



You Hold the Key:

Protect affordable homes.
Renew Rental Assistance now.

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in
Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget

May 2026



List of Recommendations

- 1** Renew federal rental assistance for co-op and non-profit housing, for at least ten years.
- 2** Invest in urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing, taking a for-Indigenous, by-Indigenous approach.
- 3** Prioritize co-op and non-profit housing in Build Canada Homes.
- 4** Enable the repair and renewal of co-op and non-profit housing.

The value of co-operative housing in an uncertain economy

Canadians are increasingly seeking stability in the face of economic uncertainty and housing insecurity. Public opinion shows that nearly half of Canadians say life feels more unpredictable than it used to be.¹ Canadians overwhelmingly want stability, particularly when it comes to essentials like housing.

For more than five decades, housing co-ops have built inclusive, resilient communities across Canada. Housing co-ops provide secure, affordable homes for households with a mix of incomes, where all households have a meaningful say in how their housing is managed.

Co-op housing is a proven, community-based solution to Canada's housing challenges, and co-ops are seen as credible, trusted institutions

that deliver stability and fairness.²

As the national voice of co-op housing, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada) recommends four high-impact actions that will protect affordability, strengthen communities and support economic resilience.



1 Renew federal rental assistance for co-op and non-profit housing, for at least ten years.

In housing co-ops, rental assistance bridges the gap between co-op housing charges and what a household can afford to pay, typically no more than 30 percent of income.

Rental assistance is similar to portable housing benefits; both are vital as they enable deep affordability needed by low- and moderate-income households. While both are an essential component of a healthy housing system, rental assistance has the added benefit of helping to ensure housing co-ops and non-profits remain financially stable. This is key as they provide homes for people with a mix of incomes.

The federal government provides rental assistance through:

- the Federal Community Housing Initiative (FCHI); and
- the Canada Community Housing Initiative (CCHI), delivered through federal-provincial and territorial housing agreements.

Both FCHI and CCHI are scheduled to end in March 2028. Without renewal, thousands of low- and moderate-income households risk losing affordability support, increasing pressure on an already strained housing system. CHF Canada recommends the federal government renew rental assistance for at least ten years.

Abacus Data polling shows that 83 percent of Canadians believe co-operatives make communities more stable through economic ups and downs.³ Long-term rental assistance is essential to preserving this stability by ensuring households can remain housed during periods of income disruption.

Renewing rental assistance is a highly effective and fiscally responsible investment in maintaining Canada's existing supply of deeply affordable homes. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has identified the preservation of social housing as the most impactful way to reduce housing need.⁴ Programs like FCHI deliver this impact because it is used in existing co-op and non-profit homes, compared to portable rent benefits that do not create or preserve co-op and non-profit housing. With access to rental assistance, households can remain in their homes even when incomes decline, preventing displacement and reducing the risk of homelessness. As of December 2025, FCHI has directly supported 11,943 low-income households since 2020-21, in both co-op and non-profit housing.⁵

Further, rental assistance is an efficient use of public funds, as co-op housing charges are typically lower than comparable to private market rents. For example, in 2024-25 in Ontario, the average annual support needed for a household receiving rental assistance in a 2-bedroom co-op home was \$6,840,⁶ compared to \$10,578 a year to provide a portable housing benefit, which are generally used in the private market.⁷

The federal government should:

- A. Renew rental assistance for housing co-ops and non-profits, for at least ten years;
- B. Ensure rental assistance provides affordability and certainty in all provinces and territories, and
- C. Make rental assistance a permanent pillar of housing policy.



2 Invest in urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing, taking a for-Indigenous, by-Indigenous approach.

In April 2026, the federal government committed \$300 million through Indigenous Services Canada and \$1.7 billion through Build Canada Homes to address Indigenous housing needs in urban, rural and northern communities. These investments are welcomed and needed to meet the growing housing needs of Indigenous peoples.

How housing is delivered is equally important. A dedicated urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing delivery partner is essential to ensure

these housing investments are designed and implemented using a For-Indigenous, by-Indigenous approach. Indigenous peoples must lead housing solutions intended for their communities.

Further investments will be required to make meaningful progress towards the need, reflecting the scale of core housing need experienced by Indigenous households and long-standing underinvestment in urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing.

3 Prioritize co-op and non-profit housing in Build Canada Homes.

Public support for expanding co-operative and non-profit housing is strong and broad-based.

Moreover, scaling up co-operative housing is a strategic investment in Canada's future that supports inclusive growth and economic resilience. Expanding co-operative housing will also strengthen local labour markets, build lasting infrastructure, improve productivity and boost GDP.⁸

The co-operative housing sector is ready and able to help the federal government meet its Build Canada Homes goals by quickly delivering affordable co-operative homes at scale for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households.

Largely enabled by the Co-operative Housing Development Program (CHDP), we have established a robust pan-Canadian pipeline of co-operative housing projects. Two years in,



CHDP has already committed \$1.21 billion worth of projects to create 2,787 new co-op homes; as of December 2025, 1,449 units are under construction, and 1,338 units have received conditional commitments.⁹

However, there are more co-op housing projects in the pipeline than there are funds remaining. Build Canada Homes can work strategically to advance remaining projects in this pipeline, much of which is shovel-ready, ensuring that people are housed faster and projects do not become more expensive and non-viable with the passage of time.

