



# LONDON FOR ALL

A ROADMAP TO END POVERTY



## Homelessness Prevention & Housing

**4.19 Encourage organizations (e.g. faith organizations, social entrepreneurs) to invest in attainable housing to increase housing supply**

### **National Housing Strategy (NHS) and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)**

Canada's first-ever National Housing Strategy was released in 2018. This \$55+ billion, 10-year plan will strengthen the middle class, cut chronic homelessness in half and fuel our economy. Most importantly, it will give more Canadians across the country a place to call home. Canada's first-ever National Housing Strategy will help drive the success of Canada's housing sector by giving more Canadians affordable homes.

Through the NHS, the federal government is bringing together the public, private and non-profit sectors to re-engage in affordable housing. Using a mix of funding, grants and loans, the strategy will create affordable, stable and livable communities. These communities will be located near amenities and transportation – and have the opportunities needed to succeed. Ultimately, communities where families thrive. The goal is to ensure Canadians across the country have access to housing that meets their needs and is affordable. To achieve this, the strategy will first focus on the most vulnerable Canadians.

The NHS will spearhead innovative new housing research, data and demonstration projects. This will fill gaps in our knowledge, share the best ideas and shape the future of housing policy in Canada. It will also create new opportunities for the federal government to innovate through partnerships with the community housing sector, co-operative movement, private sector, and research community.

The end result will:

- strengthen the middle class
- cut chronic homelessness in half
- build up to 125,000 new homes
- fuel our economy
- create a new generation of housing in Canada

Ultimately, the National Housing Strategy will promote diverse communities and create a new generation of housing that is mixed-income, mixed-use, accessible and sustainable.

### **Housing Development Corporation (HDC)**

The HDC centralizes the knowledge, skills, expertise, and tools required to support sustainable housing development, inclusive of affordable housing, throughout London and Middlesex.

HDC engages in a full range of services including development, new financial instruments, land acquisition and sale, affordable housing consultation and promotion with all partners and sectors.

### **Indwell**

Indwell is a Christian charity that creates affordable housing communities that support people seeking health, wellness and belonging. Indwell is Ontario's largest developer of new affordable housing with supports. In 2019, Indwell brought its transformational supportive housing model to London.

In February 2019, Indwell finalized the purchase of Woodfield Gate, a new affordable housing building at 356 Dundas Street in downtown London. The new tenants include people who face challenges accessing quality housing, often due to mental health and other disabilities. The building opened in July 2019 and is now home to 69 individuals. London Community Foundation helped to fund the building's construction and provided a low interest loan to Indwell to purchase it from the developer.

Indwell is partnering with the Mental Health Care Program at St. Joseph's Health Care London and the Canadian Mental Health Association-Middlesex to identify and welcome new tenants who are seeking supportive housing to continue their journey toward wellness.

Indwell is working with neighbourhood groups, civic partners, and a growing community of donors to develop much-needed solutions for our community's housing crisis. Indwell is establishing a regional office in London and plan to create more affordable housing communities in London and southwestern Ontario.

Indwell is also working on the development of the site of the former Embassy Hotel at Dundas and English into a three-storey, mixed used project. Indwell is currently in the planning stage of the project.

### **Habitat for Humanity**

Since its inception in 1993, the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity has built 80 homes across the region. In March 2019, two homes were completed as part of the non-profit's Manor project in London, where other homes have also been built on the site of the now-demolished Manor and Highland Park public school. The organization broke ground on two more homes on the same street in May 2019. Habitat for Humanity has embarked on 7 builds in the region in 2020. Due to COVID-19, 3 of the builds are temporarily on hold. Habitat also manages 7 ReStores in the region providing donated furniture, appliances, and building materials at an affordable price.

### **London Affordable Housing Foundation**

The London Affordable Housing Foundation (LAHF) is a non-profit group of faith-based partners committed to making safe, affordable housing possible for people and families facing economic barriers to housing. The vision of LAHF is for a community where affordable housing is available for all, and where all people in London can live in dignity and security.

LAHF seeks to bring together donors, builders, government and business to increase the supply of affordable housing. They primarily use their funds for the purchase of land, which constitutes their single biggest expense. After securing lands for development, the foundation then seeks partnerships with governments and assistance from donors to fund the construction of affordable housing units. LAHF is committed to ensuring as many properties and units as possible are both fully accessible and environmentally sustainable.

### **London Community Foundation (LCF)**

In response to London's growing housing crisis, the London Community Foundation has doubled its financial assistance to \$17 million to support the creation of affordable housing.

For the past six years, LCF has demonstrated its leadership in this space through its Social Impact Fund – a \$10 million revolving loan fund that has enabled the creation of 341 units of affordable housing to date. With the support of LCF donors and community

partners, LCF is deepening its commitment to addressing the affordable housing crisis with a dedicated affordable housing fund of \$17 million.

The affordable housing fund will support the growth of affordable housing in our community through donor contributions. This fund will offer flexible financing for community organizations interested in creating affordable housing as they often struggle to obtain financing from traditional financial institutions.

One of the primary barriers encountered when entering the affordable housing market is the often prohibitively expensive start-up costs. Before a project can begin construction and access traditional financing, capital is needed to fund assessments, land acquisition, and to cover planning and zoning expenses. This can result in a catch-22 situation, where money (bridge financing) is needed to begin the process but is normally only accessible after the first phase is completed. LCF is uniquely positioned to fill this niche. By providing low-interest, early-stage, flexible financing, LCF is able to help groups creating affordable housing get shovels in the ground faster.

Some of the organizations that have received assistance through LCF's Affordable Housing Fund include Indwell, the Italian Seniors Project, Homes Unlimited, and Youth Opportunities Unlimited.

The Foundation also announced the establishment of a Housing Action Committee, chaired by London architect John Nicholson. The role of the committee will be to identify organizations, both community and for-profit, which have an interest and capacity to help create affordable housing but need more information and financial assistance to develop and deliver on their plans.

### **Life Spin Housing Initiative**

Life Spin is one of the longest Community Economic Development (CED) organizations serving low-income citizens in Ontario. The Life Spin CED Housing Initiative is comprised of five commercial units, and 10 residential units. This sustainable housing initiative provides below market rents to an array of individuals with unique support needs.

### **VERGE**

VERGE Capital is a social finance program of Pillar Nonprofit Network in collaboration with Libro Credit Union, London Community Foundation, Sisters of St. Joseph, SVX (an impact investing platform) and the Government of Ontario. VERGE Capital operates

two social finance loan funds that provide capital to both new and established organizations across Southwestern Ontario.

**The City of London's Homeless Prevention Team** invited residents and community organizations to join community conversation and idea sharing meetings to help develop shared solutions towards ending homelessness and housing instability in London.

The community meetings were an opportunity for the team to engage with residents and organizations to talk about their ideas and how the services they may already be providing can support more individuals in our community. The Homeless Prevention Team connected with residents and community organizations about important gaps in the system and existing supports that could possibly help fill these gaps.

The team also used the meetings as an opportunity to provide insight into the homeless prevention and housing model the City is working towards and share updates on new and ongoing initiatives like the Housing Stability Week, Coordinated Informed Response and the Coordinated Access Centre.