

Community-driven housing solutions:

CHF Canada's Manitoba
2024 pre-budget submission

Submission to the Minister of Finance
February 2024



Co-operative Housing
Federation of Canada

About CHF Canada

CHF Canada is the national voice of co-operative housing, representing over 2,200 housing co-operatives, home to a quarter of a million people in every province and territory. In Manitoba, there are 54 housing co-operatives with 3,176 households. Co-operative housing is a well-documented success story. For over 50 years, co-ops have provided good quality, affordable housing owned and managed by the community members who live there.

The current state of housing in Manitoba

The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada welcomes this opportunity to engage in the Province of Manitoba's 2024 pre-budget consultation period, on behalf of our co-op members in Manitoba.

Housing is a social determinant of health and is essential to address poverty and create healthy communities. The current reality in Manitoba is stark – nearly 6,000 households¹ are on the waitlist for a social housing unit and 10.3 per cent of households experience core housing need². To meet the anticipated future demand for housing, Manitoba will need 260,000 additional homes of all types along the housing continuum by 2030 over and beyond the forecasted number in order to bridge the supply gap.³ The provincial government has an encouraging goal to end chronic homelessness in two terms of government – and more social, non-profit, and co-operative housing is critical to achieving this goal.

At a time when so many are struggling with the high cost of housing and high inflation, housing co-operatives offer a permanently affordable, community solution. A form of non-profit housing, co-ops foster healthy communities that offer security of tenure. Co-operative housing provides housing at cost to their members and operate on a not-for-profit basis. Research has shown that co-ops offer greater stability and affordability over time compared to market housing.⁴

CHF Canada has two key recommendations to grow and sustain co-operative and affordable homes across the Province.

Recommendation #1: Sustain existing affordable homes, such as through continued rental assistance for co-ops and non-profits

Recommendation #2: Grow co-operative housing in Manitoba through dedicated funding and assets (e.g. provision of provincial land)

¹ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba. September 8, 2023. [A Social Housing Action Plan for Manitoba](#).

² Core housing need measures whether a household experiences problems relating to affordability ('affordable' is defined as paying less than 30 per cent of income on shelter costs), suitability (enough space for the composition of the household) or adequacy (housing in good repair).

³ Canadian Housing and Renewal Association. November 27, 2023. [Economic Study: The Impact of Community Housing on Productivity](#)

⁴ Suttor, G., Otogwu, C. and Falvo, N., July 2022. [The Co-op Difference](#): Comparing co-op and market rents in five Canadian cities.

Recommendation #1: Sustain existing affordable homes, such as through continued rental assistance for co-ops and non-profits

To date, Manitoba Housing has allocated up to \$1.4 million towards new agreements for 2023-2024 through a block funding model, that can go towards subsidizing rent, meeting the rising costs of operations, or supporting an annual allocation to the replacement reserve fund. Stable funding will help to ensure more affordable options are available for Manitobans.⁵

The Province continues to review the assistance needs of low-income co-op members on a case-by-case basis. While this is a good step, it has fostered a lot of uncertainty for low-income households. Without a full reliable program available, the financial pressures on vulnerable households remain, as they are left wondering how they will pay their rent. Stability and long-term sufficient funding are needed, either through the block funding model, or a long-term rental assistance program, available to all co-ops and non-profits. The co-operative housing sector is committed to providing affordable housing in Manitoba's communities; the Province must come to the table to meet the needs of local constituents.

Embedding supports within existing housing can help meet the goal of ending chronic homelessness. There needs to be supports within housing, with a target of one tenant support worker per 100 units and supportive housing for seniors and people at risk of homelessness. This is critical to end chronic homelessness by connecting people with housing and mental health supports. Better coordination of resources cannot be effective without sufficient housing and support resources.

Furthermore, it is critical that affordable housing, including non-profit and co-op housing, is well-maintained and provides good quality homes for Manitobans. Echoing the ask from the [Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association](#), the government should provide \$1.5 billion in capital funding over ten years, led by Indigenous-led housing organizations.

The provincial government has expressed willingness to invest in upkeep and maintenance of Manitoba Housing properties and desire to ensure better oversight over affordable non-profit housing sales. It is important to state that most community housing has long-term track records of generally 30 to 50 years; selling a building is almost always the last option for non-profits or co-ops. With adequate funding and partnerships from governments, selling is highly unlikely to be considered.



What is Co-operative Housing?

For low- and moderate-income households negatively impacted by rising housing costs, co-ops are essential to remedy housing affordability challenges. Co-operative housing offers an alternative to renting or buying, which is particularly needed for vulnerable residents caught in our housing crisis.

Across the country, co-ops guarantee and preserve affordability in the present and future by virtue of operating as a non-profit home with co-operative principles. There is no outside landlord in the co-op housing model, which has continually protected households against repossessions and sale of homes. As affordability and security of other housing models has become increasingly uncertain, co-op homes remain stable for co-op members.

⁵ Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association. June 9, 2023. [New funding model through Manitoba Housing as operating agreements expire](#).

Recommendation #2: Grow co-operative housing in Manitoba, through dedicated funding and assets (e.g. provision of provincial land)

The co-op and non-profit housing sector is ready to partner with the provincial government, along with municipal and federal governments, to build more affordable housing. There is a true demand for new community housing. Across Canada, the percentage of community housing of total residential housing must grow from 5.5 per cent (as of 2023) to 7 per cent by 2030. Nationally, that would be an increase of 371,600 homes in the next six years; in Manitoba, that scales down to 13,140 homes by 2030.⁶ The provincial government should create at least 10,000 affordable homes over the next ten years, as per the “Social Housing Action Plan for Manitoba” which CHF Canada endorsed.⁷



Co-op Housing for All

Co-op Housing for All is our commitment as co-ops and sector organizations to work together towards sustainability and growth. It is about ensuring co-ops are secure well into the future and developing more co-op homes so that anyone interested in co-op housing—and willing to accept the responsibilities and benefits of membership—can do so.

To make this vision a reality, co-ops across Canada are:

- coming together through unification while maintaining their voice and sense of belonging
- joining assets (homes and money) to be able to invest better, and maintaining, managing and governing their co-op communities; and
- looking outside the sector for new solutions that provide access to money, land and people to make it possible to build new co-op homes.

CHF Canada is working closely with CMHC and federal government partners for investment in new co-op homes across the country, through the federally funded Co-operative Housing Development Program. Originally announced in the April 2022 federal budget, this program will spur the construction of new co-op homes. To maximize scale, the Province of Manitoba should develop a similar fund for the construction of new co-operative housing.

The Province has played a pivotal role in recent co-op housing developments, such as the provision of land leased for Old Grace Housing Co-op in Winnipeg. This practice should continue, so that co-ops and non-profits can keep working with the provincial government to explore new opportunities to create affordable, safe, and inclusive homes and communities for Manitobans.

Building communities together

The co-operative housing sector is ready to partner and work with the government to achieve housing for all Manitobans. Our vision for secure, sustainable, and affordable housing for all who need it aligns with the goals of the provincial government. CHF Canada looks forward to working in Manitoba to secure healthier, prosperous communities.

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⁶ Canadian Housing and Renewal Association. November 27, 2023. [Economic Study: The Impact of Community Housing on Productivity](#).

⁷ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba. September 8, 2023. [A Social Housing Action Plan for Manitoba](#).