

RIGHT TO HOME

A MUNICIPAL CALL TO ACTION

Read the Right to Home working group's full Municipal Call to Action [here](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the cracks in our social and economic systems. It has amplified the housing crisis and exposed it as a human rights crisis by demonstrating that now, more than ever, access to an adequate, secure, and affordable home is a matter of life and death.

HOW CAN YOU PAY RENT IF YOU'VE LOST YOUR JOB?

HOW CAN YOU WASH YOUR HANDS REGULARLY WITHOUT ACCESS TO WATER?

HOW CAN YOU #STAYHOME IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE?

People living in street homelessness, shelters, and encampments. Women and children experiencing spikes in violence. Renters living paycheque to paycheque. COVID-19 is exposing society's most vulnerable people to even greater human rights harms. Between a lack of access to housing, and soaring rents and housing prices, hundreds of thousands across Canada are facing unprecedented risk.

Cities are the frontline of this crisis, and it is municipal governments who are closest to the communities they represent and most intimate with the strategies that will best serve their constituents.

OUR CITIES ARE POSITIONED TO BE THE AGENTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE THAT WILL ENABLE CANADA TO BECOME A HUMAN RIGHTS LEADER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY. BUT THEY NEED THE COLLECTIVE SUPPORT OF ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO SUCCEED.

It is this fundamental premise that has brought together municipal leaders from across Canada to form the Right to Home municipal working group. Convened by The Shift and the Canadian Urban Institute, the group seeks to address the intersecting emergencies of the pandemic and its economic fallout, as well as increasing levels of homelessness, housing unaffordability, income inequality, and discrimination.

IN ORDER TO SECURE THE RIGHT TO HOUSING AND CONFRONT THIS CALAMITY SWIFTLY AND STRATEGICALLY, RIGHT TO HOME HAS ISSUED A LETTER CALLING UPON THE FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL, AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

Greater collaboration, communication, and coordination among all levels of government to address our ever-expanding housing crisis as a human rights crisis, especially in light of the compounding effects of COVID-19.

The provision of adequate resources to develop and implement policies and programs that are consistent with human rights standards and respond to the pandemic by:

- Ending homelessness through supportive housing
- Protecting renters and small landlords
- Preventing a wave of evictions
- Providing increased social assistance to match actual living costs
- Curbing unsustainable debt due to arrears
- Addressing discrimination against those living in homelessness or social housing
- Safeguarding our housing stock from speculative investors

People's lives and well being are at stake in ways we never imagined. The status quo is no longer viable. Cities need additional resources and capacity to be nimble and responsive to everyone during this exceedingly challenging time, and especially to those who need help most.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR BOLD ACTION.

The Right to Home working group brings together elected officials and city staff from across Canada committed to securing the right to housing. It is convened by [The Shift](#) and the [Canadian Urban Institute](#). Visit maketheshift.org/righttohome to learn more.