



A Rights-based Housing Strategy: Practical Housing Solutions for the City of Toronto

Home is at the centre of human rights. A safe, affordable and accessible home allows residents to live a life in dignity and security. In Toronto, the affordable housing crisis is restricting many individuals' ability to provide for themselves and their families. It is the responsibility of our governments to solve this growing crisis. They must act with urgency and allocate maximum available resources to housing solutions that prioritize the needs of those most impacted by the housing crisis.

We have developed a set of practical solutions that the City of Toronto can adopt to advance the right to housing of its residents. We hope that our decision-makers will adopt these policies, committing to a long-term housing approach that centres on the needs of residents.

1. How can the City of Toronto stay on track to implement its 10-year housing plan and advance the right to housing?

- a. Solution: Immediately adopt and implement the role of the Housing Commissioner to advise the City on how to meet its human rights obligations, and address systemic housing issues.

2. How can the City of Toronto support people experiencing homelessness?

- a. Solution: Identify or create adequate and appropriate temporary indoor shelter and permanent housing for encampment residents.
- b. Solution: Provide timely access to permanent, affordable housing options for shelter residents or people experiencing homelessness.
- c. Solution: Prioritize Indigenous-based ownership and operation of shelters and housing services that are intended for Indigenous populations.
- d. Solution: Invest in a staffing model that provides an appropriate staff-to-client ratio.

- e. Solution: Ensure that shelters and housing opportunities are available for people throughout the city, not only in the downtown core,

3. How can the City of Toronto increase affordable housing options for lower income residents?

- a. Solution: Leverage existing public lands and properties to increase deeply affordable housing options.
- b. Solution: Encourage redevelopment of vacant commercial buildings into residential use, with prioritization for affordable housing.
- c. Solution: Prioritize development incentives such as expedited approval processes towards building affordable rental and deeply affordable housing options.
- d. Solution: Adjust the application process of the Open Door Program to better facilitate the participation of non-profit housing providers in the program.
- e. Solution: Adopt policy and zoning options to increase the supply of affordable and deeply affordable rental housing across the city.

4. How can the City of Toronto better engage with renters to participate in housing decisions?

- a. Solution: Encourage renters impacted by the housing affordability crisis to engage in civic action to have their voices heard.
- b. Solution: Provide creative consultative opportunities for lower income households to be involved in the policy decision-making processes.
- c. Solution: Engage and support the creation of tenant associations in tower communities.

5. How can the City of Toronto better protect renters from losing their homes?

- a. Solution: Establish a bylaw that prohibits renovations, requires accommodation needs during renovations when necessary, and supports tenants' right to return to their homes paying the same rent.
- b. Solution: Improve legal support programs for tenants to challenge AGIs in their buildings and expand programs that build tenant organizing capacity.
- c. Solution: Increase funding and expand eviction prevention services to marginalized tenants.
- d. Solution: Extend the additional supports provided by the Housing Stabilization Fund, especially for those at greatest risk of losing their homes due to rent arrears.
- e. Solution: Expand the Toronto Rent Bank and make grants a permanent fixture of the program.

6. **How can the City of Toronto improve rental homes to be well-maintained and repaired?**

- a. Solution: Creating a new Right to Housing Community Engagement Committee to make recommendations for action.
- b. Solution: Enforce property standards and focus on bringing the worst-performing buildings back into a state of good repair.
- c. Solution: Prioritize deep capital repairs and retrofits in low-income and racialized neighbourhoods, ensuring that affordability levels are maintained.
- d. Solution: End the discriminatory restrictions on multi-tenant housing so that the safety and well-being of all renters are protected, regardless of income or housing type.
- e. Solution: Improve RentSafeTO's program by adopting colour-coding, unit inspections during building evaluations and increasing the number of Bylaw Enforcement Officers.

About Us:

The Right to Housing Toronto (R2HTO) coalition was formed in 2019 to advocate for the City of Toronto to adopt a human rights-based approach to its housing planning and policy.

