest proceeds from ASHC real estate asset sales into the affordable housing system.
- 5.8: Expand the use of rent supplements to better use existing rental market capacity.