

# Mobilizing our Communities for Social Housing



**Social  
& Housing  
Human  
Rights**  
Organizing for Change



# What is SHHR?

Social Housing & Human Rights is a coalition of organizations and individuals advocating for more federal investment in social housing across Canada.





# What is Social Housing?

## Social Housing

- **Exists outside of the market** and cannot be used for speculation or to generate wealth.
- **Owned by** public, non-profit or co-operative housing providers. Cannot be owned by private housing providers.
- **Rents are** less than 30% of household income or equivalent to social assistance housing allowances. In Quebec, the threshold is 25% of household income and this must be maintained.
- **Targeted at** low-income renters in 'core housing need' and people experiencing homelessness.

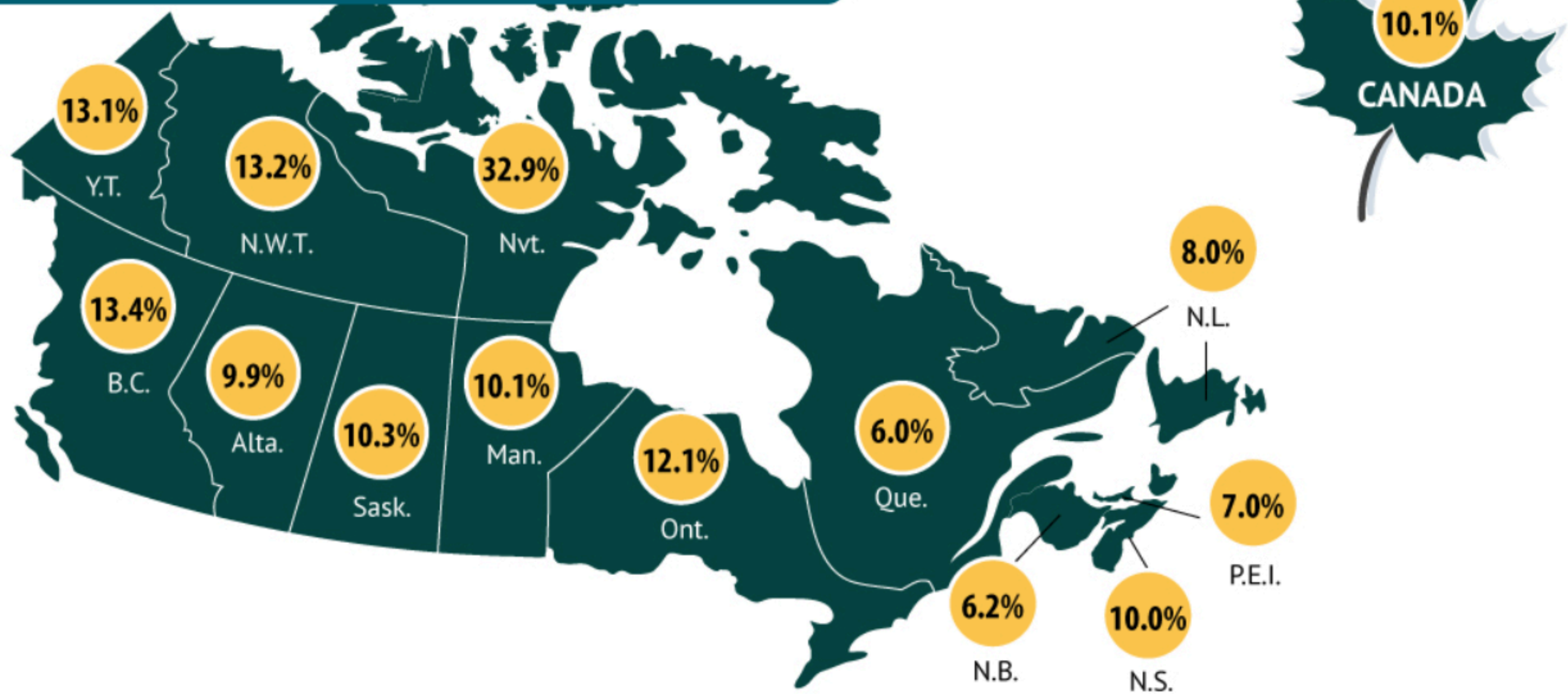
VS

## Affordable Housing

- **Owned by** public, non-profit, co-op **and private** housing providers.
- **Rents vary** across programs and governments, and don't align with CMHC's definition (eg. 70%/80% of median market rent; 30% of median family income).
- CMHC considers housing to be affordable if it costs less than 30% of a household's total income before taxes.



# In 2021, 1 in 10 households were in core housing need



Source: Statistics Canada. (2022, September 21). Core housing need in Canada.



The 2021 Census shows that 58.6% of renters living in poverty were found to be in core housing need.