To maximize impact in advancing co-operative housing projects, we further recommend that Build Canada Homes:

- Maintain income-based definitions of affordability;
- Adopt a portfolio approach that enables sector-led development at scale, rather than relying solely on applications-based

programs; and

- Address existing barriers for non-market development, including the provision of long-term, predictable financing; the establishment of an appropriately scaled guarantee framework; and integration and coordination with other federal partners.

Strong national support for co-op housing

- **73%** of Canadians say co-op and non-profit housing can help solve the housing crisis.
- **71%** want to see more co-ops operating in Canada.
- Roughly **70%** of Canadians are already members of a co-op or open to joining one.

Sources:

Abacus Data. February 27, 2026. Canadians Want Stability—Co-ops Deliver It

Abacus Data. February 14, 2026. 73% of Canadians Say Non-profit and Co-op Housing Can Help Solve the Housing Crisis.

4 Enable the repair and renewal of co-op and non-profit housing.

Co-op and non-profit housing are mission-driven organizations, intending to deliver permanent affordability and security for generations. However, as much of the existing stock was developed in the 1970s and 1980s, it now requires repair and renewal to continue to offer safe and affordable homes well into the future.

While some work can be undertaken through refinancing, additional support is often required, particularly for co-ops and non-profits whose original development programs did not allow them to generate sufficient capital reserves.

Programs like the Affordable Housing Fund and Preservation Funding have been critical in enabling the repair and renewal of co-op and non-profit housing. However, these programs recently closed without a sense of when or if they will re-open.

Similarly, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Housing Partnership Frameworks have been vital to help repair and renew existing co-op and non-profit housing. These were cost-shared with the provinces and territories through to 2028.

The re-capitalization of initiatives that support the repair and renewal of co-op and non-profit housing, or the creation of successor programs, are essential to ensure the ongoing availability and safety of co-op and non-profit homes.

At a time when we are building new affordable housing, it is imperative to ensure there is a net gain to the housing system by preserving the affordable co-op and non-profit homes we already have through support for repair and renewal.



Conclusion

Partnering with the co-op housing is a strategic investment in Canada's future and will support inclusive growth and economic resilience. At a time when trust in institutions is declining, co-operative housing remains a trustworthy model.¹⁰

The co-op housing sector is ready to build lasting, affordable homes at scale and speed. By partnering with the co-op housing sector, the federal government can both protect existing affordable housing and expand it, responding directly to what Canadians are asking for: stable, affordable homes and stronger communities.

Endnotes

¹ Abacus Data. February 27, 2026. Canadians Want Stability—Co ops Deliver It abacusdata.ca/canadians-want-stability-co-ops-deliver-it/

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ Segel-Brown, B. 2025. The Evolution of Canada's Social Housing Stock. www.pbo-dpb.ca/en/additionalanalyses-analyses-complementaires/BLOG-2425-008-evolution-canada-social-housing-stock-evolution-parclogements-sociaux-canada

⁵ Progress on the National Housing Strategy. December 2025. Government of Canada. housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/alt-format/pdf/housing-logement/ptch-csd/prog-nhs-dec-2025-dec-snl-en.pdf

⁶ The Agency for Co-operative Housing. 2025. 2024 Rental Assistance Portfolio Review. www.agency.coop/resources/2024-rental-assistance-portfolio-review

⁷ Financial Accountability Office of Ontario. March 4, 2026. An Update on Subsidized Housing Programs in Ontario. fao-on.org/en/report/subsidized-housing-2026/

⁸ Canadian Housing and Renewal Association. November 27, 2023. [chra-achru.ca/news/canada-can-boost-gdp-by-billions-through-investing-in-more-community-housing-deloitte-report/Economic Study: The Impact of Community Housing on Productivity](https://chra-achru.ca/news/canada-can-boost-gdp-by-billions-through-investing-in-more-community-housing-deloitte-report/Economic%20Study%3A%20The%20Impact%20of%20Community%20Housing%20on%20Productivity)

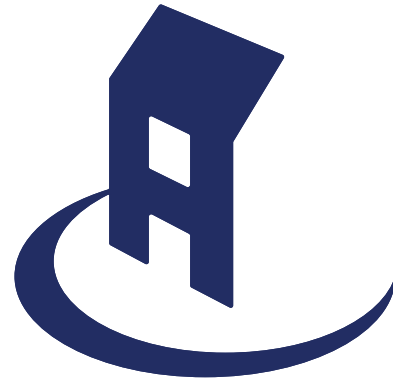
⁹ Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, Progress on the National Housing Strategy – December 2025. housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/housing-logement/ptch-csd/reports-rapports/prog-nhs-dec-2025-dec-snl-eng.html

¹⁰ Abacus Data. February 27, 2026. Canadians Want Stability—Co ops Deliver It abacusdata.ca/canadians-want-stability-co-ops-deliver-it/



About CHF Canada

CHF Canada is the national voice for co-operative housing in Canada. There are over 2,200 non-profit housing co-operatives across the country, home to a quarter of a million Canadians. Housing co-operatives play a unique role in the housing system by providing secure and affordable homes to households with a mix of incomes, where members have a meaningful say in how their housing is run. For over five decades, housing co-operatives have built inclusive, resilient communities across Canada.



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