



SOCIAL HOUSING: OTTAWA NEEDS TO ACT

Social housing represents the best way of guaranteeing the right to housing because it is non-profit, owned collectively and funded directly by governments. Social housing takes housing out of the for-profit market and offers rents that meet lower income households' ability to pay.

Provinces and cities are not able to shoulder this responsibility alone. The federal government must do its part by increasing its assistance for the completion of new social housing, as well as maintaining the funding that it already dedicates to social housing.

Our Demands

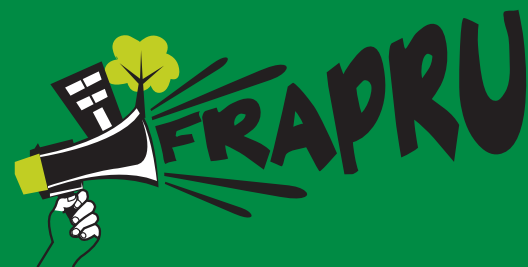
It's imperative to carry out this fight against the Conservative government. However, as the next general election will be held no later than October 2015, we must also hound the opposition parties, both the Liberals and the New Democrats as they must take clear, written and quantified commitments as soon as possible.

The FRAPRU and its member groups call for:

- The continuation of subsidies to existing social housing to ensure their affordability for tenants who remain there and for households who will need them in the future,
- An important reinvestment with a recurrent budget of \$2 billion per year, which would double the current budget of the CMHC and would annually provide between 5 000 and 5 500 new social housing in Quebec.

Several actions will be organized to support these demands in the coming months.

Fall 2014



Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain
www.frapru.qc.ca
www.facebook.com/frapru.logement

For more info,
contact your local housing organization:

It's urgent!

The figures from the 2011 National Household Survey conducted by Statistics Canada show that more and more households are spending an unacceptably high percent of their income on housing.

Number and percentage of tenant households devoting 30%, 50% and 80% of their income on rent, in Quebec, in 2011 and 2006

Year	Number of Households	Paying more than 30%		Paying more than 50%		Paying more than 80%	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2006	1 259 455	448 840	35.6%	203 085	16.1%	87 075	6.9%
2011	1 304 095	479 750	36.8%	227 835	17.5%	108 475	8.3%
% Increase	3.5%	6.9%		12.2%		24.6%	





This picture would not be complete without also mentioning:

- the 104 410 households residing in housing in need of major renovations,
- the 101 020 who live in overcrowded dwellings,
- the growing problem of homelessness,
- specific problems of access to housing experienced by persons with severe disabilities,
- the serious problems of overcrowding and dilapidated housing experienced by First Nations people living on reserve, in the Inuit territory of Nunavik, as well as living in urban areas.

In Quebec, nearly 38,000 households are on a waiting list to access a Low-cost Housing Unit (HLM) that would allow them to pay 25% of their income in rent every month. A large number of households are also waiting for cooperative and non-profit housing.

The needs are urgent! However, Ottawa is assuming less and less responsibility.

Insufficient Investment in New Housing

In 1994, the federal government put an end to its long-term investment in the construction of new social housing units.

The federal government timidly returned to support the construction of new units, eight years later, through so-called «affordable housing». However, it invests less and less in this initiative. By 2019, the federal government will only spend \$250 million per year coast to coast for all of their programmes to adequately house Canadians. In Quebec, the \$58 million granted by the federal government isn't even sufficient to subsidise the construction of 700 housing units under the current *AccèsLogis* program.

Despite these increasing needs, the federal government has chosen to reduce its housing assistance. In 2014-2015, it will invest only 0.9% of total program spending on housing. In comparison, the budget of the Department of National Defence represents 8.0%. That's nine times more! This says a lot about the priorities of the Conservative government of Stephen Harper.

The End of Long-term Subsidies

In addition to the \$250 million for affordable housing, the federal government annually distributes \$1.7 billion for social housing established prior to 1994. However, it has decided not to renew these subsidies once the current funding arrangements run out.

Canada-wide, some 585 000 social housing units still receive federal grants, however they will lose them, and in some cases, in the very near future.

In Quebec, this will be the case for 125 550 dwellings, approximately 85% of social housing units in the province.

Among these, 37 500 units receive their grants directly from the federal government, through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). In most cases, this is non-profit and cooperative housing. With these units, the effect of the end of federal subsidies is felt directly as these subsidies usually serve solely to lower the rents of low-income tenants. These tenants will find themselves, from one day to the next day, obliged to pay rent equivalent to other tenants who do not receive a rent subsidy. The actual amount that they spend on rent every month could therefore double or even triple! These units will also become far less financially accessible for other households to move into in the future.

The other 88 050 social housing units are under the responsibility of the Government of Quebec who manage them through the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ). This includes all of the Low-income housing (HLM), but also cooperative housing, non-profit and even subsidised private housing. All of these units have one common goal: they support very low-income households. In these cases, it's the Quebec government that will receive less and less money from the federal government. Over the years, this shortfall will be increasingly heavy to bear, which might convince Quebec to try to reduce its part of the bill. It could then consider increasing the rent for social housing tenants or even selling off a portion of the social housing units concerned.

In Quebec, the end of federal funding has so far little affected social housing units, but cuts will accelerate by 2015. It's not a distant danger anymore - it's an immediate threat.