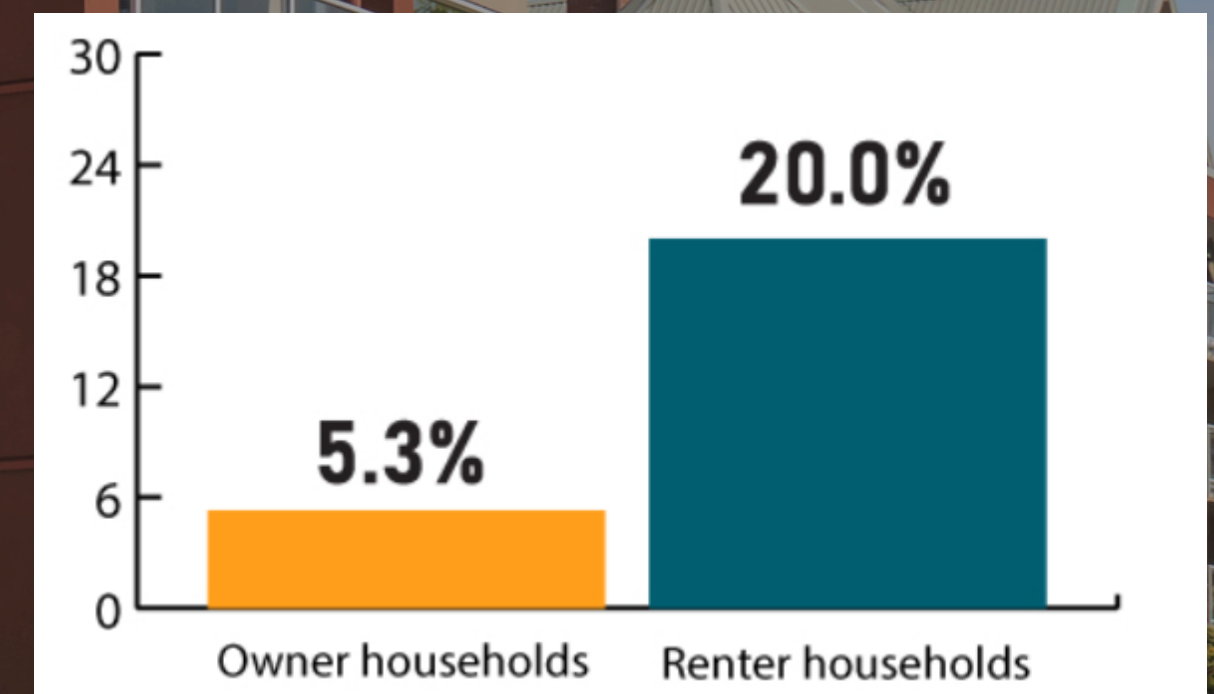
Source: Statistics Canada. (2023). Housing Experiences in Canada: Renters who are in poverty, seniors and recent immigrants, 2021. Release date: November 22 2023.

“Core housing need refers to whether a private household’s housing falls below at least one of the indicator thresholds for housing adequacy, affordability or suitability, and would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (attains all three housing indicator thresholds).”


Source: Statistics Canada. (2022, September 21). Core housing need in Canada.

Renters are more likely to be in core housing need than homeowners.

Source: Statistics Canada. (2022, September 21). Core housing need in Canada.







Since 1993, the federal government has built very few new units of social housing, and old funding agreements for existing units are expiring.

The 2017 National Housing Strategy has yielded minimal genuinely affordable housing for individuals with low incomes.

Only 3% of units funded through the Strategy's largest program are affordable to low-income households.

Social Housing & Human Rights is the only national campaign uniquely focused on securing social housing – that is non-market housing with rents set at less than 30% of a household's income.





# Our Call to Action

We call on the Prime Minister and the Minister of Housing to fulfill their legal obligation to realize the human right to housing and:

1. Create a minimum of 50,000 net new rent-geared-to-income social housing units each year for 10 years, starting now. These units should be targeted for those experiencing core housing need and homelessness and have rents permanently set at no more than 30% of household income.

2. Invest in the acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of new and existing public, non-profit, and cooperative-owned housing that meets the unique and varied requirements of people experiencing core housing need and homelessness.



