

Habitat for Humanity's Recommendations for all levels of Government

Recommendation 1

Ensure affordable homeownership and other equity-building housing models are part of the solution to Ontario's housing crisis by increasing funding for housing to municipalities, with dedicated funds for service managers to apply to homeownership and other equity-building options.

While provincial policies allow municipalities to spend housing funds on affordable homeownership developments, the rapidly increasing housing needs of communities result in funds being spent primarily and most often exclusively on emergency and short-term housing. In turn, this leaves few pathways for individuals and families to move from short-term to long-term sustainable housing options, which is why the full affordable housing continuum must be funded.

Recommendation 2

Ensure the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, and other related legislation and plans enable and encourage municipalities to increase their supply of affordable housing in a timely manner. For example:

- Revise the province's inclusionary zoning policy to ensure more municipalities are able to use it, especially in smaller communities that are not near a major transit station.
- Ensure that inclusionary zoning policies do not simply pass costs along to other home purchasers, Habitat recommends the Government of Ontario provide financial incentives to not-for-profit affordable housing builders, either through funding or the waiving of fees.

Recommendation 2 (CONTD)

- In the province's largest urban centres, create more choice by ending exclusionary single-family zoning. Allow for the development of gentle density, such as duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, without case-by-case approvals, similar to legislation that New Zealand has enacted.

Recommendation 3

Make publicly-owned land available for affordable housing, prioritizing not-for-profit affordable housing providers with access in high priority areas. In cases where surplus land goes to market, the Request for Proposals process should have a higher weighting for performance on affordable housing, encouraging or requiring market developers to include affordable housing (both rentals and homeownership). In communities across the province, decommissioned schools, firehalls, ambulance stations and municipal buildings could be used to create affordable housing.

Recommendation 4

Reduce the costs of building affordable housing and "red tape" by eliminating fees, development charges, HST and the land transfer tax for not-for-profit affordable housing developers. The provincial and federal governments must make it easier for municipalities to waive these fees for affordable homeownership providers by providing financial incentives such as access to additional funding for municipal services. As an example:

- Not-for-profits must pay for HST up front on a building, which is then added to a mortgage and incrementally recovered over the lifespan of the mortgage.
- For-profit developers can receive their HST back immediately when they sell the unit to the new owner.

Recommendation 5

Create long-term funding opportunities for skills training programs. Invest in Habitat for Humanity's local programs that encourage Ontarians to pursue careers in affordable housing and the skilled trades.