# What we've accomplished together



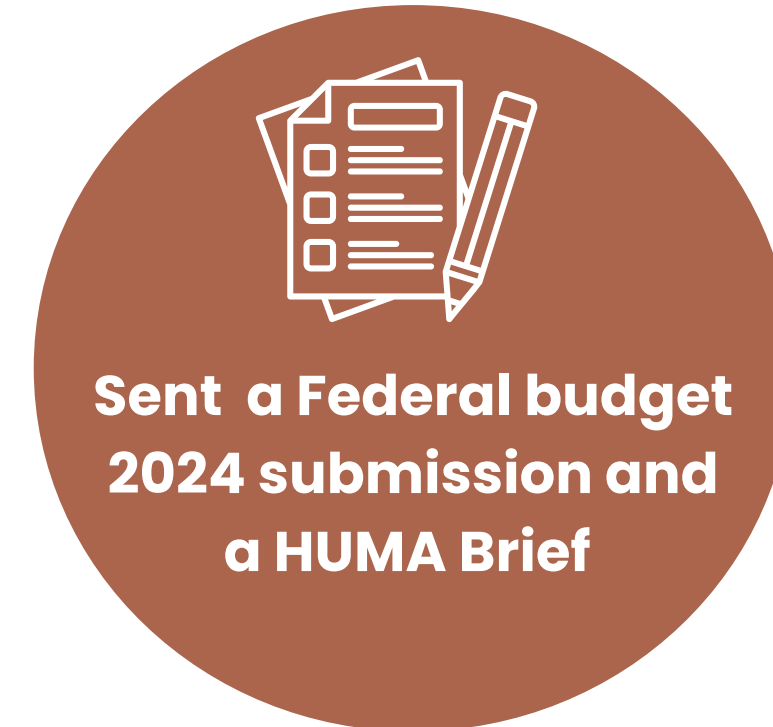
330+ people and organizations have endorsed the SHHR campaign.



On October 5, 2023, hundreds of participants gathered in cities across Canada on SHHR's National Day of Action.











**Budget 2024: Where is investment for housing those in the greatest need?**





# Breaking down the Budget

**\$1B for the Rapid Housing Stream under the Affordable Housing Fund is the only investment in social housing,** and is only projected to produce 5,000 units in total – meeting just 1% of the total need identified by SHHR.

**\$1.5 B for a Rental Protection Fund** to help non-profits and other partners acquire and preserve “affordable” housing.

Plans to use **public lands and buildings** to reduce the cost of developing new homes.

**All three initiatives will require operating subsidies from another level of government** to ensure the units that are produced have rents set at less than 30% of household income, and are truly affordable to those in greatest need.



# The bulk of Budget 2024's housing investments will create privately owned housing that is unaffordable to low-income households

Budget 2024 allocates \$15B to the Apartment Construction Loan Program (formerly the Rental Construction Financing Initiative). It is the largest National Housing Strategy program.

This program produced a building in Winnipeg with **average affordable rents at \$2,018 per month** – almost \$600 higher than the average market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in a purpose-built rental building in Winnipeg.







# A shift needs to be made...and we need your help

There is room in the 2024 federal budget for shifting and repurposing investments to generate social housing. Here's how:

**REDIRECT money for market housing**



**to rent-geared-to-income units**

**RECLASSIFY the Rental Protection Fund**



**for only non-market housing providers to acquire units and target it for rent-geared-to-income housing**

**SET ASIDE land and buildings**



**for only non-market housing providers to develop rent-geared-to-income housing**



# Next steps for SHHR



1. Engage national media
2. Engage politicians, political parties, other government
3. Strengthen alignment with other national advocates
4. Fill roles on the SHHR organizing committee
5. Promote national letter writing campaign
6. Build up SHHR endorsements
7. Build capacity of SHHR supporters to organize and advocate from their local communities





# Take Action RIGHT NOW

**Endorse the SHHR campaign and  
subscribe to our newsletter**



**Participate in SHHR's letter  
writing campaign**





A photograph of a protest banner. The banner is dark blue with white and red text. The text reads: "FAUT PLUS DE \$\$\$ DU FÉDÉRAL POUR LE LOGEMENT SOCIAL". To the left of the text is a red maple leaf logo with the word "FRAPRU" written on it. The banner is being held by a crowd of people, and a modern building is visible in the background.

## Ways you can support SHHR in your community

- Meet with your local MP or local government to endorse the SHHR campaign
- Organize local events to raise awareness about the SHHR campaign
- Engage your local media to cover social housing and the SHHR campaign
- Share SHHR campaign information on social media



# Breakout Groups

- **How can you support SHHR's next steps from your community?** (eg. engage local media; get endorsements from local MPs, municipalities, provinces; join SHHR's organizing committee)
- **What other steps could you take in your community to support the SHHR campaign?** (eg. get others to endorse the SHHR campaign and participate in SHHR's letter writing campaign; organize an event; share SHHR campaign on social media)
- **How can SHHR support you to take these actions? Can we offer tools/training?** (eg. working with media - writing op-eds, letters to the editor, press releases; working with politicians - meeting requests, prepping for meetings, meeting follow up; preparing submissions to government)
- **What organizing capacity already exists in your community that can we help you build upon?** (e.g. are there existing groups organizing around housing? Do you need to start a group?)



# Thank you!

If you have any questions, please  
contact us at:



[shhr@policyalternatives.ca](mailto:shhr@policyalternatives.ca)



[moresocialhousing.ca](http://moresocialhousing.ca)



[@moresochousing](#)



[@moresochousing](#)



**Social  
& Housing  
Human  
Rights**  
Organizing for Change